

Phairat Varasin of Thailand, men's winner of the TMBT 102 km, 2016.



Dev Sidhu 2016

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Borneo Ultra Trails

Newsletter



March 2017

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Upcoming Events & News

Registrations for Super Kerbau #3, Tambunan closing soon



Entries for the 3rd Super Kerbau held on May 21st in Tambunan will officially close by 15th April. We are planning a fun and social weekend where runners are encouraged to come to Tambunan on Saturday and stay overnight for the race on Sunday. A **barbeque** is planned for the weekend. The Super Kerbau Trail Run series has 3 categories designed to both introduce newcomers to trail running and as solid training for longer events for experienced runners. Read more on Page 2. Hurry if you want to join.

Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/super/> for information and registration.



TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon, 2017

The 7th edition of Malaysia's first and premier Ultra-Trail® Marathon is scheduled for 16/17th September, 2017. The race will have 4 distance categories ranging from 12 to 100 km. The race course, circumnavigating half of Mt. Kinabalu, offers stunning views of the World Heritage Site as it traverses the surrounding steep ridges and deep river valleys. Participants will be passing through a combination of natural and cultivated

landscapes on village trails and backroads through remote villages with a rich cultural heritage.

Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/tmbt1/> for information and registration.

Photos from Past Events

After popular request, Borneo Ultra Trails chief photographer, Dr. J.S. Sidhu has produced and posted a collection of photos from recent past events – please refer to flickr link below. Going forward, photos from all BUT events will be posted for people to access.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/148519785@No3/albums>

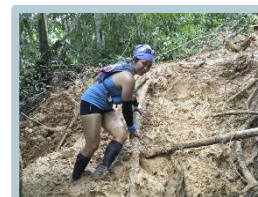
Refer to www.borneoultra.com for further information

Super Kerbau 3 - Tambunan



The third race in the Super Kerbau Trail Run Series will move to the interior district of Tambunan. Get the latest updates on the courses and other details of the event.

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Super Kerbau Race 2 Report

The second race in the series was held in Pukak on 11 Dec, 2016.

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TMBT Race Report

A report from the TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon held in October, 2016.

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BUTM Race Report

A race report from BUTM 2017 will be included in the next newsletter.

Return to Tambunan - Super Kerbau Race #3, 21st May 2017



We are happy to finally return to the Tambunan area to organise another event after successful and popular Tambunan races for Sabah Adventure Challenge in 2010 and 2011.

Course Outline

The base course has been designed as sketched in Figure 1. There may still be optimisation to the exact course.

The start and finish area for all categories is at Tandarason Resort & Country Club (TRCC). All categories will start together at 7 a.m. with a short run southward on a sealed back-road to the resort before taking the trail to the new viewpoint above Tambunan.

The 8 km category will turn back at the viewpoint and return to the finish, while the 15 km and 30 km categories will take the road back down, then cross over the river at the bottom of the valley leading to Kaingaran, before following a small trail through forest to emerge at a dirt road on the hillside above. The road and/or trails will be followed back down to TRCC.

The 30 km category will then proceed northward on the road for the second 15km loop, turning uphill for another short but steep climb on a gravel road and then dropping back down via a washed out dirt road to cross a river. The return to TRCC is mostly down the valley along the river on a combination of roads and trails.

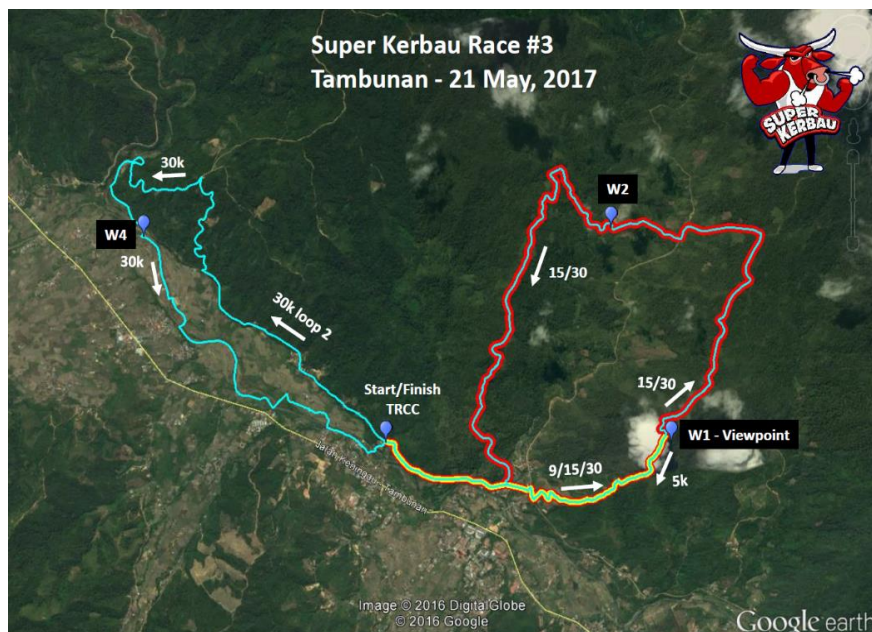


Figure 1: Outline of courses for Super Kerbau Race 3 in Tambunan. Start/Finish at TRCC. Yellow: 8km course out and back; Red: 15km loop, Blue: Second 15k for 30km category



