



Runners battled cold temps and rainy conditions at the Twisted Fork 68k in Utah. Photo: Tyler Marshall

TWISTED FORK: FAST TIMES ON MUDDY TRAILS

Tyler Marshall | 06/02/2026

On a dreary May morning in Park City, Utah, runners slowly worked through mugs of coffee, and then began their day. It was cold and humid, and rain swells swept through the mountain air for over 6 hours, pounding the ground. The weather seemed to invite everyone to stay inside where it was cozy. Yet, a few malcontents rebelled against the moody morning to race the Twisted Fork 68k.

The course featured inches of rain, thick mud and surprisingly immaculate vibes. Though temperatures were cold, volunteers at each aid station were warmed by great company. Impressively, they helped racers all day by providing broth and washing mud off of hands and shoes. Most importantly, they maintained the stoke and sent racers out of each aid in a great mood. The high-level volunteers are one reason Twisted Fork is a race on the rise, and another is the labor of love applied by its race director.

Purchased a couple of years ago by Finn Melanson, the race functions as a grassroots festival of trail and ultrarunning. Twisted is a community event, highlighted by two factors: the top-end talent that lives in the Wasatch and the strong contingent of everyday runners that are the lifeblood of ultrarunning. Each provides a vital part of what makes the scene in northern Utah so special.

Twisted Fork has 6,200 feet of gain, and though it's officially a 68k, it measures out to be 42 miles. The trails are smooth, times are fast and the course is well-marked.

Last year, the aid stations were packed with extra ice as the race occurred in June and temps reached over 80 degrees, making the bluebird day nearly insufferable. Heat rose with the dust of the dirt trails.

This year, the date was moved to the end of May and those couple of weeks seemed to have moved the race back into a different season. Fog and mist sat heavy over the slowly blooming aspens, and the trails couldn't have been muddier, while temps hovered in the low 40s. And yet, racers produced fast times and largely maintained big smiles.

The women's race remained tight all day. Rachel Drake, Kristin Johnson, Becca Bramley and others, sparred between each aid station, seeming to never arrive or leave in the same order. In the end, Drake achieved a narrow victory in 6:39:19, with Johnson right on her heels in a time of 6:39:51. Bramley was less than 20 minutes behind. Earlier in the race, Drake took a longer stop at the mil23 aid station, slipping out of first place. Unbothered, though looking a little worked, she spent time with family, regrouped and began her chase. At mile 37 – the final aid before the finish – Drake entered with the lead, looking confident and calm. She rode this wave to a stout finishing time.

Ryan Montgomery dominated the non-binary division in a time of 6:23:36 and was in competition for a top overall spot throughout the misty morning. Aid to aid, Montgomery was always smiling throughout the race.

Things on the men's side were no less exciting than in the other two groups. Liam Fleming (5:25:07), Gavin Prior (5:31:28) and John Raneri (5:38:07) made up the podium, dueling throughout the day, and spending limited time at aid stations. Fleming raced with a peculiar comfort in spite of difficult conditions. He seemed to allow the race to come to him and made a significant move in the later stages in the race.

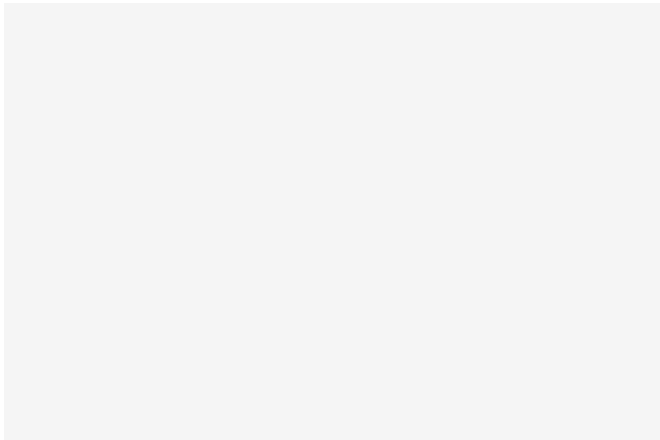
Unfortunately, the 2026 race wasn't all rainbows (in fact, there were no rainbows as the sun never appeared). The Forest Service capped the race at 100 runners and Melanson hopes to increase racer numbers in the coming years. Additionally, a number of runners DNF'd, likely due to the soggy, cold conditions.

And yet, ultra marathons are worth doing precisely because they're difficult. Further, race courses are different year to year. Surviving and thriving, no matter the conditions, comes down to what can be seen at Twisted Fork: great volunteers, a caring race director, robust culture and individual grit.

