



Leslie Chiang

Compressport TMBT 2017

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Borneo Ultra Trails

Newsletter



October 2017

WWW.BORNEOULTRA.COM – THE TRAIL EXPERTS

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Upcoming Events & News

Registrations for Super Kerbau season finale closing soon



Super Kerbau – 10th December, 2017

The 4th and final race in the 2016/17 race series is scheduled for 10th December, 2017. Registrations close on 28th October, so sign up now if you want to join the season finale. Refer to page 3 for updates and <http://www.borneoultra.com> for registration



Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon (BUTM), 2018

The 4th edition of the BUTM is scheduled for 10-11 March, 2018. Distance categories will include a full range for beginners at ~12 km over intermediate at 30 km and 50 km to the full 100 km. Entries are open and will close on 10 January, 2018. Brief updates for 2018 are posted on Page 2. Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/butm> for registrations & future updates.



TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon, 2018

Malaysia's original and premier Ultra-Trail® Marathon will return for its 8th edition on 1st and 2nd September, 2018. Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/tmbt1/> for information. Registrations are expected to open in December 2017.

Longer Course?

We have for years been considering to create a longer course – in the order of 140-150 km (if not a full 100 mile course). It would qualify as a 6-points course on the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) certification scale. We would like to gauge the interest for this. If you would be interested in a longer course, please drop an email to indicate this to claus@borneoultra.com

Refer to www.borneoultra.com for further information



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Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon (BUTM) - 2018 Updates



Entries for the 4th edition of the BUTM scheduled for (g) 10-11 March are open – see www.borneoultra.com

Course & Logistics Updates

The course is being tested and is still subject to adjustments. It is at this stage expected that the courses will be largely similar to the 2017 course illustrated below with the 12, 30, 50 and 100 km centred around the river-side start and finish in Kiulu Township.



Please take note that the 12k race has been shifted to start Sunday rather than Saturday. This is with the intent to spread out racers and reduce the risk of congestion on the first trail section as well as creating a little more life at the finish line for the 100 km on the Sunday.

We also intend to try to generate a bit more finish-line atmosphere with the potential for (live) music and food & beverage. This is still on the drawing board.

For people who would like to avoid the early morning drive with risk of congestion going into Kiulu on race morning, or would like to have a place to “crash out” after completing, there is camping available immediately on the other side of the river. Toilets and outdoor shower facilities have been established. We will get back to you with details on fees and registration for this as we need to coordinate this with the owners.

