

SPORTS

# Kilian Jornet Sets New Record in Hardrock 100

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT

**SILVERTON** – One of the most revered course records in North America fell with a cowbell clang in the pre-dawn moonlight on Saturday morning, July 12, as renowned ultrarunner Kilian Jornet completed the Hardrock 100 Endurance Run in 22 hours, 41 minutes and 35 seconds.

The previous record of 23:23, thought to be practically bombproof, was set by Kyle Skaggs in 2008.

Fueled by Kit Kat candy bars and a shot of tequila on Virgin-i-us Pass, Jornet ran his own race,

trailing Skagg’s record-setting pace for about two-thirds of the way and hardly seeming to care about winning, let alone setting a new course record.

The amiable, darkly tousle-haired 26-year-old from Catalonia took snapshots of the scenery with his cellphone, lingered in aid stations to eat heartily and chat with volunteers, posed for pictures with young fans along the route, and slowed his pace at one point so that fellow runner Julien Chorier of France could catch up and keep him company.

But on the steep climb toward the summit of Handies Peak – the

highest point on the fabled 100.5 mile course – Jornet shifted into animal gear and left Chorier and the rest of the runners behind, blazing up the mountainside ahead of a brooding storm and into the darkening night.

His pace got faster, not slower, as the night wore on. By the time he loped into Silverton to kiss the Hardrock (the granite icon of the race that marks both its beginning and its end) at 4:41 a.m., he had eclipsed Skagg’s record by a full 40 minutes, prompting one fan at the finish line to ask, “Are you a mountain goat?”

Rick Trujillo of Ouray, a



**RECORD RUN** – Kilian Jornet took a breather and answered questions from the media after setting a new record of 22:41 on the Hardrock 100 Endurance Run. (Photo by Samantha Wright)

mountain-running legend in his own right, was among those who had around the Hardrock at an obscenely early hour to witness

Jornet make history. “It’s just incredible. What can see **HARDROCK** on page 29

## TELLURIDE 100

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who will compete in the Men’s Open category in the Telluride 100, has qualified again for this year’s Leadville 100.

### TRAINING AND PREPARING

“I have done a bunch of long road bike races and had no intention of finding a 100 mile mountain bike race, but then the Telluride 100 came along,” Johnson said. He is racing, he added, “to support the local effort!”

Haggerty has raced both mountain and road bikes, with his longest road bike race at 85 miles. He explains that long-distance road biking is difficult to compare to equally long distances on a mountain bike, as road bike rides take about half the time.

Both Johnson and Haggerty are using Telluride as their training camp for the race.

“All my training has been local,” Johnson said. “My main goal has been to make sure I have enough miles and enough climbing ahead of time. Most of my training has been focused on longer duration, lower intensity, given that this could easily be a 11-12 hour ride for me.”

Haggerty has “been doing a lot of riding on the course itself. I’ve

done the Last Dollar Loop a few times, and have been up to Ophir. I am looking to do Black Bear Pass once it is open.” He adds that he has been logging miles on his road bike as well, regularly riding to and from Ridgway from Telluride, because “road miles are the best way to get you strong.”

### BIG CHALLENGES

When asked about the challenges of this race, both Haggerty and Johnson agree that simply being in the saddle anywhere from eight to 11 hours is a huge challenge in and of itself. They also emphasized keeping the body fueled properly.

“The key will be staying hydrated and eating regularly along the way,” Johnson said. “A friend who has done many of these likes to say that it is not a bike race, it is an eating race!”

Haggerty plans to keep a steady stream of electrolytes on hand to avoid cramping, as well as fatigue and dehydration.

Haggerty also said that knowing when to get off of your bike is just as important as knowing when to stay on.

“Knowing when it might be good to walk your bike, to use different muscles and just move around in a different way, is essential,” he explained, “even on sections like Boomerang, which

are completely rideable.”

Similarly, Johnson said that knowing when to keep it slow and calm is a tactic far more useful than attempting to go full throttle from start to finish. Going into the race, both men clearly take the approach that it is a marathon, not a sprint, and believe that pushing on even as the body wants to quit will be a hurdle.

“Just staying focused and driven to keep pedaling is something each rider will inevitably struggle with at some point during the race,” Haggerty said.

Johnson and Haggerty agree with race organizer Tobin Behling that the Telluride 100 will be harder than the Leadville 100.

Johnson even goes so far as to say, “In typical Telluride style, this ride is going make the Leadville 100 look like a warmup!”

### EVEN BIGGER REWARDS

Haggerty is intrigued by the prospect of trying something new and different.

