

TrailRunner

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45

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COVER: Elinor Fish pounds out some early spring miles on the surreal flanks of Mount Garfield, Colorado.

PHOTO BY BRIAN BAILEY

THIS PAGE: Backcountry bowhunter and trail fiend, Cameron Hanes training in the Wasatch Range, Utah (see page 14).
PHOTO BY SCOTT MARKEWITZ

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MAKING TRACKS

IN THE HUNT

Cameron Hanes goes trail running for his bowhunting. Or is it the other way around?

His wife noticed the red streak running up the back of his leg. An innocent blister acquired during the Siskiyou Out and Back 50K had progressed into a full-blown blood infection, the kind that can quickly kill you if you're not careful. The doctor prescribed heavy-duty antibiotics and warned him not to go into the mountains. He went anyway.

At 4 a.m. on September 22, 2006, alone in a soup of thick fog and blowing snow at 8000 feet, 12 miles from the nearest road in Oregon's immense Eagle Cap Wilderness, Cameron Hanes was soaked and near hypothermic. He had to do something, so he got out of his sopping sleeping bag and bivy sack and headed uphill to generate some heat.

"It's in Oregon's largest wilderness, 60 by 30 miles. With virtually no one back there, I felt completely insignificant," says Hanes. "I could live or die and not one thing would change. My life was equivalent to an ant's."

Hanes was not on some heinous 100-miler training mission. He was hunting bull elk with a bow. He survived the night by moving, and then spent four more cold, wet, lonely days on the quest, eventually coming out empty handed.

"Without the mental strength trail running gives me, I would have thrown in the towel on that hunt and numerous others," says Hanes, 39 of Marcola, Oregon, a renowned backcountry bowhunter. Hanes' outings are usually solo, and as far from any road as you can get in the lower 48. On up to 10-day adventures, he carries everything he needs on his back and sleeps wherever he ends up, hunting from daylight till dark on steep, rocky, trail-less terrain.

Last summer, Hanes ran four trail ultras (races that included such talent as Scott Jurek and Sean Meissner), finishing in the top 10 three times, and three road marathons, most notably the New York City Marathon. His best ultra finish was at the S.O.B. 50K in Ashland, Oregon, where he finished in 4:27, snagging sixth place.

Hanes is editor of *Eastman's Bowhunting Journal* and author of two



books including the popular *Backcountry Bowhunting, A Guide to the Wild Side* (2006), which is already in its second printing. He lives with his wife, Tracey, and three young children, and takes up to four trips deep into the backcountry, pursuing big game each year.

WHAT IS YOUR RUNNING HISTORY?

My dad was a track guy, earning a scholarship at the University of Oregon back in the late '60s, but I was never a runner in high school. I did the football, basketball and baseball thing, and running was something I did to get in shape for football.

After high school, I continued recreational running. In 2003, I ran my first marathon, the Gorge Marathon in Hood River, Oregon, and finished third. The past two summers I delved into ultrarunning, which has been perfect for me, a guy with decent endurance who loves challenge, pain and a sense of accomplishment.

HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN TRAIL RUNNING?

It was a natural transition to prepare myself for the rigors of bowhunting in the mountains. On many long solo hunts in very rugged, remote country, there are many times I want to quit, go home to be with my family, watch Sports Center. I needed to really push out of my comfort zone.

Now, I use my running as motivation during long hunts, and my long hunts give me strength to push through the pain during a long run. I might spend 10 days in the mountains by myself, humping up and down steep, rocky, unforgiving country, in baking heat, pouring rain or snow while trying to arrow a bull elk. Facing these kinds of challenges can make a four-hour run seem like a walk in the park.

YOUR GOAL FOR THE NEW YORK CITY MARATHON WAS TO BEAT LANCE ARMSTRONG.

Yes, that was my only goal. I haven't run many road marathons and had just run Baltimore [Marathon] three weeks earlier, so I didn't know how fresh I would be. So, PRs aside, I was going after Lance, period, and truthfully it was kind of a letdown. I reeled him in and passed him at the one-mile mark. I thought about hanging out and getting a little TV love from NBC and the Lance Cam, but had to run my race.

Before the race, even my kids thought I was stupid for saying I wanted to beat Lance. But I ended up ahead of him by over nine minutes [setting a PR of 2:50:21].

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN WRITING?

From my high-school days, I have had a fascination with painting a picture with words. I have an incredible passion for hunting animals in wild places, and the reality and rawness of it seems to make for interesting reading. Bowhunting is a journey that has taken place in the mountains for generations before me.

WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO IN TRAIL RUNNING?

It would have to be Scott Jurek. He is the man. He has won all of the major deals—Western States, Badwater and the Spartathlon in Greece.

WHAT ARE YOUR TRAIL-RUNNING GOALS?

To be the absolute best I can be. My body is fresh; I feel a young 39. I have never piled on the high mileage like many of these endurance athletes, and never ran more than about 20 miles a week until a few years ago. I would like to knock off a 100-miler soon.

WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING SCHEDULE LIKE?

When gearing up for the marathon season and prior to bow season [in autumn], I run at least eight to 10 miles every day. I'll do a couple long runs a week, from 15 to 20 miles, but have a hard time getting motivated to run alone for more than that so I race. Last summer I raced a marathon and two ultras on consecutive weekends and never felt terribly fatigued. Sometimes because of time constraints I split my runs up in order to get my mileage in; I will run in the morning, at lunch and in the evening.

I love running during the absolute hottest part of the day. I don't drink water either. I want to be miserable, as I know it is only temporary. This prepares me for those tough stretches of ultras or long hunts. I also run a local three-mile hill that gets baked by the sun. It gets up to well over 100 degrees, and sometimes I run it three times back to back.

HOW DID YOU STAY FOCUSED ON RUNNING THROUGH THE FALL HUNTING SEASON PRIOR TO NOVEMBER'S NEW YORK MARATHON?

It was definitely a challenge to keep up my mileage while traveling and hunting. Sometimes it meant getting home from the airport at midnight, lacing up the shoes and hitting the streets for a quick five-miler, just to keep the juices flowing.

HAS TRAIL RUNNING BECOME A PASSION IN ITSELF?

It has. There are times when I am in top condition and I have a hunt slated and, truthfully, don't want to go and lose my peak. Once I get on the hunt, though, I get so into it. Both disciplines make me who I am.

—MICHAEL BENGE

OVERHEARD

"I thought about my family and my friends and everything I do, and I just kept saying to myself, 'I can't die. I'm not ready to die.' But it would have been so easy to relax and cut up and die."

—Danelle Ballengee, who fell 60 feet down an ice cliff near Moab, Utah while running and waited over two days before being rescued

"Dean Karnazes and I had the opportunity to run in the diamond district in the deserts of Namibia and although we never found diamonds in the soles of our shoes, we were always able to run faster than the springbok, wildebeest and oryx chasing us!"

—American ultrarunner Topher Gaylord, now living in Montebelluna, Italy

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