

## **TRAIL FACTOR Run Report 12-14-2008**

### **[Ridge Trail 9 mile loop](#)**

Hello all you trail runners and Happy Holidays.

Trail Factor had another great Sunday run. It was a local run that was held in forest park and started at the bottom of Ridge Trail. We had a pretty solid crew considering that the weather conditions were questionable for safe driving. Portland was getting doused with its first winter blast of the season. The temps were hovering in the mid 20's and the snow was falling. We knew the trails would be snow covered and possibly slippery, but perfect for a TRAIL FACTOR run.

The die-hard crew that showed up for this run included, Richard, Shawn, Del, Jacob, William and Dan. Richard and William had been on previous Trail Factor runs, but Del, Jacob and Dan were new to the group.

Del is a very experienced trail runner, ultra cyclist and overall Ultra distance athlete. He has the kind of experience racing in ultra events that I can only dream of having. Jacob is relatively new to trail running, is a former soccer player and did a great job on the trails. Dan is a road marathoner who just finished racing down in Sacramento and posted a blazing 2:37 marathon time.

We all huddled around the cars and chatted about the trail while the snow pelted our faces. I personally love running in this kind of weather. It reminds me of running through sub zero weather in Wisconsin. It's something that grows on you after living in Wisconsin for over 10 years.

Our plan was to run a 9 mile loop up in forest park. We started at the bottom of Ridge Trail just off of the South Side St. Johns bridge ramp. You know you are at the trail head when you see the concrete stair case leading to the trail.

The trail starts off with a pretty good little climb that actually goes all the way to the top of the west hills. We were running together and chatting about the weather and getting to know each other. The trail was completely covered by a blanket of white, but it didn't hinder traction.

We climbed the trail until we hit Leif Erikson. We crossed Leif Erikson and climbed a bit more until we hit Wildwood trail. Once we hit Wildwood Trail, we turned left. We were headed toward Trillium Trail, which is a bit hard to see. It's an unmarked trail, but does have a dirt staircase, lined by wooden planks. Those wooden planks are the giveaway that you've hit the correct trail.

Trillium trail climbs a bit further up the West Hills and finally dumps you out onto Firelane #7. At this point the climbing is basically over.

Once we hit Firelane #7 we took a quick left. We were headed toward Springville Road.

One of the coolest things about Forest Park is all the steep firelanes that cross over the west hills. They offer up a tremendous amount of access points to the trails and also many great hills for those into running hill repeats.

We continued on and intersected Springville Rd. Took a right on Springville Rd and started descending to intersect Wildwood once again. The traction wasn't bad, but I we were all tip toeing a bit since I we were uncertain as to what lied beneath the snow. You never know what kind of mud pit might be lying beneath the beautiful snow.

Once we hit Wildwood half way down Springville Road, we promptly took a left. We would head down Wildwood trail for a bit until we hit Tohlinda Trail. Unfortunately Tohlinda trail is not marked by its correct name. It's actually called Waterline trail. I must have looked pretty funny running along. I kept pulling the map out to check our route, which isn't the most effective way to run. I've run wildwood plenty of times, but there are definitely some trails that I have not run and waterline was one of them. My inattentive running lead to a nice trail factor style fall that left me covered in mud. I recovered quickly and carried on.

Once we hit waterline trail, I bid a farewell to the rest of the guys. My stomach was not on the right track and I had a date with the bushes, but I encouraged the rest of the crew to continue on.

You take a gradual right onto waterline trail and descend down a slippery path toward Leif Erikson. You take a quick right on Leif Erikson, which at this point opens up and allows you to run a bit more quickly. I'm sure the guys were running 3 to 4 abreast.

By the time I had finished my date with the bushes, the guys were well ahead. I wasn't feeling well so I decided to cut the run short. I also headed down Leif, only to be greeted by several Nike runners. I was about 300 meters behind them and was measuring my stride length against their stride length. That's one of the cool things about running in snow. I was blown away by how much longer each one of their stride lengths were in comparison to mine. They had stride lengths that were at least 6 inches longer. No wonder they were so fast. I held pace for a bit, but a few minutes later they were gonzo, as if the wind had picked them up and carried them away.

I passed Hardesty trail, which is where the original route traveled. That's where the rest of the crew had gone. I saw their foot prints headed up that way. They took a right onto Hardesty

trail and climbed up it to intersect Wildwood once again. Once they hit Wildwood trail, they took a left and traveled on Wildwood trail for a bit and then reconnected with Ridge Trail. This would be the last turn of the day. They hung a left on Ridge Trail and descended the long and slippery hill back to the start of the run.

What an amazing morning it was for running. The snow really changes the trail. It's visually stunning and a must for me every year that it snows up in forest park.

Thanks to all who came out and braved the weather conditions. I'll be posting our next Sunday's planned run shortly, so stay tuned into [www.trailfactor.com](http://www.trailfactor.com).

Shawn Bostad