Logistics

Tambunan is located in the Central Valley within the Crocker Range, about 1 1/2 hours drive from Kota Kinabalu. The race base will be at TRCC, for details refer to: <http://www.tandarasonresorttambunan.com/> which is located along the Pegalan River at an elevation of just under 600 m. This makes it cooler at night and ideal for camping.

There is various types of accommodation available at TRCC for those who would like to take a relaxing weekend in Tambunan and for instance travel to Tambunan on Saturday for a leisurely start of the race on Sunday rather than a very early morning drive to the race on Sunday morning. We are planning to organise a barbeque dinner (optional at a fee) at TRCC for a good opportunity to socialise with fellow runners.

Race Report: Super Kerbau Race 2

The second race in the Super Kerbau Trail Running Series was held out of Pukak on Sunday, 11th December. The race again had 3 categories with distances of 5, 15 and 30 km with a course designed to challenge new-comers and experienced trail runners alike.

Morning mist and low hanging clouds helped keep the temperature down on the first hill of the day, but this was quickly burnt off to expose participants to the full force of the tropical sun for the rest of the day.



Morning fog and mist kept temperatures down on the first climb of the day but partly obscured views to Mt. Kinabalu in the distance.

Azmeer Mirzan, Arnold Tuil and Jason Lay tackled the 5k course with an altitude gain of about 250m in times from 43 to 45 minutes to take 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the men's category. In the women's 5km, Brazilian first-timer Lilia Mariana Barroso dos Santos took a convincing 1st place and came 3rd overall. Audrey Wong and Sofiah Bongogoh took 2nd and 3rd spots in times just over 1 hour.



The 5 km category is designed to allow new-comers and the younger runners to experience trail running

Competitors in the 15 and 30 km courses had a much longer way to the top of the hill before dropping down in the valley to cross the Kiulu river and follow a trail along the river through a beautiful landscape of varied

forest, plantations and padi fields to the finish line for the 15k and the halfway mark for the 30k category.



Eric Tai Man Hiung, Jackreend Jee Dos and Rehan Ratimin completed the course in times between 1:58 and 2:10 to take the top three positions in the men's 15k race. Rita Gani came 3rd overall to take 1st in the women's 15k, with Roziana Ramlee repeating her 2nd place from the 1st race series, followed by Chin Mei Yeng in 3rd.



Several river and stream crossings offered opportunities to cool down

The canopy cover helped protect against the sun, and several river and stream crossings offered opportunities to cool off. At the finish line, a dip in the main river was popular to cool off and wash off the accumulated mud and sweat.



The last 6 km of the 15 km category followed a trail along the river through beautiful varied landscapes

The 30 km runners had to complete a second 15 km loop which included a second steep hill up to Kg. Sinansag beautifully located on top of the hill. The second half of the course also included an additional surprise challenge in the form of a mud-slide across the trail caused by heavy rainfall the night before.

The mud slide had to be crossed twice on the 30 km course, and some competitors taking a more challenging route across it came out looking like they had joined the Kerbaus (buffalos) in their favorite pastime of a full-on mud bath! ☺☺



Ongoing road construction on the hill above combined with heavy rainfall the night before the race led to an additional challenge in the form of a mudslide across the trail with a chance for a mud bath....

Jahirin Ginsos and Justin Lohok, who won the 15k category of the first Super Kerbau race, were competing for 1st and 2nd in the men's category with Jahirin coming out on top in an impressive time of just over 4 hours. Jahirin also won the TMBT 50k. Tommy Mathew rounded off the podium in the men's category. Rejlen James and Munikah Ginsos repeated their impressive 1st and 2nd placings from the first Super Kerbau race, followed by Rosehardiati Binti Mohd Tajuddin in 3rd.

The last and perhaps hardest fighting competitors were welcomed by friends and fellow runners at the finish line just after sunset. A special tribute to Frankie, a 100 km athlete, who with tremendous patience supported his group of runners to the end.