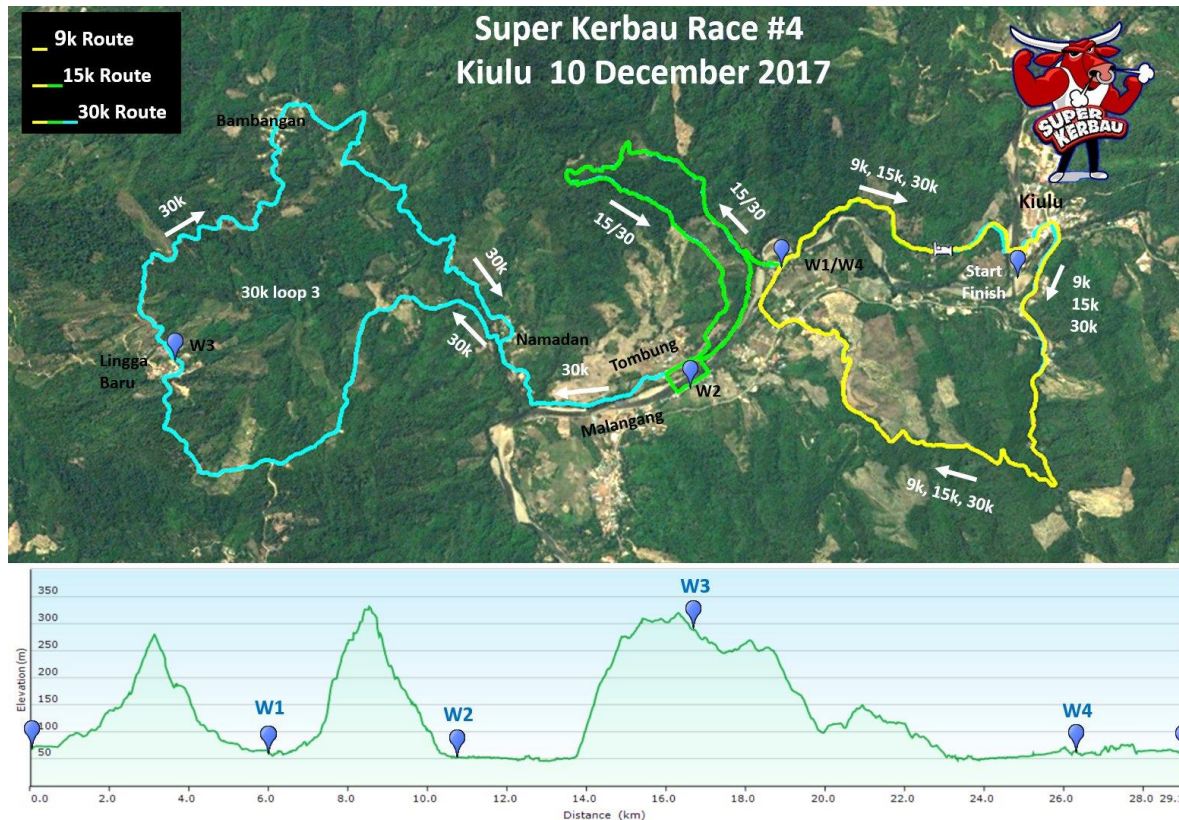
Super Kerbau Race 4 - Series Finale



Course Updates

The fourth and final race in the 2016/17 Super Kerbau Trail Running Series is scheduled for Kiulu on 10th December, 2017.

Entries close on 28th October, so hurry if you want to be part of this fun race. Below is a base map with an outline of the



courses and profile for the 30k. The courses are still being optimized and may be subject to minor changes.

All courses start and finish at Kiulu with planned mass start at Kiulu river side on 10 December at 7 a.m. See web site for more info.

The "short course" (marked in yellow on map) is about 9 km long with one hill and an elevation gain of 300 m.

The 15 km course adds another loop (green on map) and hill for a total elevation gain of a little over 600m.

The long course adds yet another loop (in blue on map), is just under 30 km long with a third hill and a total elevation gain of more than 1000 m.

Race Series Standings

The combined standings after three out of the four races in the series completed are outlined in table below.

RANK	NAME	Category	Country	Points Race 1	Points Race 2	Points Race 3	TOTAL POINTS
Ladies Category							
1	Rejlen James	Women	Malaysia	95.11	92.79	95.22	283.12
2	Rosehardiati Binti Mohd Tajuddin	Women	Malaysia	67.51	77.76	66.72	211.99
3	Rosimah Mohamed	Women	Brunei	70.21	65.17	59.06	194.44
4	Suguna Subramaniam	Women	Malaysia	74.64	60.88	57.83	193.35
5	Raynee Kumilau	Women	Malaysia	58.89	57.54	64.55	180.98
6	Amy Foh Choon Mee	Women	Malaysia	65.43	52.02	55.44	172.90
7	Munikah Ginsos	Women	Malaysia	87.63	84.40		172.03
8	Mary Stephen	Women	Malaysia	58.02	56.14	57.59	171.75
9	Rainnie Chow Pui Lee	Women	Malaysia	58.16	52.02	55.44	165.63
10	Rachel Cletus	Women	Malaysia	79.23		60.08	139.32
Male Category							
1	Tommy Mathew	Men	Malaysia	79.06	80.66	89.58	249.30
2	Justin Lohok	Men	Malaysia	73.14	89.29	82.74	245.17
3	Jee Sal Tak	Men	Malaysia	83.92	69.54	62.67	216.13
4	Lai Chea Fook	Men	Malaysia	59.43	71.60	62.26	193.29
5	Steven Ling Fui Hung	Men	Malaysia	65.63	64.82	61.03	191.47
6	Alan Tai	Men	Malaysia	63.22	59.09	59.27	181.58
7	Matnarudin Ibrahim	Men	Brunei	61.39	58.39	60.91	180.68
8	Franke Chung Fui Chiung	Men	Malaysia	61.70	59.30	59.50	180.50
9	Asli Tengah	Men	Brunei	60.20	58.39	59.11	177.70
10	Choy Mun Hee	Men	Malaysia	59.19	57.13	60.82	177.15

After an impressive performance - winning all 3 races till date in the ladies category - Rejlen James has a convincing lead going into the last race. The race for 2nd and 3rd is far more open in the ladies category and is contested by most in the top 10.

