

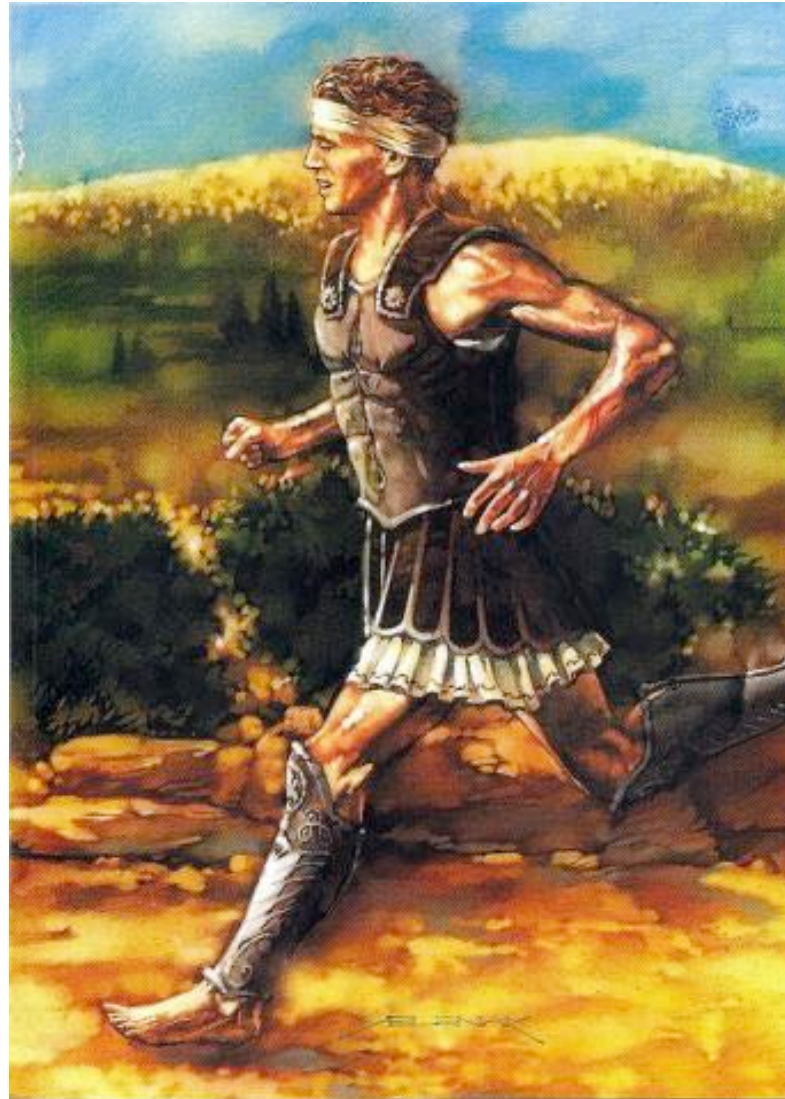
SPARTATHLON & THE LEGEND OF PHEIDIPPIDES

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BRITISH SPARTATHLON TEAM

THE LEGEND OF PHEIDIPPIDES





THE LEGEND OF PHEIDIPPIDES

- In 490BC Athens needed the help of the Spartans against the invading Persians
- Pheidippides, a professional runner was asked to run 150 miles to Sparta to ask for their help

“AND FIRST, BEFORE THEY LEFT THE CITY, THE GENERALS SENT OFF TO SPARTA A HERALD, ONE PHEIDIPPIDES, WHO WAS BY BIRTH AN ATHENIAN, AND BY PROFESSION AND PRACTICE A TRAINED RUNNER...” (HERODOTUS)





THE LEGEND OF PHEIDIPPIDES

- Following a rugged difficult, mountainous route, Pheidippides delivered the message
- However, the Spartan army could not take the field of battle until the Moon was full (due to religious laws) and would not reach the battle in time
- Pheidippides then ran back to deliver the bad news.





THE LEGEND OF PHEIDIPPIDES

- Fortunately, the Athenians defeated the Persians in the "Battle of Marathon"
- The surviving Persians headed towards Athens, to attack the city before the army could return
- Pheidippides ran 25 miles to warn Athens

"..WHO RAN IN FULL ARMOUR, HOT FROM THE BATTLE, AND, BURSTING IN AT THE DOORS OF THE FIRST MEN OF THE STATE, COULD ONLY SAY "HAIL! WE ARE VICTORIOUS" AND STRAIGHTAWAY HE DIED.





INTERESTING FACTS!

- "Nike" is the Greek Goddess of victory and is where the the Sports clothes manufacturer got their name.
- A "marathon" event gets it's name from Pheidippides run from the Battle of Marathon to Athens.



