



Jurek defends Badwater title

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Scott Jurek didn't reach his goal of becoming the first competitor to ever finish the Kiehl's Badwater Ultramarathon in less than a day, but the Seattle man, nonetheless, retained his title.

The 32-year-old Jurek completed the 135-mile desert race from Death Valley to Mount Whitney in 25 hours, 41 minutes and 18 seconds on Tuesday.

Akos Konya of Oceanside, Calif, was a close second in 25:58:42. Konya actually finished before Jurek on Tuesday but had started four hours prior to Jurek on Monday. Like past Badwater winners, Jurek didn't receive a cash prize; anyone finishing the extreme ultramarathon in less than 48 hours receives a belt buckle.

Jurek, who won seven straight Western States titles, captured the 2005 Badwater title in a record-setting time of 24:36:08.

The 29th running of Badwater featured a 90-competitor field, which started in waves at dawn on Monday at 280 feet below sea level in Death Valley. En route to tallest peak in the continental United States, the runners encountered temperatures that rose above 120 degrees and a comforting rain at the finish.

Among the other early finishers were Charlie Engle of Hermosa Beach, Calif., in 28:18.36; two-time runner-up Ferg Hawke of Surrey, British Columbia, in 28:45:10; first-timer David Goggins of Chula Vista, Calif., in 30:18:54 and Stephane Pelissier of Lanta, France, in 31:28:15.

Konya was 20 minutes ahead of Jurek's record pace early in the race, but by the time Jurek entered Lone Pine, Calif., early Tuesday morning, the tables had turned with Jurek 15 minutes ahead of Konya's time.

Women's record holder Pam Reed of Tucson, Ariz., pulled out of the race at Stovepipe Wells because of dehydration. Reed was the overall winner in 2002 and 2003 and women's champion in 2005.

Monica Scholz of Jerseyville, Ontario, finished in time for a good night's sleep at 7:58 p.m. Her time was 32:07:01.

At 1 a.m. Tuesday, Monique Muhlen of Bridel, Luxemborg, was farthest on the course at the 72-mile mark, but her time was slower than two other competitors because of an earlier start time.

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