



WWW.BORNEOULTRA.COM – THE TRAIL EXPERTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Upcoming Events & News

Borneo Ultra Trails wishes all runners and friends a **HAPPY NEW YEAR**. Perhaps time to consider signing up for another race as part of that New Years resolution of a healthier lifestyle?



Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon (BUTM), 2019

The 5th edition of the BUTM will be on **9-10 March, 2019**. The race has grown rapidly since it's start and with the central start/finish area along the riverside in Kiulu, it provides an excellent opportunity to mingle with other runners from near and far. Although the elevation gain and altitude is a bit less than for the TMBT, the terrain and weather can make it an equal challenge. Latest updates are included on Page 2-4. Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/butm> for future updates. **Registrations close on January 15th.**



Super Kerbau Going Forward

The original Super Kerbau series ran in 2016 and 2017. On popular request, the Super Kerbau or a similar roaming, 1-day trail run format is being planned for 2019 with the intent to test new trails and provide a good training venue for both new and experienced runners. We have tentatively set June 16, 2019 for the next race, so stay tuned for updates. Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/super/> for future updates.



TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon, 2019

The 9th edition of Malaysia's original and premier Ultra-Trail® Marathon has been scheduled for 14th and 15th September, 2019, so reserve the dates. There will be some optimisation of courses and timing, but the "classical" trail sections will be maintained. Announcement about registrations expected in February. Refer to <http://www.borneoultra.com/tmbt1/> for future updates.



BUTM Update

Latest news on preparations for BUTM 2019

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TMBT 2018 Report

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Success through Tenacity

Selina Chew's story of completing the TMBT 30 km as a newcomer to trail running.

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Race Safety

An update of the last newsletters tips on safety and avoiding disqualification or time penalties.

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Refer to www.borneoultra.com for further information

Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon 2019 - Updates

Don't Let Anybody Tell You That
You Can't Just Because They Can't.

BORNEO ULTRA TRAIL® MARATHON

9 & 10 March 2019

100km 50km 30km 9km

www.borneoultra.com/butm/

REGISTER NOW!

Organiser: Borneo Ultra Trails

The Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon is open for registration until 15th January, 2019.

Close of Registration

Normal registrations will close on 15th January. If you intend to take part, please sign up before this date as we need to order shirts and medals, etc. Please note that you are only registered once payment has been confirmed received, so do not wait till last minute and risk losing out.

Race Routes

The race courses are largely finalised. We have slightly amended the "100 km" course to reduce the main road section at the start of the race and to ensure that it remains a 5 points qualifying race under the amended rating system of the International Trail Running Association (ITRA). The new course is extended by about 4 km to 106 km. We have at the same time amended the cut-off times by 1 hour to account for the additional distance and elevation gain.

The 30 km and 50 km race courses are expected to be largely similar to the race courses of 2018, while the shortest course has been changed from a 12 km course to a new 9 km course – see below. The 100k and 50k races will start Saturday 9th March at 6 am, with the 30 km course starting an hour later to reduce the risk of trail congestion.

The 9 km course starts on **Sunday 15th March**. A special discounted rate is offered to participants in the 30k and 50k races who would like to do a weekend double and also join the 9 km race – please refer to the web site for more information on the add-on discounted rate.

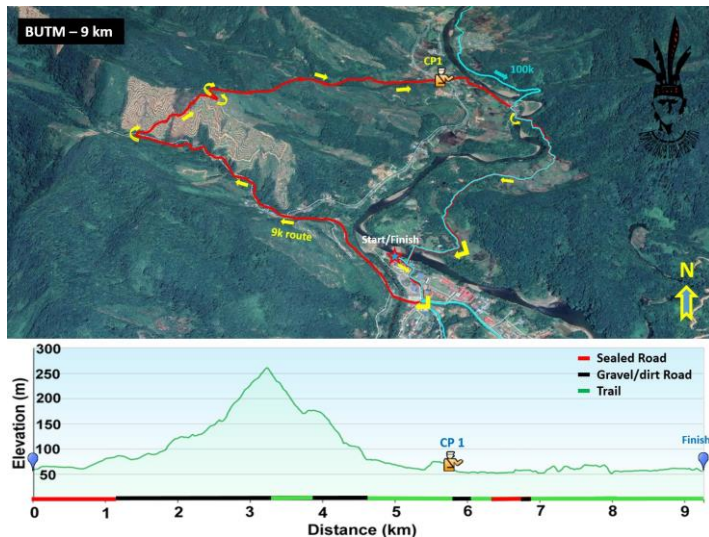


Map over slightly amended 100 km course, extended from previously about 102 km to now 105 km, with about 200m additional elevation gain.

Sunday 9 km Family Run

The previous 12 km route has been changed completely to a new 9 km route. This has been done for two main reasons: 1) To encourage participation of more families with kids. 2) A greater proportion of the

new 9 km route is different from the 30 km and 50 km courses, giving any 30 and 50 km competitors who sign up for the 9 km add-on a different trail experience.