“I love to ride,” he said. “I’ve been cycling for 25 years, and I usually don’t have the desire to be in the saddle longer than four or five hours. This is the new big thing, though, in the biking community, and this will give me a whole new perspective.”

Haggerty also said that timing was a big factor in his decision to

test his endurance for 100 miles.

“I usually focus on the Mt. Evans hill climb every year, but this year I couldn’t go,” he explained. “A 100 mile race in Telluride is the perfect opportunity to try something different.”

For his part, Johnson said he simply couldn’t pass up the opportunity to ride for 11 hours through “some of the most glorious scenery in the world,” and couldn’t resist jumping on the bandwagon when a group of his good friends decided to do it.

“I want to support what I foresee becoming a great tradition in our community,” Johnson said.

For more information go to: <http://telluride100.com>.

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## HARDROCK

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I say?” Trujillo said, marveling at how Jornet sped through the night. “He was incredibly strong at the end. No one else has been able to do that. The guy has removed any shadow of a doubt. Basically, he’s the best in the world.”

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He is also a world-class alpinist in the process of attempting to break the records set on some of the most breathtaking summits in the world through his “Summits of My Life” project.

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The son of a schoolteacher and a mountain guide, Jornet grew up at the Malniu Mountain Refuge, part of a hut-to-hut system near the village of Puigcerda on the slopes of the Pyrenees in Catalonia, a fiercely independent region that is technically part of Spain.

“These mountain people – they’re crazy,” said Pablo Vigil, a Colorado Hall of Fame mountain runner who has befriended Jornet in recent years. “He was skiing when he was 3 years old, and hiking six, seven hours in the mountains,” Vigil said. “By the time he was 10, he had crossed the Pyrenees with his parents. At 12 or 13, he was traveling around with his sister and his dad, and they were climbing in South America, Morocco, Africa and other parts of the world.”

As a teenager, Jornet attended a world-famous skiing school just across the border in France. He moved naturally into the sport of ski mountaineering, and joined Spain’s junior class skimo team. Over the ensuing decade, his fame has followed the trajectory of his accomplishments. He is now a Salomon-sponsored professional athlete who runs all summer, skis all winter and is adored across Europe.

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at the school where Kilian’s mother teaches, and helping his father put on a series of races and clinics in the Pyrenees’s La Cerdanya valley.

“If you go to that part of the world, it’s very similar to Colorado,” Vigil said. “You look around and it’s rocks, mountains, rivers. That’s where Kilian grew up.”

Vigil is deeply impressed by the quality of upbringing that Jornet and his sister Naila received. “His parents have just done an amazing job in making sure their children got good educations,” he said. “They are very cultured people, very humble, kind people. They are very traveled, very well read. And they love mountains.”

According to his dad, Eduard, Kilian got his competitive side from his mother, Nuria. “I ran a mountain race against her, 9.5 kilometers, and she kicked my ass by over five minutes,” Vigil said. “She’s vicious. That lady is vicious. She is very kind, gentle, humble, but in a race her teeth grow and the claws come out.”

Which begs the question – is Kilian like that?

“I think Kilian is very passive-aggressive,” Vigil allowed. “But he also has this way of relaxing. He knows how to relax, and I think he also really enjoys the moment of competition.”

Kilian’s sense of adventure and technical mountain climbing ability, meanwhile, came straight from his dad.

“They’ve instilled this sense of discipline, culture, education and self-reliance. And above all, humility and kindness,” Vigil marveled.

(As a case in point, minutes after winning the Hardrock 100, Jornet had already Tweeted a thank you note to the Hardrock race committee.)

This is all the more remarkable considering the level of fame to which the 26-year-old Catalan has risen in recent years.

“All over Europe he is a celebrity,” Vigil said. “He is the main spokesperson for Salomon. Every other magazine sports cover is Kilian Jornet. He is a rock star in Europe. He has an entourage of people – they film him, they follow him, they ask him every stupid question under the sun. At every pub, tavern and restaurant all over Catalonia is a picture of Kilian, autographed. Wherever he goes, he takes time to answer questions, whether it’s a child or an old farmer. They love Kilian. That’s the way it is. And with good reason.”

According to Vigil, Jornet has earned his status as one of the world’s top mountain runners and alpine skiers.

“He is the real deal, in terms of sacrifice, dedication, blood, sweat and tears for the sport of running. Cardiovascularly, he has one of the highest max CO2 levels ever recorded. He’s been picked, pried, studied. He’s the real deal, man. He is the real deal.”