In the men's category, it is still wide open at the top of the standing with Tommy Mathew and Justin Lohok being the top contenders for the overall title, but many others with striking distance if the two top contenders should fail to deliver.

The full lists can be downloaded from the competitors racebox via the web site:

<http://www.borneoultra.com/super/>

Finisher Certificates

We have not issued certificates to everyone who completed the 2nd and 3rd races in the Super Kerbau series. If you would like a finisher certificate emailed to you, please email to superkerbau@borneoultra.com with your full name, race and distance category.

Compressport TMBT Ultra-Trail Marathon, 16-17 September, 2017

The 7th TMBT Ultra-Trail Marathon lived up to its reputation as being equally beautiful and brutal with participants enjoying stunning views to Mt. Kinabalu and the surrounding jungle clad ridges and river valleys while sweating it out on tough climbs or sliding down steep descents.

A record 1550 participants of 40 nationalities pitted their physical fitness and mental stamina against the challenging courses of Malaysia's original ultra-trail marathon.

We would like to thank all participants, officials and volunteers as well as the local communities, who not only let us run through their back yards and fields, but contribute tremendously during the event, for making this another memorable and successful event.



The 100k and 50k categories lining up in the early morning for the start of the 7th edition of the TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon with Mt. Kinabalu in the background.

We have drawn up a race report and a few observations from the race organisers' perspective. Winner of the Ladies 50 km race, Chris Yee Ting Kwan of Hong Kong, has kindly provided her perspective on the race, see Page 8.



Nervous anticipation and final preparations at the start area as the sun rose behind Mt. Kinabalu to clear skies

Race Report

Typhoons to the north of Sabah in the days leading up to the race caused heavy rains with flooding and strong winds tearing at the course markers – making final preparations a little extra challenging. Concerns that Mother Nature would wreak havoc during the race proved unfounded as the sun on race day rose behind Mt. Kinabalu on a clear and crisp morning – with the promise of a hot day!

Mt. Kinabalu beckoned (or some participants may say threatened) high above as the 100k and 50k categories headed out on the course shortly after dawn, while the 30k and 12k categories followed 2 hours later to reduce trail congestion.



Flags were proudly displayed with 40 different nationalities taking part.

After a short "warm-up" run along the river, competitors hit the day's first significant hill on the climb up to W1. Wide roads allowed overtaking as the hill "sorted out the ranks" of racers before they ventured into the narrow, technical trails.



All thumbs up from two of our competitors from the large Brunei entourage, Shaazzatul Wardah Hj Ramli and Fadli Muhammad, as they negotiate the smaller technical trails after W1.

After the climb and hot conditions on the small trails, the refreshing river crossing before W2 was welcomed by most, though it meant either taking the shoes off or getting them wet.



Clear skies, green hills and lush paddy fields provided a stunning backdrop on the approach to W2 at Kg. Tambatuan.

The clear skies, green hills and lush paddy fields provided a stunning backdrop as runners approached W2 at Kg. Tambatuan, where they were welcomed by traditional gong-playing by a group of village elders.



Competitors were welcomed with traditional gong-playing at W2 at Tambatuan.

The finish line for the 12k was located in Tambatuan, while the other categories continued up the valley through a varied landscape of lush paddy fields alongside the river, small trails on steep hill sides, crossing streams and jungle clad hills to eventually emerge on a dirt road. After W3, recent floods had shifted the river channel and a bamboo bridge had to be constructed to take competitors across the river.