New BUTM 9 km course map and profile

The new 9 km route is somewhat easier than the 12 km route and considered better suited for families with young participants. We encourage parents to introduce their kids to a healthy, outdoor lifestyle away from electronic gadgets.

Age Requirements

The age restrictions are set as a balance between safety & liability considerations and the desire to allow capable younger participants to take part. The races are semi-autonomous, and all participants are ultimately responsible for their own safety. We therefore require parental consent for any participants below 18 years on race day. Based on popular request, we are allowing younger participants to take part in the 30 km course if they are accompanied by an adult. We recommend that this is only considered for experienced runners who have previously taken part in trail runs longer than 10 km, and they must strictly stay with the accompanying adult throughout the race.

The following age restrictions apply for BUTM 2019. All ages are referred to the age on race day.

Race Category	Minimum Age (on race day)	Accompanying Adult	Parental Consent
9 km		if < 14 years	if < 18 year
30 km	12 years	if < 15 years	if < 18 year
50 km	16 years		if < 18 year
100 km	18 years		

Qualifications and Championships

We have slightly increased the distance of the "100 km" course to still be a 5 points qualifier under the ITRA system – see ITRA certification below.

Course certified by ITRA		ITRA POINT				
2019						
Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon	09 March 2019	Site	ITRA No.	Endurance	Mountain	Finisher
100 Km	106.10km / 5030m+		1328-41405	ITR\5	Q\5	220
50 Km	51.80km / 2280m+		1328-41407	ITR\3	Q\5	220
30 Km	31.60km / 1510m+		1328-41409	ITR\2	Q\5	180

ITRA ratings for revised courses

The races have been submitted to UTMB as qualifying races and are under processing. The races further function as qualifiers for races such

as the Lavaredo Ultra Trail: <https://www.ultratrail.it/en> and Trail Verbier Saint Bernard: <http://www.trailvsb.com/en/> and Ultra-Trail® Mount Fuji.

BUTM is part of the Malaysia Ultra League Championship (MULC), and the 100 km and 50 km courses will count towards the championship for 2019.

Race Pack (RP) Collection

On previous events, we have had race pack collection open for about a week prior to the race with the intent that all local runners should register early and thus reduce the congestion on the last day of RP collection. This has not had full effect as many of the local runners still turn up on the Friday.

For BUTM 2019 we have therefore decided to work with Avangio hotel to have two days (Thursday 7th and Friday 8th of March) in the hotel's conference rooms to provide a more spacious setting. We strongly urge all competitors to read the instructions and bring along the required paper work, fully filled out and signed, to speed up the registration process.

Shirt & Medal Design

Whereas we consider that participating in and completing the race should be the main target and reward in its own right, we acknowledge that in Asia there is quite an interest in the medal and shirt designs as a matter of "trophy" collection. Below are the current designs for shirts and medal. These may still be subject to adjustments.

For the shirts, we are working with Ultron® as our apparels partner for the BUTM. The material will be Micro-dry® Melange. Please note the colours of the actual shirts may look somewhat different from the images.



BUTM 2019 Event Tee design



BUTM 2019 Finisher Tee design

In collaboration with our graphics design consultant, we have developed a new medal concept where the centrepiece of the medal can be detached from the medal and used as a key holder.



BUTM 2019 medal design

TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon 1-2 Sep, 2018

The 8th edition of the TMBT Ultra-Trail® Marathon presented with Salomon as name sponsor and under the banner of the Ultra-Trail® World Tour (UTWT) Discovery Races saw a record number of more than 2100 competitors representing 40 nations.

Borneo Ultra Trails would like to thank Salomon and other sponsors, partners, participants, officials, volunteers and not least our local hosts and communities along the race course for their assistance in creating a successful event. Without their positive contributions and support, the event would not be possible.

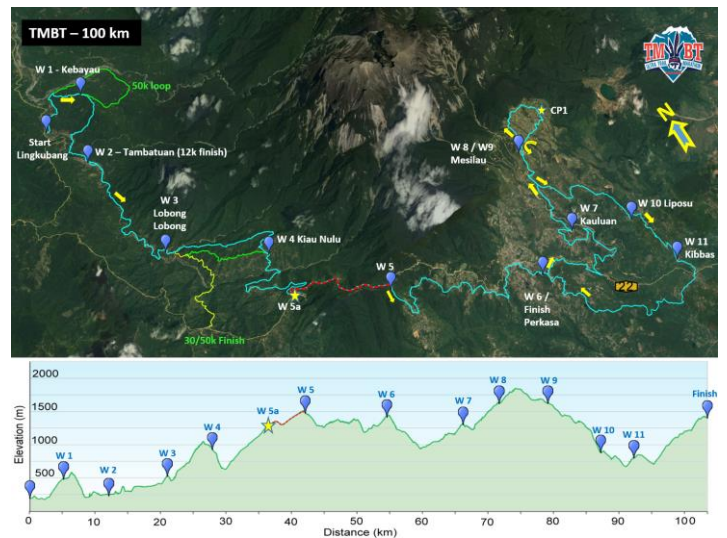


The start has gone at first dawn with competitors in the 50 and 100 km charging out with Mount Kinabalu, the race name sake, looming in the background.

