

## JANICE MACKAY

Women's Marathon and Shorter Champion



"I'M SURPRISED to say the least," responded Jan MacKay of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, upon learning that she had won the *Trail Runner* Trophy Series. "There's always a *Trail Runner* magazine on our breakfast table so I was aware of the Trophy Series and I was fortunate that several races were within driving distance of home."

On her way to the title, MacKay, 51, raced well and piled on the points at races in her backyard. She claimed age-group wins at the nearby Keweenaw Trail Running Festival (in Michigan's western

upper Peninsula), Tahqua Trail Run (15.5 miles, in Whitefish Bay, Michigan) and Running Fit Trail Marathon (Pinckney).

Despite her stellar finishes, MacKay downplays any competitive streak, cherishing the solitary, peaceful side of the sport just as much. "I started racing about 10 years ago, mostly 5 and 10K races," she explains. "The last few years I've gotten into longer runs and really enjoy them ... a lot of life's little problems have been solved out on those trails."

The upper Midwest is rarely referenced as a trail-running mecca, so how does this mother of two train hard enough to take home one of the sport's most prestigious prizes? Says MacKay, "There are no mountains here but we are located in the rugged Canadian Shield. I

run on cross-country ski trails until the snow is deep enough for grooming, then I take to the roads and also ski as much as time allows."

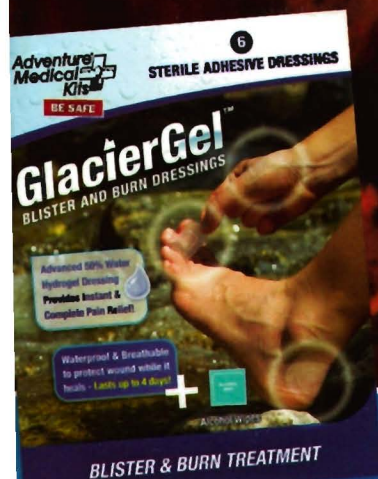
Memo to MacKay: that's a regimen that sounds mysteriously like that of an elite runner. She insists, "I pretty much stay true to myself and just run."

But surely there's a competitive fire that burns somewhere within. MacKay sheepishly relents, "I have to admit I do enjoy looking over the results afterwards to see the number of younger runners that crossed the finish line after me."

*Garett Graubins is former Senior Editor of Trail Runner. He finished the 2007 Trophy Series in 530<sup>th</sup> place, but it would have been 496<sup>th</sup> if he hadn't gotten lost.*

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