Bamboo bridge crossing after W3

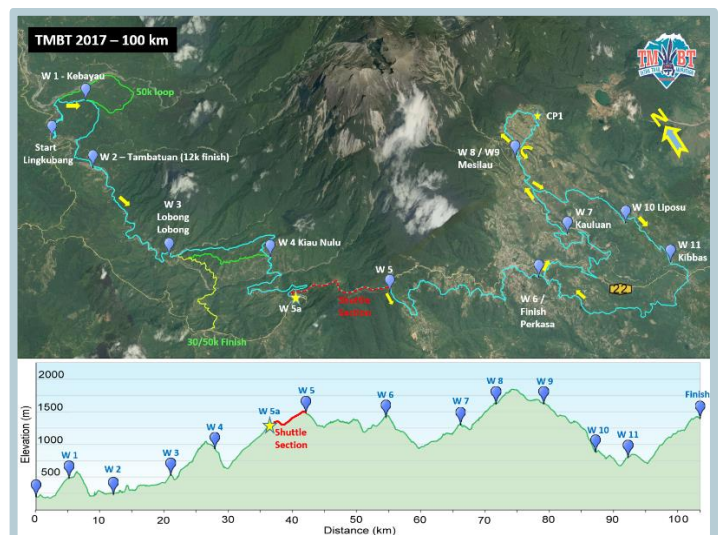
The 100k and 50k headed for the "Pineapple Ridge" – a seemingly never ending climb bringing competitors up close to the south face of Mt. Kinabalu with excellent views (when not hidden in clouds) to the near vertical rock face with waterfalls cascading off it. The 30k headed for the infamous Bukit Dallas – the very steep "double" hill that brings the 30k and 50k competitors via steep trails directly up to the finish location.



Winner of the women's 30k race, Stephanie Davidson of France, keeping her head down and making use of her whole body to negotiate the infamous Bukit Dallas climb towards the finish line.

Despite significant trail improvements with installation of steps and ropes, Bukit Dallas lived up to its reputation as the "sting at the tail end" of the 30k and 50k routes. It tested the strength and mental resolve of many competitors, and good stories and memories were carved in mud. With no easy escape, the majority of competitors pushed personal boundaries over the pineapple ridge and up the infamous Dallas hill, making the arrival at the 30 and 50 km finish line high above the steep climbs so much sweeter.

Heat and dehydration was an issue for the early competitors, and two experienced and very fit competitors suffered collapses close to the finish area. Thankfully we had volunteer doctors and ambulances close by, and a swift and professional response averted what could have been very serious cases. Early afternoon showers brought relief from the heat, but turned the steep trails more muddy and slippery, and the installed ropes were used extensively ☺.



The TMBT is set around Mt. Kinabalu with the 100 km course making a half circumnavigation of the mountain. A short (5 km) bus shuttle had to be introduced due to a major landslide.

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. A short shuttle transfer had to be introduced to a recent landslide taking out part of the trail. The race-clock was stopped during the transfer of about 10 minutes.



Yuriko Scanlan of Japan – 4th place finisher in the women's 100 km race, running away from rain at Mt. Kinabalu and approaching W5a and the shuttle transfer.

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. The log bridge between W7 and W8 had been improved with railings for safety, but crossing it during the night could still be a little daunting.



One of the more exciting bridge crossings on the 100k route. The old log lodged between boulders was made a little safer for TMBT with reinforced railing. The majority of competitors crossed this during night.

Another "exciting" section included the jungle descent to W10, which was negotiated through the night by most. To some competitors, this section in the deep jungle at night could make not only the body, but also the spirit run wild, and there was a tendency for competitors to "team up" for comfort in numbers ☺.

The Competition

While the majority of competitors were battling physical and mental exhaustion to complete the courses, a fierce battle was also played out amongst the top runners for the podium places.

Local runner Milton Amat took the early lead in the men's 100k, but Italy's Alessandro Rizzetto Chini of Team Sherpa Dynafit was never trailing by much, and he caught up with Milton at the halfway point.



Local runner Milton Amat held the lead over the first half of the 100 km category and became joint winner of the 100 km race.

After racing neck to neck for the entire second half of the 100 km course, with neither runner giving an inch, they eventually showed great sportsmanship and completed together in a time of 14 hours and 49 minutes. Japan's Yuta Matsuyama rounded off the podium in 15 hours and 12 minutes.

