

A Day in the **MUD**

Tough Mudder is claimed to be the longest and hardest of the muddy obstacle course race series out there. I figured, I've done an IronMan and other grueling events, so I figured an obstacle course-muddy run would be super fun! I did not want to be mediocre at it, by any means, so most importantly, I had to get in the right mindset to have fun and do well. Online for Tough Mudder Georgia, the race directors told us it was 10-11 miles. Race day they told us it was 12-ish. Come to find out, it ended up being 14.2 or 14.3 miles. YEAH!



Upon arriving to the race site, Highlank Park, Georgia, in the morning, nerves were stirring. I simply wanted to get a mohawk before the race, as they advertised free mohawks, but no one was there at the mohawk station. Bummer. Jimbo and I were to begin our Tough Mudder adventure in the second wave at 9:20 A.M. Our race numbers permanent marked on our foreheads and legs, we use blue Crayola body paint from SGA to represent Lindsey Wilson College Cycling and R.A.V.E. We were Blue Raiders,

for sure. If he and I knew there was an “elite” specific start at 9:00 A.M. we would have been on board. The first wave went off and we went to the starting area and were given the speech from one of the race directors. The race clock drew closer and closer to 9:20... and I was nervous and psyched. We were at the front of our wave. I was worried about being passed right in the beginning and looking like an idiot.



BOOM! The race officials started us and the SPRINT downhill began. Jimbo and I were sitting 3rd and 4th right off the gun... YES! The first obstacle was an ice-cold muddy river crossing, twice. I had to remind myself to breathe; it took the air from my lungs. WOO! Get past it and press on. We did. As each obstacle came, our lead on our group grew and we would pass the two guess in front of us within

the first mile or so, one of them would hover behind us a couple seconds. Completely covered in mud from head to toe, we kept running, as if trying to escape from a wild pack of dogs – like when we’re on road bikes, so it was a similar nostalgic feeling. Obstacles came and went, ranging from mud and ice filled narrow tubes, low crawl under 8-inch barbed-wire, maneuvering under a cargo net in nearly a foot of mud. Let’s just say that within the first two miles, blood was drawn on my knees and elbows. The blood (and future scars) made me feel as if I was in some sort of battle because I yelled to Jimbo that the battle wounds have started to show!

Our shoes were covered in mud and so were our bodies, which added weight and made moving harder. Still, we pressed on. We run, and run, and run some more, still just Jimbo, that guy a few seconds back, and myself. In the distance, we could hear the next wave of Tough Mudder participants taking the same oath that we did. That was rather a neat feeling.

We then make a dash into the woods, following the course directions. HILLS EVERYWHERE! It was rather impossible to get lost during the run because the single track (and some double track) was beautifully marked with arrows and Tough Mudder signs galore. Up and down, up and down, the hills continued and continued, and Jimbo and I started passing numerous people. It was a cool feeling to know that with the first three to four

miles of the course we had caught people that started 20 minutes before us. The hills came and went, and so did all of the people that we passed from the 9:00 A.M. group.



The legs were definitely starting to feel fatigued because of the hills, but we pressed on. There were rocks, roots, mini-trees, trees, mud puddles and people were things that we had to make sure we avoided in order to reduce chances of injury. Well, mud puddles were not really avoided on my part, simply because it was a MUD race, so why not run through the MUD! I splashed some other people we were passing, but they got over it and I had a good time doing it, too.

The water stations were essential in continuing the Tough Mudder because it was HOT and there were only three water stations throughout the course. Pressing on, there are other obstacles, including Berlin Walls, which are 12-foot walls you must get over- piece of cake. Some other obsta-

cles, this time in front of crowds, included the Funky Monkey and the Fire Walker, more cargo net mud crawls, and other crazy challenges that were fun. Still, we pressed on. We ran past some people that were about one mile into the race, and they were gasping for air, complaining about this or that, and I wondered how they would end up continuing for however many miles the challenge ended up being. We were nearing the finish. A couple more mud pits and cargo nets later, we approached the final water obstacle,