Race Report

After the logistical challenge in the dark of getting more than 2000 competitors transported into the normally quaint village of Lingkubang, nestled along the Kadamaian river under the western flanks of Mount Kinabalu and accessible only via a hanging bridge and a narrow gravel road, the first wave of runners set off on the 100 km and 50 km routes at first dawn.

The 2018 edition of TMBT largely followed the course from 2017.



Outline of 100km course, with elevation profile for 100 km below.

This included (in-)famous TMBT landmarks such as the Kilambun River-crossing, the Pineapple Ridge with spectacular views to the southwest face of Mount Kinabalu, the never ending Bukit Dallas to the 30/50 km finish line and the Vegetable Patch loop between W8 and W9, up in the Borneo Highlands at Mesilau.

Some 100 km runners who passed the area between W9 and W10 during the night will also remember the “spooky forest” (according to some runners) descent on a small trail through dense forest down to W10 at Liposu Baru. We see far fewer “solo” runners during the night. When tired brains may trigger the imagination to “run wild” and play tricks on competitors, they tend to “bundle up” 😊.



Local top athletes Daved Simpat (winner 100 km) and Milton Amat (4th 100 km) took the time to swiftly remove their shoes for the Kilambun river crossing.

Located about 9 km into the run (17 km for the 50 km), and just after a small but very steep hill, the Kilambun river crossing provides a nice reprieve from the heat. The water level at the river crossing was, to many

competitor's relief, low compared to some previous events where safety ropes were required to cross the fast flowing stream.

Many competitors, including some of the top runners, took the time to take their shoes off for the crossing to keep their feet dry for a bit longer. Others happily soaked most of their bodies in the clear, cool water that flows directly down from the steep western flanks of Mount Kinabalu. At some stage, the river banks were lined with competitors taking a first small break to cool off and recover or drying off their feet. A smart choice by those who are aiming to complete rather than win.



While some competitors were concerned of wet feet, others took advantage of the crystal clear, cool water to lower their body temperature.

Foot care is important on a long race like a 100 km, and for some it can almost become an obsession (perhaps those who have suffered the full brunt of serious blisters before). On the TMBT it is not an easy task to look after your feet with wet and muddy trails, and even if you take your shoes off on river crossings and avoid stepping in mud and water, you are likely to get soggy feet from sweating.



Baharudin Haji Nordin of Brunei taking a moment after the Kilambun river crossing to try to save his beautiful feet wrapping for the remaining 91 km of the race. He finished in style 😊.

After the Kilambun crossing, runners soon reached the main Kadamaian River where the trails alongside the river pass through paddy fields with splendid green in all possible hues – very pretty and soothing for the mind, but most runners may not have taken the time to notice and stayed focussed on the small trails ahead of them. The 12 km runners completed their race along the riverside at W2 at the idyllic Kg. Tambatuan.



The trails close to W2 at Tambatuan run alongside the Kadamaian River with a kaleidoscope of greens in the fresh paddy fields and the jungle clad hills of Anak Nabal and Mount Kinabalu as the backdrop.

After crossing the Kiulan River below W3, the 50k and 100k competitors went through a short stretch of mixed trails before starting the long ascent of the Pineapple Ridge.



Faherina Mohd Esa of team Suunto Malaysia showing the way with a winning smile through tricky terrain at the lead up to the Pineapple Ridge climb.

"Pineapple Ridge" between W3 and W4 is one of the classical trail sections that most TMBT 50k and 100k runners will remember. It has been part of the TMBT for the past 6 years, and was recently elected by runners in the Asia Trail Masters (ATM) series as the favourite trail section in an ATM points race jointly with a section in Japan.



Veteran runner Lu Ah Tsing Louise with energy to spare for a smile on pineapple ridge. Louise has shown what can be accomplished through dedication and good race management, completing the 100 km at the age of 60 with time to spare!

The Salomon TMBT 2018 was blessed with just about ideal weather. A layer of high clouds kept temperatures down during much of the day, and only a couple of showers along the course left the trails in mostly good condition.



The weather was kind to the Salomon TMBT 2018. Mount Kinabalu was visible much of the day – here seen in the background of the 30/50 km finish line while waiting for the first runners. The 30k and 50k competitors come up the steep staircase from Bukit Dallas down below.

Some runners may have wished for a shower to cool off as they fought their way up the relentless Bukit Dallas to the finish of the 30k and 50k courses.