In short, there couldn’t be a more fitting standard-bearer and record-holder for one of the most physically challenging and mentally demanding ultra races in the world.



**WILD AND TOUGH** – Two runners labored up the steep slope toward Grand Swamp Pass early on in the race last Friday morning. (Photo by Samantha Wright)

### SPIRIT OF THE HARDROCK

The Hardrock 100 was founded in 1992 by a group of ultra-runners headed by Boulderite Gordon Hardman, who wanted to celebrate and emulate the “wild and tough” spirit of the hardrock miners of the San Juan Mountains a century ago. The race (more formally called a “run”), follows some of the routes laid out by those miners, originally constructed to transport materials to mountainous mining sites and ore to market.

Hardrock runners trace a big, beautiful 100.5-mile loop through the San Juans that starts and ends in Silverton, taking in the towns of Telluride and Ouray along the way. The course includes 33,992 feet of climb and descent (the most of almost any ultra-marathon in the world) for a total elevation change of 67,984 feet (like climbing from sea level to the top of Mt. Everest, and back), with an average elevation of 11,186 feet.

The average runner takes over 41 hours to finish the course, running through two nights, navigating scree-covered slopes, malevolent weather, swollen creek crossings and fine ribbons of trail winding through forest and tundra, by headlamp, at elevations where temperatures can plummet below freezing.

The run has attracted an increasingly fanatical and tribal following over the years.

And the psych was particularly high for this year’s 21st running of the Hardrock, mostly because of Jornet.

Despite his elite status, Jornet got into the race through the lottery, just like everyone else, earning one out of the 140 coveted runner slots that are allowed through the race’s permit with the Bureau of Land Management, out of 1,200 or so runners who applied this year.

When word got out that Jornet was in, the running world was electrified at the prospect of one of the world’s best ultra-runners taking on one of the sport’s most notoriously difficult and legendary courses.

Such was the level of hype that for the first time ever, race organizers had to hire a media relations manager to handle the scrum of 53 videographers, photojournalists and writers (working for 22 different organizations) jostling to cover

the event.

That hype was heightened by a “field of dreams” in the Men’s race this year, including not only Jornet, but last year’s Hardrock winner Seb Chagneau, 2011 winner Julien Chorier, and other greats like Dakota Jones, Joe Grant, Timmy Olson, Scott Jaime, Adam Campbell and Jared Campbell.

But once the race got underway, so many frontrunners fell by the wayside with a variety of injuries and ailments that Jornet found himself without a pack to chase him.

Chagneau, favored to do well again this year, passed out in Grouse Gulch for a couple hours, exhibiting rhabdo-like symptoms. (A curse of the ultra-runner, rhabdomyolysis is the breakdown of muscle tissue that leads to the release of muscle fiber contents into the blood, which, if left untreated, can eventually lead to renal failure). Eventually he made the call to take himself out of the race, and walked out on his own power.

Joe Grant, who trained with Chagneau for three weeks leading up to the race, dropped out at mile 51 with a blown quad muscle.

Local favorite Dakota Jones twisted his ankle about 20 minutes out of Telluride after slipping off the trail on his way up to Virginus Pass. He made it over the next two climbs, but the injury worsened on the long slog up from Ouray to Engineer Pass. Jones, too, dropped at Grouse Gulch, turning back from the top of the next pass upon realizing it would be dangerous and foolhardy to go on.

Timmy Olson, with two Western States titles to his name, toughed out some nasty stomach troubles to eventually kiss the Hardrock, but missed a top-ten finish.

There was a brief moment of speculation that Julien Chorier, running in second place behind Jornet for the latter half of the race, might break the 24-hour mark this year. But the course and its extreme altitude took a heavy toll on the French runner in the final miles of the race, and he approached the finish line well after sunrise, bent over with a sore back and shaky legs, finishing in 25:07:56 for 2nd place.

The most electrifying story from this year’s run came from Canadian runner Adam Campbell,

who survived a lightning strike on the top of Handies Peak to earn a 3rd place finish, with a time of 25:56:46.

“It was probably one of the most terrifying experiences I’ve ever had,” he said in a post-race interview with TrailRunner Nation. As he and his pacer, Aaron Heidt, climbed towards the 14,058-foot peak, a nasty thunderstorm they’d managed to avoid so far suddenly changed course and pinned the duo to the mountain top.

The lightning struck Campbell and his pacer simultaneously, exploding the battery pack on Campbell’s headlamp and leaving the two with one headlamp to get off the peak. After some serious profanity, “We both agreed we had to get out of there as quickly as possible,” Campbell recalled. “It was pitch black, with pouring rain lashing down, with one headlamp, and we got off Handies so fast. It was probably the fastest I ran all day.”