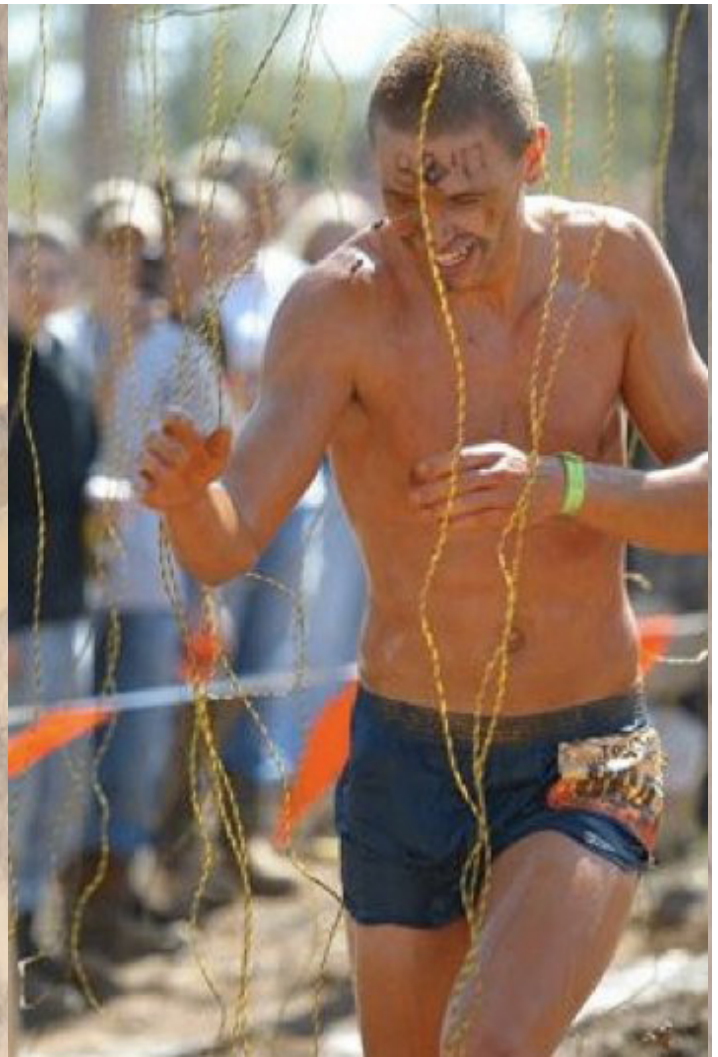
which was a climb up to a 20-foot platform into 15-foot deep, cold, muddy water, which you had to then swim 15-20 yards to the exit.

The FINAL obstacle was "Electric Shock Therapy" which had live wires hanging down (which we had to run through) that would conduct up to 10,000 volts if you touched a positive wire with a negative wire. Jimbo did not get zapped once,



however, I was lucky enough to feel it **THREE** times! **BZZZT!** We crossed the finish line and received our victory mementoes, a Tough Mudder Georgia t-shirt and the coveted orange Tough Mudder head-band. It seemed as if only about three to five people finished ahead of us from the 9:00 A.M. start group, so we did pretty awesome for passing almost all of the “elite” wave. Our time was 2 hours and 10 minutes for the 14-some odd miles hilly, muddy race. Seemed like a victory to me since the average projected finish time online for the 10-mile version was 2 hours and 30 minutes. We stomped that time and had a great adventure in the meantime.

All during the race, and as we finished I kept thinking about the **World’s Toughest Mudder** – the world championship event in December and how the top 5% of participants get to do the event if they chose to. I wanted to be in that top 5%. Looking at our time, I was (and I still am) 100% sure that Jimbo and I qualified. Now we just wait for the e-mail, which should be coming soon. The **World’s Toughest Mudder** website says to “expect 50 miles of mud, ice, snow, fire, hot coals, rock climbs, barbed wire, electric fencing, underwater swimming, boulder carries, rope climbs, extreme weather conditions and 100-foot dives from waterfalls.” Sounds like an adventure to me, since the location and actual distance is undecided. They project 10% to finish the **World’s Toughest Mudder**. Jimbo and I will be part of that 10%. Stay tuned as we press on.



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