

2021 Runner Profile: Abby Lanager

Among the runners taking part in the Tussey Mountainback 50 Mile Relay and Ultramarathon in Rothrock State Forest this fall will be first-time 50-miler, Abby Lanager, of Bellefonte.

Lanager's introduction to the Mountainback was through the relay division of the event.

"I found out about this race from participating on a relay team in 2018," said Lanager, a team called Scrambled Legs. "I loved every part of the race and fell in love with the idea of participating in the whole thing one day. I am nervous but very excited."

Running fifty miles may seem daunting, but Lanager has worked up to this race. Distance events already under her belt include the Harrisburg Marathon, Pittsburgh Marathon, and five half marathons.

But she also has a secret weapon. Lanager is a mom. During her half marathon last October, she was 6 months pregnant. After Lanager gave birth to her baby girl in February, she began walking a few miles a week and doing in-home strength training and started doing smaller runs a few weeks later.

"The jogging strollers are a life saver!" said Lanager. "Training sure is challenging to fit in, but I'm getting it in as much as I can and fitting in fitness classes for strength support when I can as well. I absolutely am nervous with this being my first ultra, but I'm excited to see just how far I can physically and mentally push forward."

Lanager is training five days a week besides working 7-11 hour shifts as a server at Otto's in State College. "So, I'm constantly moving and on my feet. I train a lot in Bellefonte, so I'm definitely practicing hills and climbs."

Lanager began running daily when she was 15, but her running trailed off when she got to college.

"Worst mistake," recalled Lanager, "but I started making [running] my religion again when I was 24-25." She had run track for a year as a short distance sprinter, but always loved longer runs. "Starting back up in my twenties, I had



experienced personal trauma. I remembered how exhilarating running was, and it saved me and my mental/physical health since."

The Mountainback event welcomes both recreational and competitive runners to participate on relay teams of 2 to 8 runners, as well as offering the solo ultramarathon option.

Proceeds from this year's event will support CommonFood Centre County, a non-profit, all-volunteer group whose key mission is to resource underserved and under-employed elderly, single parent families, and low-income families in Centre County and neighboring areas with nutritious food and related services.