A focused Maud Debs of French outfit: Trail The World on the way up the first of the two hills to reach the finish. Maud produced a video of her experience in French: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SociCRR-ZKE>

The night was clear but cold, urging competitors to carry on to stay warm, in particular at the higher elevation stations up at Mesilau (w8 / W9). Hot drinks and soups were in high demand in the cold conditions.

An additional 7.5 km course was included for Sunday morning to coincide with the finishing of a large proportion of the 100 km runners. This short course was introduced with the intent to give beginners, and in particular families with kids, the opportunity to experience the buzz of trail running.



8 year old Rinko Watanabe of Japan is leaving her shadow runner, Yuichiro Watanabe (right back) behind on the long uphill towards the finish line – way to go Rinko! We may need to introduce smaller size T-shirts in the future ☺.

It was a joy to see the next generation of trail runners taking on the challenge, and more than one accompanying parent / adult was struggling to keep up ☺. Both parents and kids seemed to fully enjoy the experience and challenge, and we hope to see an increase in the number of parents bringing their kids out to take part in the shorter events in the future.



A focused 6 year old Lukas Andonegui of Spain in full flight down the 9 km course with Mount Kinabalu shrouded in clouds in the background.

The Competition

Aided by the good race conditions, a fierce battle for positions was played out at the front of the race. After the initial positioning on the first hill, a trio in the men's 100 km consisting of last years' joint winners, Italian Alessandro Rizzetto Chini of Vitamode and local Sabahan runner Milton Amat pulled away together with local runner Daved Simpat of The North Face Adventure Team.

As Daved and Milton both took time to remove their shoes at the Kilambun River crossing (see picture on page 4), Alessandro took a slight lead going towards W2.



Alessandro Rizzetto Chini of Italy took the lead at the Kilambun river crossing – here seen on the trail from Kilambun towards W₂ at Tambatuan.

At W₃, the trio was together again and pushing each other hard, leading to a pace that was close to 10% faster than the previous year. Kristian Joergensen of Denmark and local mountain runner Wilsen Singgin took a slightly more conservative race strategy and followed at their own pace about 8 minutes back at this stage.



Kristian Joergensen of Denmark raced his own pace and took time to also enjoy the views. This paid off with a second place finish.

Daved kept pushing hard up over Pineapple Ridge to W₄, and only Milton could still follow him. Alessandro had dropped back and eventually retired at W₄. Daved and Milton arrived together at the half-way station at W₆. Daved continued through the second half of the course at a blistering pace to take victory in a new course record of 12 hours 20 minutes, more than two hours faster than the previous record.

Milton slowed on the second half of the course and was overtaken by Kristian and Wilsen who took second and third places in times of 12:49 and 13:25, respectively. Defending champion Milton secured his 4th place position in 13:31 well ahead of an international field with 7 nationalities in the top 10.



Wilsen Singgin with a great performance to take the last podium place. Here running along the Kadamaian River towards Tambatuan.

In the women's 100 km, the Champion from the Borneo Ultra-Trail® Marathon (BUTM) in March 2018, Lucy Scott of the UK, took an early lead that she defended all the way to W₄ at Kiau Nulu before chasing Corinne Williams of the USA overtook her.



Lucy Scott held the early lead in the women's 100 km race until W₄ but was eventually overtaken by Corinne Williams.

Corinne maintained a high pace throughout the race to take victory in a time of 16 hours and 17 minutes, breaking the previous course record for women by 46 minutes. Lucy secured second place in 18:25 ahead of local runner Mailin Salungin of Team Kuda.



Corinne Williams, Champion of the women's 100 km, on the Pineapple Ridge.



The 100 km women's podium with winner Corinne Williams (third from left) flanked by 2nd place Lucy Scott on her right and 3rd place Mailin Salungin on her left.

In the men's 50 km category, a tight battle was played out at the front with a trio consisting of Julian Baker of Canada, Daniel Perez Fernandez of Spain and local runner Safrey Sumping of The North Face Adventure Team eventually battling it out for the podium positions.



50k winner Daniel Perez Fernandez arriving at the finish line. Filmed by Lloyd Belcher and photographed by Kris Van De Velde of Asia Trail Masters

Julian was at the front throughout the race and arrived first to the finish in a time of 5:46, which would have been a new course record if he had not received a 1 hour time penalty for missing compulsory equipment. Daniel became the champion in a time of 5:55 ahead of Safrey in 6:07. Julian maintained the last spot on the podium despite the time penalty.



The 50 km podium from left to right: Julian Baker, Safrey Sumping, Daniel Perez Fernandez, Jassica Binti Lintanga Pado, Airince Liam and Nanei Hanan.