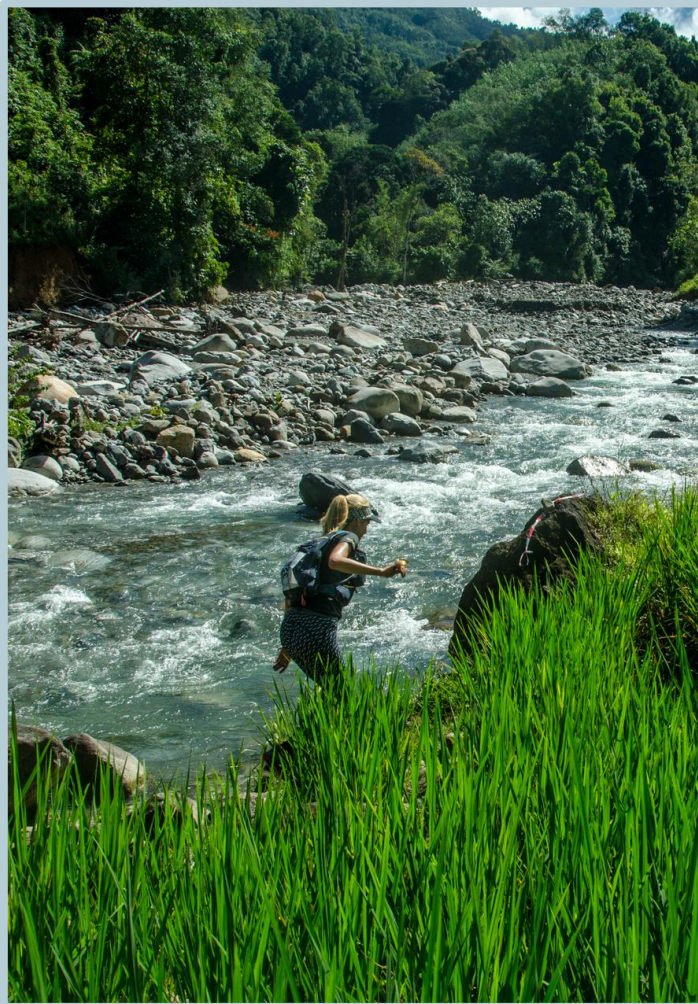


Joint winner in the Men's 100 km, Alessandro Rizzetto Chini of Italy running for Team Sherpa Dynafit



Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Datuk Pang Yuk Ming (second left) presented prizes to Milton (3rd left), Alessandro (3rd right) and Yuta (2nd right). Flanked by Aileen (Borneo Ultra Trails) and volunteer Tony Chiffings.

In the women's 100 km category, Eszter Csillag of Hungary took the lead between W2 and W3 and never looked back from there, slowly but steadily increasing her lead to win in a time of 17 hours and 3 minutes. Local top runner, Rejlen James, who had the lead in the early stages, secured 2nd place in 18 hours and 6 minutes ahead of Lauren Albart-Lebrun of Canada in third in a time of 18 hours and 22 minutes.



Winner of the Women's 100 km category, Eszter Csillag of Hungary skirting the river before starting the climb to Pineapple Ridge.

In the men's 50 km race, Taiwan Beast Runner's Petr Novotny of the Czech Republic was in his favorite terrain on the technical trails and made seemingly easy work of the course, completing it in an impressive time of 5 hours 52 minutes ahead of Jeffrey Campbell of Canada and Cory Lewandowski of U.S.A. in third.



Winner of the Men's 50 km category, Petr Novotny of the Czech Republic, arriving at the finish line.

In the women's 50 km category, Chris Yee Ting Kwan of Hong Kong catapulted herself up the ranks on the last steep hills to take the win in a time of 9 hours ahead of long-time leader Tsai Meng Shan of Taiwan in second and local runner Adelinah Lintanga in third.



Chris Yee Ting Kwan, winner of the Women's 50 km category, leading fellow Hong Kong runner Yu Keong Chan on the way to W2. See report from Chris on page 9.



Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Datuk Pang Yuk Ming (second left) presenting prizes to Eszter (3rd left), Rejlen (3rd right) and Lauren (2nd right). Flanked by Aileen and Tony.

It was a tight race in the men's 30 km race with no more than a few minutes separating the top three through most of the race. In the end, Gavin Oneill of the UK prevailed on Bukit Dallas to take the win in a time of 4 hours 48 minutes ahead of Malaysian Denis David who just managed to propel himself ahead of Craig Armstrong of Australia in third.



Podium of the Men's 30 km category, Gavin (centre), Denis (right) and Craig (left).

In the Women's 30 km category, Stephanie Davidson of France led from start to finish and convincingly took the line honours in a time of 5 hours and 29 minutes, ahead of Katarina Anna Andersen of Sweden in 5:59 and Kristine Liu of U.S.A. in third place in a time of 6:57.