THE HISTORY OF SPARTATHLON





THE HISTORY OF SPARTATLON

- In 1982 British RAF Wing Commander John Foden and four other RAF officers travelled to Greece
- Based on the legend of Pheidippides they wanted to test whether it was possible to run the 150 miles in a day and a half
- Three runners were successful in completing the distance and re-creating the story of Pheidippides





THE HISTORY OF SPARTATHLON

- A year later saw the running of the first open International Spartathlon Race
- From 1984 the "International Spartathlon Association" was founded and has organised the race every year



THE SPARTATHLON RACE





THE SPARTATHLON RACE

- One of the worlds most challenging and historical ultra-marathon events
- 390 people participate each year
- 153 miles in distance
- Must be completed within 36 hours
- A non-stop running race
- The weather is usually very hot
- Only 50% of runners finish the race





THE SPARTATHLON RACE – PART 1

- Starts in Athens at the Acropolis, an ancient citadel overlooking Athens
- Heads out through the city along coastal roads along the Athens – Corinth highway
- Passes Cornith Canal, a famous landmark built in 1893



THE RACE START

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ATHENS



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SPARTA PHOTO

CORINTH-ATHENS HIGHWAY



COASTAL ROADS



CORINTH CANAL





THE SPARTATHLON RACE – PART 2

- Route starts to climb and wind its way through villages, passing the ruins near Nemea
- Follow more country roads as night starts to descend until you arrive at the Mountain Base
- The Sangas Pass is a 1000m climb along switchback trails before the route rejoins paved roads

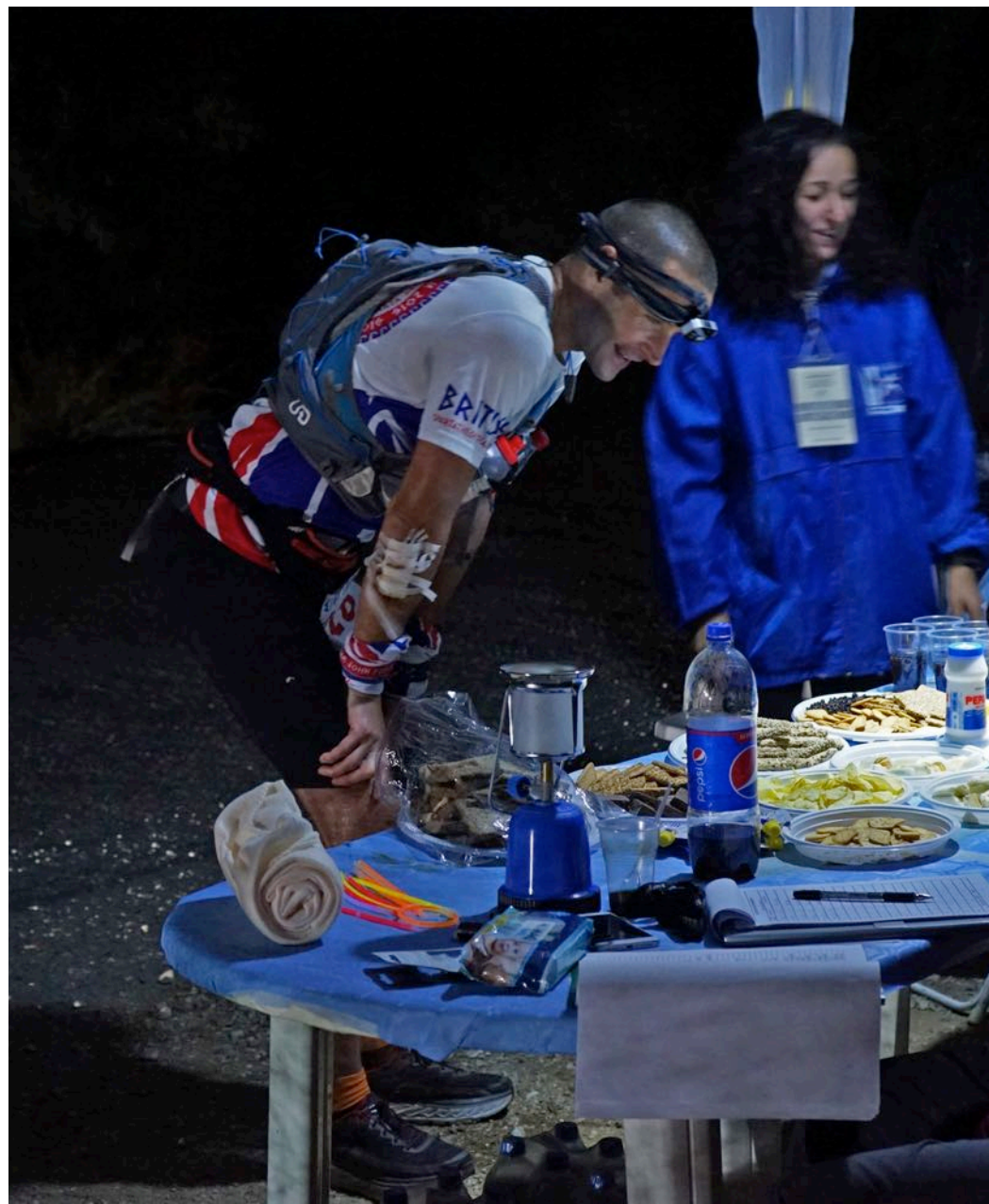


ANCIENT RUINS

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EVENING & NIGHT



SANGAS PASS

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THE SPARTATHLON RACE – PART 3

- Night turns to day as the runners pass numerous villages until the road takes a final climb to the outskirts of Sparta
- There is a final descent into the City of Sparta where runners are met by local school children who accompany them to the finish
- City turns out in force to welcome the athletes as Heroes, who finish the race by kissing the foot of the Statue of King Leonidas.



ROUTE TO SPARTA



STATUE OF KING LEONIDAS



THE FINISH



THE BRITISH SPARTATHLON TEAM





2017 BRITISH SPARTATHLON TEAM

- 391 runners took part in total, 265 finished (68% finish rate)
- 24 British runners took part, 20 finished (83% finish rate)
- Winning time was 22.04
- Paul Beechey was 2nd British finisher in 28.35, 27th overall



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Does anyone have any questions?