In the women's 50 km category, Purificacion Garcia of Spain was an early leader but local top runner Jassica Binti Lintanga Pado established a lead at W2, which she gradually increased up to W4 after the pineapple ridge. She relaxed a little on the last Bukit Dallas leg, but took the win in a time of 8:45 with a gap of 5 minutes to second place finisher Airince Liam of Brunei. Airince battled it out for second place with Nanei Hanan of Malaysia who came third in a time of 8:57.



A focused Jassica Lintanga on the way up Pineapple Ridge where she established the lead that led to her victory in the 50 km race.

The local mountain runners of Team Kuda dominated the men's 30 km race. Walter Herman took charge with a 2 minute lead to fellow Team Kuda runner Denis David on the hill up to W1. He maintained this lead until W3, but Denis overtook him on Bukit Dallas to take the win in a time of 4:35 ahead of Herman in second in a time of 4:37. Romi Romantis Robi of Malaysia established himself in 3rd position from the start till finish and took the last podium place in a time of 4:50 with Hazwan Jaya of Brunei finishing strong on Bukit Dallas to move up to 4th place.



The 30 km podium finishers: Romi Romantis Robi, Walter Herman, Denis David, Eunice Ong, Mei Choong and Lisa Bourgogne.

In the women's 30 km category it was also Malaysian dominance with 4 out of the top five being Malaysians. Only Lisa Bourgogne of New Zealand managed to break the Malaysian dominance to claim 3rd place.

The lead changed several times in the beginning of the race, with 4 runners still being within 5 minutes of each other at W3 before the last dreaded triple hill section. Eunice Ong eventually claimed first position in a time of 5:58 ahead of Mei Choong in 6:10 and Lisa Bourgogne just seconds later.

The 12 km course is traditionally dominated by strong local runners, but this had changed this year with 4 different nationalities represented in the top 5 in both the men's and women's categories. Perhaps because many of the local strong men and ladies had moved up into the 30 km category?

In the men's 12 km race, Joeythine Musin of Team Kuda took the early lead and won in a time of 1 hour 22 minutes. Aatish Patel of the UK and Etienne Berot of France battled it out for second place with Aatish coming out on top in a time of 1:32, just 20 seconds ahead of Etienne. In the female 12 km category, Trina Cobbledick of Canada established a lead on the hill up to W1, and increased this further to take the win in a time of 1:43, ahead of Isabelle Kervella of France in second and Chan Jat Li of Malaysia in third.

The 7.5 km Sunday run was focused on families and new runners, but some of the more experienced runners also took part as a second race over the weekend. Bruneians dominated the men's open podium with Haji Fariul Azmi Haji Suhaimi taking the win ahead of Mohamad Radhi Noror Gumiet, who had also done the 30 km the day before. Eric Lo of Malaysia came third. In the women open category, Rosehardiati Mohd Tajuddin exchanged her 4th place in the 30 km the day before with a win in the 7k. She was followed by Hana Harun, who took time off from volunteering the day before, and Eleyina Sabtu of Brunei in third.

Special prizes were awarded to the kids taking part. We thank Dulwich Runners and all parents who brought their kids out for the support. We hope to see more kids in the future.



Some of the next generation of trail runners on the podium. All did brilliantly and Hana Maeda of Japan (4th from left) came 4th overall in the female category!

Full results can be found at:

<https://www.racematix.com/site/#results:grp/TMBT-2018>

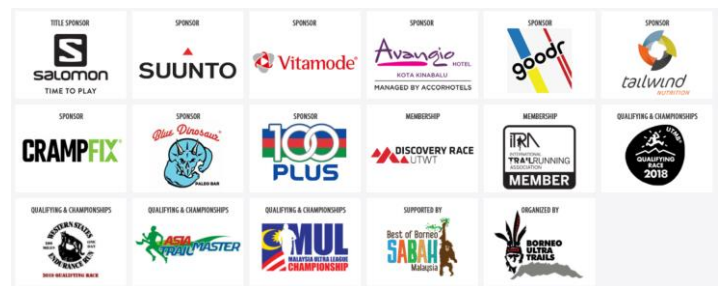
A race video is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq2-A1k60o&t=9s>

Photos from the race can be found at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/148519785@N03/albums/72157701917875984>

We would like again to take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors, volunteers and supporters without whom the race would not be possible.



In addition to Salomon as the title sponsor, the key sponsors for the TMBT 2018 were Suunto with watches, Vitamode for health supplements, Avangio Hotel provided the venue for Race Pack collection, 100 Plus provided isotonic sports drinks on the course, SingPhil provided Goodr sunglasses and Sportlicious Malaysia provided nutrition through Tailwind and Blue Dinosaur



Thanks to our dedicated volunteer photographers for capturing the TMBT in pictures that we can all enjoy. Chief photographer Dr J.S. Sidhu sharing advice with Nasir Lee.

NEXT TMBT

TMBT 2019 has been set for 14-15th September, 2019. An announcement regarding opening of registrations is expected to be made in February.