The 12 km competitors mostly came for the experience and to complete the race, but a group of competitors from the villages close to the start area were highly competitive and flying through the course. Team Kuda took the entire podium in the Men's category with Tino Ino taking the win in a time of 1 hour 10 minutes ahead of Melthony Gusitin in 1 hour 24 and Seveor Sadib in a time of 1 hour and 25 minutes.



The young guns from Team KUDA took the entire podium in the 12 km category.

It was also an all Malaysian podium in the women's 12 km category with Joan Ainne taking the win in a time of 2 hours 16 minutes ahead of Syikin Najib in second with a time of 2 hours 37 minutes and Siti Mariam Mostamam in third in a time of 2 hours 40 minutes.

For full results, please refer to:

<https://www.racematix.com/site/#results:grp/TMBT-2017>

Photos from the event can be found at:

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

Organiser's Observations

We strive to give participants a chance to experience a remote and beautiful part of Sabah, as well as the chance to push own physical and mental limits in a friendly competition, all within acceptable risks. We believe that this was achieved for the vast majority of participants, and we overall consider the event a great success.



BUT Director and chief photographer, Dr. J.S. Sidhu offering directions to our radio operator cum sweeper turned 100k competitor – Sabdin Ghani.

There will always be room for improvement, and we will keep striving to learn and improve within budgetary constraints. We will keep optimising the registration and race pack collection procedures. We faced congestion during the last day of race pack collection in particular, and will further improve on the efficiency of this for coming events.

An integral part of the TMBT is getting competitors out on the small, natural trails. This almost inevitably leads to some congestion on sections of the race course. We would in this respect like to stress the need for good "trail culture". When you hear someone faster come up behind you, take the first opportunity to step aside and let that person pass – it only takes a second! If you are catching up with someone and want to overtake – get up close and then make a polite request to pass. We have feedback of both reluctance to let others pass, and some competitors "pushing" their way through. Both are very much against the spirit of good trail culture!

Extreme rains and associated landslides before the race forced the introduction of a short, 10-minute transfer by shuttle for the 100k competitors. Not ideal from a logistics and race perspective, but it did cut out the highway section that we as organisers always have dreaded, so in some respect a blessing in disguise.

With 1400 people pushing themselves to their respective limits in the outdoor environment, there will always be risks involved. We saw two collapses (likely related to heat exhaustion) which could have turned very serious. They were effectively averted by our volunteer doctors, but they serve as a stark reminder to all of us of the inherent risks associated with these types of events. The two cases both involved experienced and fit athletes and could not have been predicted. We have to remind ourselves that no matter our level of fitness, we all have to race smart, hydrate, cool off (take a dip in the river) and listen to our bodies.

Further feedback and suggestions to improvements are welcomed.

Next TMBT

The next TMBT is scheduled for 1st & 2nd September, 2018.

Registrations are expected to open early 2018

<http://www.borneoultra.com/tmbt1/>

The course will once again be set around the perimeter of Mt. Kinabalu and take in the "classical" TMBT landmarks.

TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon from a runners perspective

Chirs Yee Ting Kwan, winner of the Women's 50 km, has kindly provided a writeup of her experience of the TMBT. Below is Chirs' story and pictures.

Perhaps running TMBT is not on the to-do list of Hong Kong trail runners, but probably climbing Mount Kinabalu is on the wish list of most hikers. Wouldn't it be a great idea for climbing Mt. Kinabalu, running a race and earning ITRA points in a single trip? This is why I had chosen to take part in TMBT. TMBT stands for "The Most Beautiful Thing" where the race course is set over the ridges and river valleys around the base of Mt. Kinabalu.

I climbed the mountain few days before the race. Setting foot on one of Southeast Asia's highest peaks took a toll on my body, nonetheless, a post-climbing 50 km race is doable. In fact, I am glad to run TMBT afterward for giving a second chance to see the mountain. During the 3-day-2-night tour, the peaks of the mountain either hid in rain or in fog, I did not have a chance to get a glimpse of them.

In a race, some people run for prizes, some for personal best time, some for purely enjoyment. My first overseas trail race would be for enjoyment. Naturally, I compared TMBT with the race experience in Hong Kong.