“We are so fortunate that we weren’t both seriously injured.”

In the Women’s race, Darcy Africa Piceu achieved a three-fer this year, coming into Silverton under a double-rainbow at around midday, just shy of 30 hours, for her third straight Hardrock win. Her victory was made bittersweet by the fact that Diana Finkel, the women’s frontrunner through Maggie Gulch at mile 87.1, once again had to drop out this year for medical reasons.

The drama continued throughout the night until the race cut-off time of 6 a.m. on Sunday morning. Among those who finished in the dead of the second night were Ridgway runner Rick Hodges, 65, completing his 10th Hardrock this year (he said it would be his last, but we’ll see about that), and Chris Twiggs, a Florida runner whose wife has deep roots in Ouray. It was Twigg’s 10th finish, as well.

Kirk Apt, the “heart and soul of Hardrock,” got his ticket punched for the 20th time this year, earning a standing ovation from the crowd at the award ceremony.

Amanda Grimes, who got the caboose award, came in looking strong and happy, finishing her very first Hardrock to earn a “Doctorate of Distance,” with 10 minutes to spare, at 47:50. She celebrated with a champagne toast, exclaiming, “Save the best for last!”

In all, 100 runners finished this year’s Hardrock. Race Director Dale Garland (who has been with the run since its beginnings almost a quarter-century ago) greeted each and every finisher, hanging medals around their necks.

“We don’t distinguish between elite runners and first-time runners,” said Hardrock Media Coordinator Oliver Fischer. “We really don’t. Because [in spite of the fact that the media frenzy evaporated within hours of Jornet’s finish] the story is not just who can finish it in 24-26 hours.”

Or, indeed, in 22.

Garland concurred. “One of my basic philosophies is, the person who finishes first and the person who finishes last have both accomplished something pretty extraordinary.”

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The Watch Newspaper | July 13, 2014

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"It's just incredible. What can I say?" Trujillo said, marveling at how Jornet sped through the night. "He was incredibly strong at the end. No one else has been able to do that. The guy has removed any shadow of a doubt. Basically, he's the best in the world."

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The drama continued throughout the night until the race cut-off time of 6 a.m. on Sunday morning. Among those who finished in the dead of the second night were Ridgway runner Rick Hodges, 65, completing his 10th Hardrock this year (he said it would be his last, but we'll see about that), and Chris Twiggs, a Florida runner whose wife has deep roots in Ouray. It was Twigg's 10th finish, as well.

Kirk Apt, the “heart and soul of Hardrock,” got his ticket punched for the 20th time this year, earning a standing ovation from the crowd at the award ceremony.

Amanda Grimes, who got the caboose award, came in looking strong and happy, finishing her very first Hardrock to earn a “Doctorate of Distance,” with 10 minutes to spare, at 47:50. She celebrated with a champagne toast, exclaiming, “Save the best for last!”

In all, 100 runners finished this year’s Hardrock. Race Director Dale Garland (who has been with the run since its beginnings almost a quarter-century ago) greeted each and every finisher, hanging medals around their necks.

“We don’t distinguish between elite runners and first-time runners,” said Hardrock Media Coordinator Oliver Fischer. “We really don’t. Because [in spite of the fact that the media frenzy evaporated within hours of Jornet’s finish] the story is not just who can finish it in 24-26 hours.”

Or, indeed, in 22.

Garland concurred. “One of my basic philosophies is, the person who finishes first and the person who finishes last have both accomplished something pretty extraordinary.”

#### TOP 10 MALE AND FEMALE FINISHERS OF THE 2014 HARDROCK 100

##### Women:

1. Darcy Piceu – 29:49:58
2. Betsy Kalmeyer – 37:57:22
3. Betsy Nye – 42:22
4. Tina Ure – 42:45
5. Suzanne Lewis – 42:55
6. Sarah McCloskey – 43:12
7. Liz Bauer – 43:49
8. Kim Gimenez – 44:43
9. Patty Bryant – 46:34
10. Susan Gardner – 46:46

##### Men:

1. Kilian Jornet – 22:41:33
2. Julien Chorier – 25:07:56
3. Adam Campbell – 25:56:46
4. Jeff Browning – 26:58:59
5. Scott Jaime – 27:46:14
6. Tsuyoshi Kaburaki – 28:07:38

7. Jared Campbell – 28:23:42

8. Mick Juryneec – 28:28:54

9. Ty Draney – 28:46:04

10. Ted Mahon – 29:23:34