We expect some changes and optimisation to the courses to account for the larger number of participants, but the "classical" trail sections that TMBT is known for such as Pineapple Ridge will be maintained.

Observations from the Organizers

We will always strive to keep improving. Responses to a couple of concerns have been included below.

Trails Congestion

The increased number of participants aggravated an issue with the top 50k runners getting caught behind slower 100 km runners on the first part of the course. We will adjust the routes and/or timing to avoid or minimize this problem for 2019.

Finisher Shirts and Medals

We have had grievances about finisher medals and finisher shirts not being given to participants who did not make the final cut-off time, and therefore did not officially finish the course in time and were not entitled to the medal and shirt. We recognise that the 30 km course is tough (with an ITRA mountain rating of 7), and it was a rather large number of participants who did not make the final cut-off time this year. We will take this into consideration for future planning.

Success Through Tenacity

Perspective from a TMBT 30k finisher

Title and foreword by Borneo Ultra Trails

There is an old proverb in my native language that translates into something along the line of: "Own happiness is to be preferred, but the misfortune of others should not be scorned". This may be perceived as rather negative, but we are probably all guilty at it to some extent – "well I didn't complete the race – but at least I made it further than my friend". Perhaps not a good example as there is nothing wrong with a little "friendly competition"??, but I think the majority of you get what I mean.

I would like to think that most of us also have an affinity to the opposite; that we can take joy in and be inspired by other people succeeding against the odds. As race organisers, this has always been an important motivation factor that has kept us going. Would-be runners complaining about the colours or designs of the shirts, or the size of the medal, (hope you will like the BUTM designs presented in this newsletter though ☺), or other in our opinion secondary aspects of a good trail run can be a little tiring and at times make you wonder "why bother". In such situations it is great to get those small feel-good stories where the race in one way or other contributed to the success of someone.

We have over the years seen many examples of runners who have succeeded and transformed their lives through trail running. Individuals who were perhaps struggling with physical health and lifestyle, or just with taking charge of one's own life and destiny. Pushing beyond own perceived limits, both physically and mentally, can make people realise that as long as they put their mind to it, they can achieve far greater feats than they ever thought possible. Whereas I have no illusions that we as organisers can take credit for the life changing experiences that some people may have around the races, I still take joy and pride in being part of "a family" of organisers and volunteers who provide events that allow people to challenge their own limits within managed risks.

When Selina Chew recently wrote to us about a training manual that she had produced after completing the TMBT 30 km, we offered her (with extremely short notice) to provide a short story about her experience for this newsletter. She accepted – and here is her story, which is one of standing up against adversity, taking charge and dogged tenacity and perseverance that started long before the race itself. We hope that this can inspire other runners as well as non-runners to take charge of their lives with a positive outlook and make a difference.

Story by Selina Chew

I am a fervent rock-climber who has never run any distance more than 10 km. Two years ago, I had a very bad slipped disc in my lower back that left me with a permanent weakness in my left leg, which hindered my engagement in the activities I derived so much joy in doing. After a thorough check, my doctors told me to stop all the activities I love and just stick to swimming. How boring! The rehabilitative period was the most painful, both physically and psychologically. I had to retrain my injured leg muscles to become functional once again. I couldn't walk more than 10 meters because my left leg gave up on me.

The slightest pain will stop me in my tracks. I think I was more afraid of the possibility of an agonizing pain coming back than the real pain itself. There are so many stories of people giving up doing the things they love because of the little bumps on the road, but I was determined to rewrite the story. They all gave up because of the need to struggle to effect a change.

I stumbled upon this Ultra-Trail® event, "The Most Beautiful Thing" also known as "The Most Brutal Trail." Who wouldn't want to see the most beautiful thing? I wanted to see what "The Most Beautiful Thing" is. And to see its beauty, I must persevere and finish the race. When I signed up for the 30k ultra, I received endless "You're crazy," "Are you nuts?" and "Why would you do this?" I thought to myself, why not? I love being outdoors, and I wanted to see the remote places of Sabah that I would not otherwise see.

Getting reliable information and coming up with a training plan was not an easy task. I asked a couple of my runner friends who have already done this, but none of them could really break the trail down or give any actionable insights. Google wasn't exactly helpful either, especially when you don't know what to look for. To enjoy the most beautiful thing, you'll need a certain level of fitness if not, you'd have to endure it.

I find runners intimidating. I tried signing up to join running groups, but it wasn't easy to get in. One required me to have already ran trail before, and the other just didn't get back to me (you have to pass their selection before you get invited to join them on their runs). After knocking on many doors, I found a friend who was willing to help me whenever she could and also give me some pointers on running trail. Had it not been for her I would not have learned how to strategize to complete this race. Because I could not invest too much time into running I had devise a training plan to supplement and mimic the movements for trail running.