The Course

"Brutal" is the most frequent description of TMBT. Brutal, for its rough course which has steep, muddy and slippery climb and descent, and for the unpredictable weather which can vary from a sunny and very hot day to heavy cold rain. Shortly before the race, the organizer generous increased the time limit for 1 hour making it up to 16 hours for 50 km. In spite of the generosity, only 266 out of 407 starters (about 65%) completed the 50 km course.



Early morning view of Mt. Kinabalu compensated for the sealed road on the first section. Here joined by the next generation of village runners.

Personally, it is not as brutal as expected. Compared to the infamous cement-paved trails in Hong Kong, I prefer to run on the primitive conditions of the TMBT course. I like no step is built on hillsides, a short person like me has found climbing and descending by following the terrain actually is easier. I hate the impact force on foot for running on sealed roads which is hard to avoid in Hong Kong races; in TMBT 50 km, the first 6 km and the last few hundreds meter are on sealed roads, then the majority of the course is on gravel roads and dirt trails. I wished I could skip this first 6 km, of course, I could not. My compensation is the scenic view of Mt. Kinabalu.

The last 11km, the "dreaded" section is challenging. The final two very steep hills with an elevation of 900 m was very taxing to the exhausted body. In addition, the weather rapidly changed from sunny to raining heavily. The rain made the famed "Bukit Dallas" even harder to climb. The trail of the final ascent has become muddy and extremely slippery, even with the aid of ropes, feet slid back, legs were on the verge of cramping.



Water at aid stations was provided in big blue tanks. When refilling we cheered each other on by saying "add oil" in Cantonese.

The Landscape

The uniqueness of TMBT is having Mt. Kinabalu as a backdrop, making most part of the course like a landscape. The most impressive image is the green paddy field in contrast to blue sky, the colors are vividly imprinted in my memory.

River crossing was the part I enjoyed the most. The current was swift, water level was almost up to my waist, I held tight to the supporting rope trying hard to keep balance while crossing. It sounds risky but it was not. We were safeguarded by marshal.

The water came at the right time to cool us off, I hoped so much to have more rivers to cross. Disappointingly, for the rest of the course, all the other crystal clear rivers were crossed on bridges.

Bridges in Hong Kong are made of concrete. In TMBT, it is interesting to see and walk on various types of bridge, hanging, bamboo or log bridge. These bridges are not that sophisticated, runners were told not to run on them. In fact, the bridges were guarded by marshals to limit the number of runners on the bridge at any one time.

The Supplies

For 50 km or shorter courses, runners have to be self-support for food. My friends and I were reminded by the last year 50 km male winner, JahiRin Ginsos, who happened to be our guide in climbing Mt. Kinabalu, only fruit would be served at water station. Even we stocked our race packs with power gels, it was not enough. The cup noodle at Water Station 4 came on time, I swallowed it in a few bites.

The large water tank erected at water station is kind of interesting to us, we refilled drinking water directly from the nozzles of the tank. One of my friends said it was resembling to gas refill. In Cantonese, we cheer the other on by saying "add oil", so every time we refilled "gas", we cheered on ourselves.

The People

During the race, the friendliness of the locals was particularly impressive. We went through various villages, passing through the villagers' houses and their crops. This unavoidably disturbed them and caused damages to their crops. In Hong Kong, this would be very objectionable; few races have been cancelled lately because of the objections from villagers. However, in TMBT the villagers are very welcoming. They smiled to us and cheered on us as we passed through. Children lined up for "high five" with runners; both of us were excited for the encounters.



Taking a break and interacting with the locals at one of the small stalls erected along the route.

The Organizer

This is the 7th year of TMBT, the race is not perfectly. For example, the on-site instructions for race pack collection were unclear. However, I appreciate the effort of the organizer, Borneo Ultra Trails. They listen to the runners and respond to the issues raised. The change from buses to minivans to reduce the waiting time at the finish for the return journey to Kota Kinabalu was a good one.

The overall experience of TMBT was good. In my view, "The Most Beautiful Thing" should not only refer to the iconic Mt. Kinabalu but also the primitive beauty along the course, and the people we met. I will suggest this racing and climbing combo to my fellow trail runners.