Experienced runner Frankie taking in the views as he had opted for an easier day on the trails, providing support for a group of less experienced runners.

A small video from the race course can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzAomcmZ_eA

Photos from the race are available at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/148519785@No3/albums/72157681843847815>

We would like to thank all participants and volunteers making this an enjoyable and fun Sunday.

Super Kerbau race #3: <http://borneoultra.com/super/>

Colourcoil TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon, 29-30 Oct, 2016

The sixth TMBT Ultra Trail Marathon was held at the end of October with about 1300 competitors of more than 35 different nationalities competing across 4 race categories. We would like to thank all participants, officials and volunteers for making this another memorable and successful event.



Our race photographers at work on the infamous pineapple ridge with views towards the first part of the race course

We have drawn up a race report and a few observations from the race organisers' perspective. We welcome feedback from participants to allow us to continue to improve future events.

Race Report

Lingkubang, located along the Kedamaian river in the shadow of majestic Mt. Kinabalu, welcomed the annual predawn flurry of activity as bus upon bus pulled in with competitors anxious to get ready for the adventure ahead after the very early morning bus journey from Kota Kinabalu. Registration, toilet visits and the compulsory selfies and group photos all taken care of, the 100 km and 50 km categories were flagged off as the sun was rising behind Mt. Kinabalu. The 30k and 12k categories would follow 1½ and 2 hours later to reduce trail congestion.



Photo time prior to start



Nervous anticipation and selfies on the start line. Who would have guessed from their relaxed smiles how fiercely competitive the Lintang sisters are ☺?

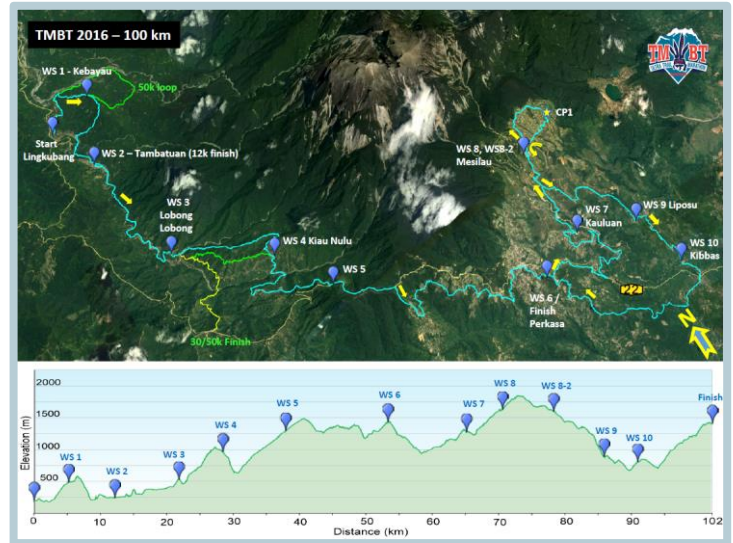
After a short “flatish” run along the river, racers got a taste of what was in store for the day on the first climb up to WS 1. Wide gravel and sealed roads on the first stretch allowed overtaking as the hill “sorted out the ranks” of racers before they ventured into the narrow, technical trails that the TMBT is known for.



Norway's Jan Nilsen on ridgeline just after WS 1 with views towards the western flank of Mt. Kinabalu. Jan with a strong finish climbed to the runner up position in the men's 100 km category.

Though steep, and to some, seemingly unmerciful, the first climb also offered good views to Mt. Kinabalu hovering over the race course.

Partly shrouded in clouds, the mountain occasionally exposed its western flank, scarred after the 2015 earthquake induced landslides and shining white in resemblance of the Dolomites rather than the tropical, forested massif it used to be.



The TMBT is set around Mt. Kinabalu with the 100 km course making a half circumnavigation of the mountain.

It had rained heavily during the week leading up to the race, but on race morning the weather was perfect for racing with a high cloud cover blocking out the worst of the heat from the sun. This allowed racers to make good progress in the cooler conditions, although the saturated soil led to some trail sections becoming very slippery – testing conditions for the best of trail shoes and competitors.



Borneo Warrior battling it out on the 100k course while displaying his body arts!

The finishing sections of the 30k and 50k courses took competitors via steep trails directly up to the finish location. A tough finish but with spectacular views for those who made it through in the daytime.

For the back of the pack, this section turned into a mammoth test of willpower and strength to get to the finish line that will go into the history of the TMBT and serve as a reference for difficult trail sections. The combination of afternoon rain showers and hundreds of feet pounding the soft and saturated soil turned the dirt trail into a mud slide with participants using both feet and hands, yet sliding as much backwards as making progress uphill. Our standby mountain rescue team of experienced guides was mobilised to assist stranded competitors past the slippery section to reach the finish line.