As race day approached I was more and more nervous, unsure if I will make it through. So many "what ifs" going through my mind. What if my training is not enough? What if I get lost? What if I don't finish? Will that make me a failure?

RACE DAY

The day before the race, I had packed everything and went to bed at 9pm so that I would be ready the next morning. But in all that excitement, I just could not fall asleep. I check my watch, it's 12am, 1am, 2am. It was 3am, time to get up and get ready. I did not catch any sleep!



Pre-race fresh face.

As the gun went off at the starting line everyone started running. As we exited the school what lay in front was 6km of steep uphill asphalt road which gets steeper as we approach W1. I did not enjoy this section at all.

Throughout the entire section my brain was just screaming, "This is BRUTAL!" "I did not prepare for this!" "I will never get through this!" But I did. And personally I think this is the most agonizing part of the trail.

After W₁, that's when the trail starts to get really fun and enjoyable. There were gradual ups and downs that brought us through remote villages, paddy fields and river crossings with Mount K in the backdrop. The villagers were all so friendly and pleasant. Some of the other participants were very encouraging and motivating. Although I am a penny-pinching Chinese, I love the idea that the organizers only provided water and some fruits along the trail. In doing this, they have created a sustainable ecosystem for the villagers to thrive from by selling food and drinks along the way.

At about the 15km mark, I started to feel a slight cramp in my legs, and I thought to myself that it just can't be right because I wasn't even running out of breath. How could my body be shutting down so soon while I was feeling so energetic internally? In truth, I was shutting down. Shortly after that, I had massive cramps in both thighs that I had to rest longer at the water station. I knew I had to pace myself better and also to slow down.

The final 2 hills were like the rabbit hole in Alice In Wonderland except it was going upwards. I make my way slowly up the hill. Just when I thought that I was at the top, I look up and I see yet another massive hill in front of me. This went on for an eternity.



My face when I realised there's still another hill up ahead.

The final 50 meters or so was a steep climb up, and full-blown cramps set in. I couldn't bend or straighten my knees without excruciating pain, and I resorted to crawling on my hands and knees to the finish line. It was grueling, but I FINISHED THE RACE despite all that pain. The view at the finish was spectacular with Mount Kinabalu towering in the back.

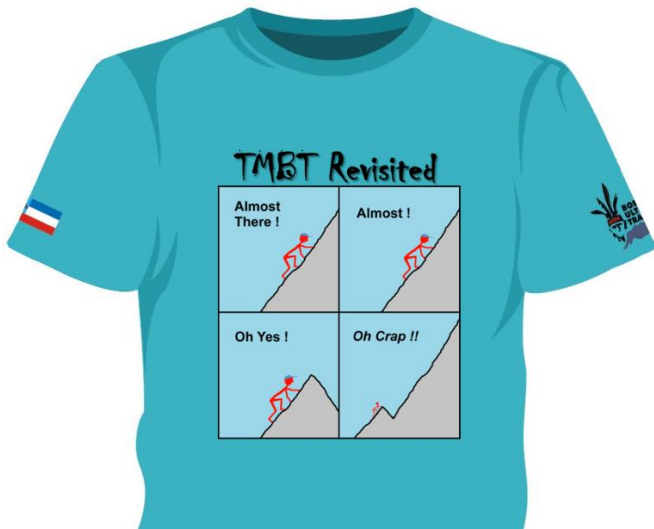


At the finish line

This is my first ever ultra-trail run. Finding reliable information on how to train and strategize for the run was not easy. If it wasn't for the advice from my friend, I don't think I would have completed the run. Because of the difficulties I had I have decided to compile everything that I have gathered into a book that any beginner can use.

Why should you get this guidebook although there are tons of free materials out there? Yes, we live in an age of information overload. There are so much information out there but what do you take and what do you leave? Where do you look for crucial information? You will only find what you need if you know what to look for and where to look for it. You will have to invest hours to find and test it out. Time is the most crucial commodity which most people often overlook. I have already done the research, tested it out, and have obtained the desired results. I have weeded out what is not needed and have cultivated what you need, and have compiled it into this awesome guidebook. Check out my book, **Runners Can Suck It! How a non-runner crushed a 30 km trail run (TMBT- The Most Beautiful Thing) without having to run a marathon** at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/916482>

[Borneo Ultra Trails insert: What Selina described about that never ending hill – every time she thought she had reached the top, there would be another climb ahead, is captured in our TMBT Revisited T-shirt design © - see front motif below. This is one of the designs for sale at our office].



TMBT Revisited – T-shirt design to commemorate those never ending climbs such as the Pineapple Ridge and Bukit Dallas on the TMBT race course.

Race Safety and Compulsory Equipment

This is a partial repeat and update of an article in the latest newsletter. This is relevant for two reasons: 1) Safety is a culture that we must continuously work on and inform about. 2) Although we have repeatedly stressed and informed about the compulsory equipment and the consequences of not carrying this in terms of disqualification or time penalties, we still see even top runners missing out on equipment.