A Spirited Performance in support of #thisability

When Mohd Zhariff Afandi a few weeks before the TMBT contacted Borneo Ultra Trails with a request to allow him and a support runner late entries to the 30 km category to run in support of #thisability, we did not have to consider for long before agreeing. #thisability is a programme supported by Unicef to encourage participation and rid society of prejudice and discrimination around disabilities. You could hardly ask for a better Ambassador for the cause than Zhariff. Most of us would find it difficult to imagine how to cope in daily life if we had no arms, but this is not holding back Zhariff in any way – he takes on challenges beyond what most people without any disability would ever dream of!

Yes we had a quick chat about safety concerns before agreeing – anyone who has taken part in the TMBT, and in particular faced the last hill before the finish, "Bukit Dallas", will understand why. It is not for nothing that "The Most Beautiful Thing" (TMBT) amongst runners has been nicknamed "The Most Beautiful Brutal Thing". There are very steep (and seemingly never ending) uphill and downhill sections which often get treacherously slippery if wet – and tropical showers are a normal ingredient of any TMBT. It is more the norm than the exception that the participants at the back of the pack in particular – who face a trail that in places has been turned into a mudslide by hundreds of pounding feet ahead, spend considerable time on their rear end sliding down, or on hands and feet trying to claw their way up – all part of the fun 😊!

Walking poles for balance and the ropes we had placed for safety and assistance on the worst sections would not be of much assistance to Zhariff. But knowing Zhariff from his participation in the Sabah Adventure Challenge (SAC) a few years back, we quickly agreed that we should probably worry less about him than a significant number of "City-folks" who do not have easy access to trails and mainly train in the gym and therefore are not accustomed to challenging trail conditions. With Zhariff further being accompanied by Petr Judl – an avid and experienced trail runner who also partnered with Zhariff for the SAC, we had no hesitation to welcome them in the race.



Zhariff and Juan during the TMBT

Come race day Petr was unfortunately unable to join due to illness in the family. Zhariff was certainly not going to let that stop him, but I would personally feel better knowing that he had company on the course, so I called on my brother-in-law Juan Savioli, who was also signed up for the

30 km. Always helpful, Juan was more than willing and he and Zhariff met up at the start of the race and set out with 500 other competitors in the 30 km category with the ultimate goal to conquer the infamous Bukit Dallas to make it to the finish.

Unfortunately Zhariff's chosen shoes for the event were not as strong as he was of mind. Not far into the race, the soles started to come loose, and on the way down the steep technical hill between Water Stations 1 and 2, the glue had come completely undone and the soles were lost, leaving Zhariff with a slippery pair of "footliners".



Zhariff with his kind donor and "new" shoes showing off the old pair without soles

At the bottom of the hill the course passes through the village of Bundu Paka. The local shop did not sell shoes, and certainly not trail shoes – flip-flops were more the norm. But the dilemma got a lot of attention, and eventually a villager with a pair of running shoes that Zhariff could fit was identified. He generously let Zhariff have his shoes for a symbolic amount that Juan and Zhariff had brought along to buy snacks along the way – they had not exactly planned for shoe shopping!



Zhariff at the finish line of the 12 km course.

With "new" shoes they could continue on their way. A lot of time had obviously been spent with the small shoe issue, and by the time they reached Water Station 2 they were running late and hitting the cut-off time. They realised that it would be a struggle to catch up on time, and agreed to downgrade to 12 km and save Bukit Dallas for next year.

Borneo Ultra Trails are grateful to Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Datuk PangYuk Ming to kindly take part in a small dinner and present a pair of shoes from our sponsor, Altra, to Zhariff. With that we are confident that we will see Zhariff back in future races to complete the course and conquer Bukit Dallas 😊.



Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Datuk Pang Yuk Ming, presenting a pair of Altra shoes to Zhariff.

News from the Shop

We have leftover finisher shirts from TMBT 2016 and BUTM 2017 for sale – exclusively for people who finished the said races.

The shirt will be on sale for RM 40 per shirt.

You can pick it up in our office or we can ship it within Sabah for RM 15 and within the rest of Malaysia for RM 20. For Shipment outside of Malaysia, please let us know destination and we can make enquiries pertaining to the cost of shipping.

If you are a finisher of one of these races and would like a replacement shirt, please email to info@borneoultra.com with your Name, Race, Race category and shirt size, and we will let you know whether we have your size. This will be on a first come, first serve basis.