We all owe the rescue team from Miki's Survival Camp a huge thank you for their swift and professional efforts.

Some damage to both the trail and the surrounding crops was unfortunately incurred as runners would search for any grip and traction to get up the hill, including making alternative trails and pulling themselves up through the hill rice field..... This obviously caused some distress to both race organisers and the owner, who was duly compensated for the damages immediately after the race.

The wet conditions also transformed the lawn at the 30/50 k finishing area into a mud blanket, but competitors generally took it as part of the experience and in good spirit – the trait in racers that we all enjoy.



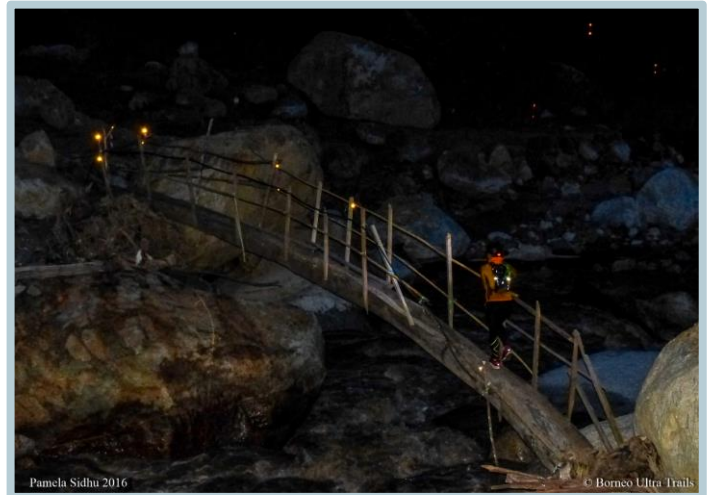
Katarina Anna Andersen of Sweden, runner up in the women's 30 km category, on the second last climb towards the finish line.

The second half of the 100 km course is more on tracks and less on very technical trail sections for safety reasons in the dark and on tired legs. The 2016 route saw a return to the vegetable farming area up along the eastern flank of Mt. Kinabalu. It was nicknamed the "cabbage patch" when used in the second and third editions of the TMBT, and is back after popular request.

Although there was no rain on the eastern side of the mountain on race day, the tracks through the cabbage patch were slippery and challenging with deep mud-holes. This slowed down the majority of runners, in particular when going through in the dark.



Ever smiling winner of the men's 100 km category, Phairat Varasin of Thailand, touching the bottom of the clouds in the slippery "cabbage patch" where he took the lead from James Tellias.



Going into the dark zone at one of the more exciting bridge crossings on the 100k route – a rickety fence across a log lodged between boulders brought downriver in the mudslides triggered after the 2015 earthquake.

A new trail section on a small trail downhill through thick forest was another challenge through the night. The competitors still on the race course between WS 8-2 and WS9 at dawn were greeted by a superb morning with the eastern ridge of Mt. Kinabalu out in full glory.



That way!! Our chief photographer Dr. J.S. Sidhu offering directions to a stunned 100k competitor.



Mt. Kinabalu greeted competitors still on the race course Sunday morning.



Amporn Roberts of Thailand arriving at WS 9 in the morning with a big smile after a night on the trails. Villagers were enjoying the show.

The Competition

The top 4 competitors in the men's 100 km category established themselves at the front of the pack already at WS1, and a fierce battle for the podium places ensued for the next 15 hours with rarely more than a few minutes separating the top contenders. Jason Robinson of the UK took the early lead and defended it for about 25 km before being overtaken by James Tellias of the Philippines on the infamous Pineapple Ridge section.

James maintained the lead for the next 30 km to the half-way station, after which a battle for 1st and 2nd between James and Phairat Varasin from Thailand was played out for the next 25 km until Phairat prevailed and gradually increased his lead to the finish line for a convincing win after a very steady run in a total time of 14 hours and 35 minutes for the 102 km.



Mid-way leader and 3rd place finisher in the 100 km category, James Tellias from the Philippines towards the top of Pineapple Ridge.

Norway's Jan Nilsen had in the meantime kept a steady pace to overtake first Jason Robinson, and then James Tellias on the last section to finish second ahead of James who was fading on the last stretch, but just managed to stay ahead of Jason Robinson for the last podium place.

In the women's 100 km race it was an all Malaysian podium with Christine Loh Woon Chze taking a convincing win in a time of 19:46. Marjilah Rebid steadily worked her way through the field to finish runner-up, less than two minutes ahead of Elvina Jimin in third place after 22 hours of racing. Jocelyn Cheung from Hong Kong and

Singaporean Chew Hanyu were in contention in the first half of the course, but gradually lost time as Marjilah put in a strong performance on the second half of the course.