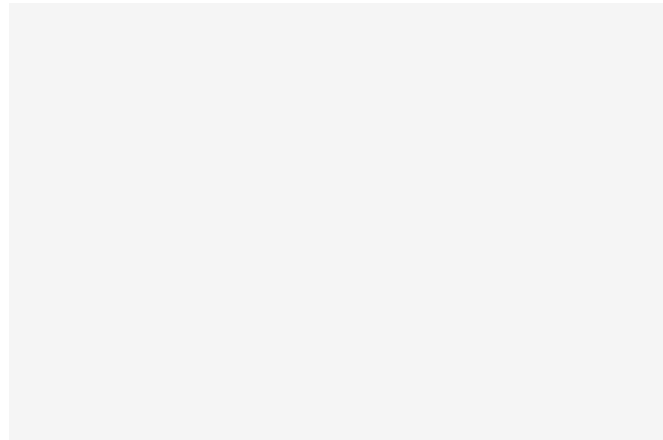


TYLER MARSHALL

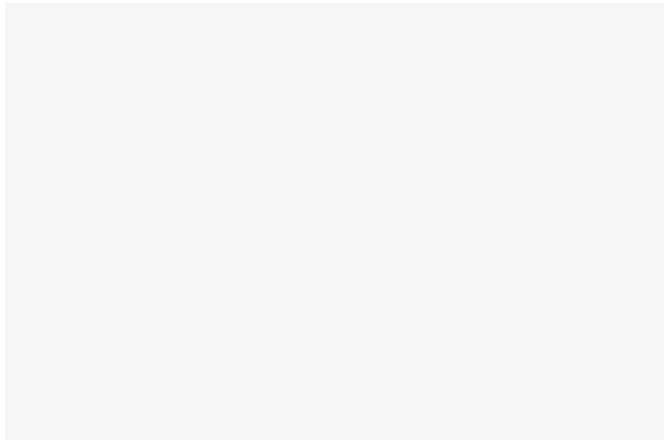
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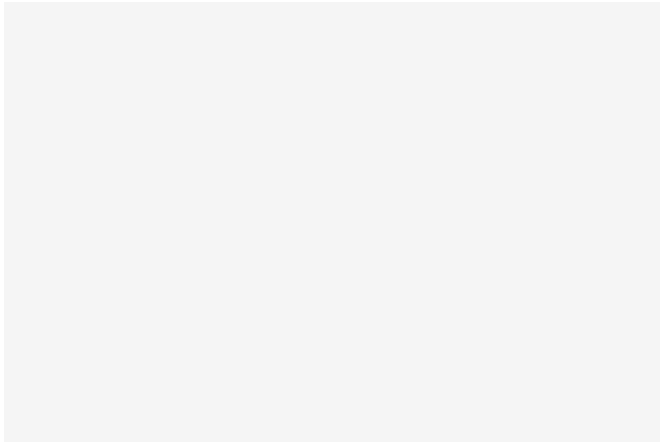
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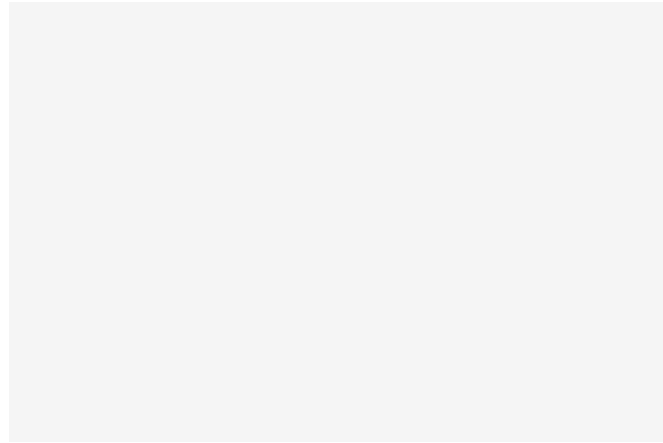
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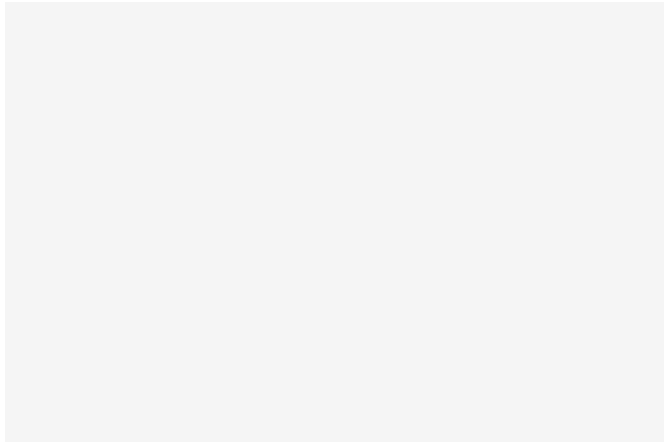
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50 KM

Devil's Gulch

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Mt Pleasant, PA - 11 finishers
30 Miles

8 Hour Dream Endurance Race

Indianapolis, IN - 145 finishers
8 Hours

First Blaze Trail Race

Milton, ON - 70 finishers
50 KM

Summit 700 Trail Runs

Blue Mountain, ON - 117 finishers
50 KM

Dirty Burg

Belmont, MI - 23 finishers
50 KM

Beaverhead Endurance Runs

Salmon, ID - 363 finishers
55 KM | 100 KM

Knee Knackering North Shore Trail Run

North Vancouver, BC - 193 finishers
30 Miles

Spaulding Woods 50K

Northfield, NH - 52 finishers
50 KM

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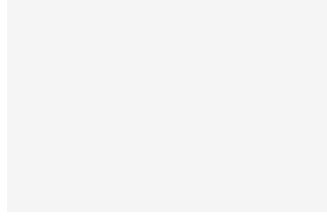
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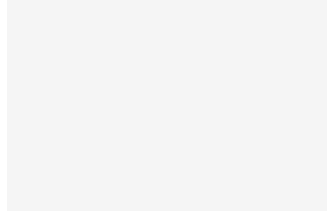
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What's the Issue w/ Amy Clark



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