With more than 1500 runners pushing their limits over about 130 km of trail on the TMBT and BUTM, it is impossible for the organisers to “guarantee” the safety of all participants, and some incidents will almost inevitably happen.

It is crucial that all competitors understand that they are ultimately responsible for their own safety. This is in line with the principle of a “semi-autonomous” race that the Borneo Ultra Trails races fall under. With the increasing number of relatively inexperienced runners taking part, we wish to remind runners of these principles. Runners should prepare themselves physically and mentally for the race. This includes ensuring to have a level of fitness required for the selected course, and understanding the basic requirements to take part in the race. Although the race course is marked, it is strongly recommended to familiarize yourself with the maps and course details both to assist in navigation and in planning how much water to bring between each aid station.

Dehydration & Risk of Heatstroke

One of the key risks of running in a tropical climate is dehydration and heatstroke. Under intense and prolonged physical exercise in tropical conditions, it can be difficult to stay hydrated, and dehydration can severely affect the body’s ability to regulate temperature, ultimately leading to a risk of heatstroke.

We have seen previous cases of heat-stroke of fit runner who suddenly collapsed, so no-one should think they are safe from it. We must always keep a close watch for the symptoms as well as take the necessary precautions to stay hydrated and avoid over heating. We strongly encourage that you familiarize yourself with the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, and during the race ensure that you carry

and drink sufficient water to stay hydrated, take the time to cool off at stream crossings in hot conditions, and avoid overexerting yourself. Also look out for symptoms in fellow runners and provide support as deemed necessary.

The upcoming BUTM is during the dry period. And although there is no guarantee it will not rain or even flood, there is a good chance that days could be hot and dry. Apart from some of the largest hills on the course, with the sections between W3 and W4 as well as between W8 and W9 being notorious for hot, dry climbs, there are quite a lot of river / stream crossings along the course. We DO NOT recommend to drink the water in the streams untreated, but we DO recommend to take advantage of the water to cool down if in risk of overheating. Even if the stream / river is crossed on a hanging bridge, there will normally be relatively easy access to the water to cool off.

Dehydration and overheating are probably the most common reason to DNF in the TMBT and the BUTM, and carrying a bit of extra drinking water and **taking a short while to cool off in a stream can not only save the race for you, but also make you go much faster overall.** The required ability to carry a MINIMUM of 1.5 liters is only considered sufficient for the top part of the field where the runners move quickly through the course. For the slower half of the field, this is unlikely to be sufficient to stay properly hydrated on some of the longer sections between Aid Stations.

Compulsory Equipment

The compulsory equipment is for the safety of runners. Most of the equipment may not be required during a normal race, but this is intended for the cases where things **do not** follow the normal patterns.

It is also essential that all competitors carry the minimum compulsory equipment to create an even and fair competition. Although vastly improved since we introduced equipment checks on the course and at the finish lines rather than at race pack collection, we continue to see some who sacrifice safety to save a bit of weight to gain a competitive advantage.

Compulsory items and penalties for missing items are listed below. Please note that these are individual items. The “torch” in a handphone CANNOT replace a back-up torch (it would be rather useless in the jungle and would quickly burn out the batteries of the emergency phone). Please refer to the web site for further details, and if in doubt about any rules, please check with the organisers rather than making assumptions.

Item	Category				Time Penalties			
	100 km	50 km	30 km	9 km	100k	50k	30k	9k
Race pack / bag to carry compulsory equipment	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	Disq	Disq	Disq	
Mobile phone – with number provided to organizers during registration. Preferably local number - must be able to make and receive calls	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
Emergency Blanket	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	
Emergency Whistle	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	1/2 hour	1/2 hour	1/2 hour	
Hydration bladder/bottles with min. 1.5 litre capacity (1litre for 9k)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Disq	Disq	Disq	1 hour
Wind/rain jacket	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	
Basic First Aid Kit ¹	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	
Primary Headlamp	✓	✓	✓		Disq	Disq	1 hour	
Spare batteries for headlamp (rechargeable, non-changeable exempted)	✓	(✓)			1 hour			
Backup headlamp/torch lamp	✓	✓	✓		1 hour	1 hour		
Red or white blinking light - attached to back of pack and on when dark	✓	✓	✓		1 hour	1 hour		
Personal cup for drinks: No cup = No hot drinks	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)				No hot drinks / soup

✓: Compulsory to be brought along at all times

(✓): Recommended for safety or comfort

¹**Basic Medical Kit:** For treating minor wounds and injuries and should contain some antiseptic, gauze, some self-adhesive dressings and small elastic bandage (preferably the cohesive type). A blister kit is also recommended.

We hope that we will never have to take the unpleasant steps of disqualifying or giving time penalties to runners because of missing equipment again.