Jocelyn Cheung of Hong Kong, 4th in the women's 100km race, close to the top of Pineapple Ridge with clouds closing in.

In the men's 50 km category, local runner Jahirin Ginsos took an early lead, and never looked back as he gradually pulled away from the chasing pack to take the win in a time of 7 hour and 12 minutes. Christopher Koelma of Australia established himself in second place about a third through the race course and maintained it to finish runner-up in 7 hours 26 minutes. The battle for third was closer with David Kennedy of the UK eventually taking the third step on the podium with less than a minute to Jinus Lianty.



Christopher Koelma took second in the men's 50k category.

In the women's 50 km category, 4 competitors soon established themselves at the front of the pack as the main podium contenders. Nathalie Marie Darbon of France broke free at WS 2, then gradually pulled away to take the win in a time of 8 hours and 7 minutes. Local girls Mailin Salungin and Rejlen James were taking turns to hold second position with Mailin eventually pipping Rejlen for the runner up position with seconds to Rejlen in third position. Katrin Olsen of Norway came in 10 minutes later.

In the men's 30 km race, local competitors Amat Milton, Joeythine Musin and Junaidi Limondok took the podium in times of 4:26, 4:43 and 5:10, respectively. In the women's category, Munikah Ginsos took the line honours ahead of Katarina Anna Andersen of Sweden and Audrey Lee Tian Ni of Singapore.



Elation at the finish line for Munikah Ginsos, winner in the ladies 30 km category.

The 12 km competitors mostly came for the experience, but a group of competitors from the villages close to the start area were highly competitive. Fardy Francis took the win in the men's 12 km in a time of 1:31 ahead of Chairon Bin Selumin and Joy Bin Barahim minutes later.



The 12 km competition was dominated by young locals from the villages around the starting area who made swift progress on the technical course.

In the women's 12 km, Roziana Ramlee took the win in a time of 2 hours ahead of locals Kathrine Sumbing and Noorsih Binti Sabin.

For full results, please refer to:

<https://www.racematix.com/site/#results:grp/TMBT-2016>

Organiser's Observations

Although there were plenty of challenges and some unfortunate hitches, overall the race went well from the organisers' perspective. All participants got safely off the course with only very minor medical cases, and the majority of runners took the, at times, difficult conditions in stride and as part of the challenge.

We had some hitches around race pack collection the day before the race caused by confusion around two registration venues running in parallel in an attempt to accommodate out-of-state runners with a convenient location. We sincerely apologise for any inconveniences caused and in future there will only be one site open at any given time.

The objective of the TMBT has always been to bring participants out on the smaller and more technical trails to experience the true village trails through difficult but spectacular terrain. With the number of competitors now in the race, some of the trails unfortunately do suffer and become more difficult for the back of the pack, in particular in wet conditions such as experienced in 2016.

With the technical trails and the number of competitors, there is always risk of congestion at some pinch points. A bit of waiting time at a hanging bridge was caused by overly cautious officials from the local village controlling the flow across the bridge. We have taken efforts to reduce this risk through staggered start times, but it is likely that the number of participants in each category will need to be controlled in future races to both protect the trails and ensure that trails are not too congested during the race.

The trail and crop damage is obviously a major concern to the organisers as we only "borrow" the trails from the local villagers and farmers, and we rely on their goodwill and cooperation to let us conduct the races. Every year we spend significant funds on trail preparations and repairs to hanging bridges prior to the race. We will keep working very closely with the villages and landowners in the planning, and compensate where damages are incurred. But at the same time, we plead to participants to stick to the trails and not make alternative trails through crops just because the trail is muddy.

The filtered water system which we have implemented is working well and saving the environment from about 20,000 plastic bottles in a single race. It has reduced the amount of litter on the race course significantly, but there is unfortunately still littering with other items. This is obviously totally against not only the rules, but also the spirit of the race. We cannot police the entire course, and we can only appeal to participants and hope that everyone with time will adopt a more mature and environmentally conscious approach and dispose all rubbish at the aid stations rather than along the course!

Photos from the event available at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/148519785@No3/albums/72157681847994095>

Further feedback and suggestions to improvements are welcomed.

Next TMBT

The next TMBT is scheduled for 16th & 17th September, 2017, with registration open at: <http://www.borneoultra.com/tmbt1/>

The course will again be set around Mt. Kinabalu with a similar format to the 2016 course. Some course optimisation is being considered and will be reported in coming newsletters and on the web site.