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It was a year of historic firsts at the Barkley Marathons. No race is more notoriously impossible to finish. Over the first 37 years, only 17 people had done so. That all changed on March 22, 2024, when an unprecedented five runners completed the race, smashing the record of three set [last year](https://www.outsideonline.com/health/running/racing/races/2023-barkley-marathons/) (<https://www.outsideonline.com/health/running/racing/races/2023-barkley-marathons/>).

In case that’s not enough, Jared Campbell, who finished in 59:30:32, became the first individual to finish the race four times.

Joining the Class of 2024 Barkley Marathons finishers is Barkley “virgin” Ihor Verys of Ukraine/Canada, who completed the race first in 58:44:59. He was followed by Tennessee’s John Kelly in 59:15:39, who became just the second person after Campbell to earn a third finish. And on his third attempt, Greig Hamilton of New Zealand finished in 59:38:42.

Here’s how these runners survived “the race that eats its young” during 60 of the most iconic hours of ultrarunning history.

[RELATED: The Barkley Marathons Have Begun. Here’s What You Need to Know \(https://run.outsideonline.com/news/barkley-marathons-2024/\)](https://run.outsideonline.com/news/barkley-marathons-2024/)

Third Time’s the Charm for Jasmin Paris at the Barkley Marathons

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— g (@trautsnehcterg) March 22, 2024 (https://twitter.com/trautsnehcterg/status/1771318128967847977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Paris, 40, may have found running later in life than some, but she’s made up for lost time—and redefined what’s possible. At her debut at the Barkley Marathons in 2022, [she completed a “Fun Run” \(https://run.outsideonline.com/people/jasmin-paris-barkley-marathons/\)](https://run.outsideonline.com/people/jasmin-paris-barkley-marathons/) on a year there were no finishers.

She returned to Frozen Head last year and blew ultrarunning fans away by becoming just the second woman ever behind Sue Johnston to start a fourth loop. While she completed the lap, she did so outside of the 48-hour cutoff, ending her Barkley quest.

But Paris entered the 2023 event coming off of a knee injury, which both impeded her training build-up and her ability to run to her potential up and down the insanely steep grades, which go up to a dizzying 40 percent. While that slowed her down, it also stopped her from hanging with fellow participants, including her coach Damian Hall and Kelly, on the descents. All three have cited the critical role that teamwork plays over the first four loops, when runners can help each other navigate to the hidden books that serve as checkpoints, push each other through their lows, and collectively problem-solve on the fly. (It's every runner for themselves on the fifth loop, which runners start in rotating directions.)

Paris, who juggles being an elite runner with being a mother of two and an animal veterinarian, was not to be stopped this year. She returned to Frozen Head armed with the experience of two "Fun Runs," as well as a healthy body and an interminable resolve.

When Laz lit the cigarette marking the start at 5:17 A.M. Eastern on Wednesday morning, Paris ran at the front of the pack with the likes of Kelly, Hall, and Verys over the course of the first lap—all three finished within a minute of 8:31 elapsed. Those four continued to work together over the second loop, which took the runners the opposite direction (counterclockwise) through the night before returning to the yellow gate 19:27 into the race.

Jasmin Paris battled soaring daytime temps, dense underbrush, and sleep deprivation to become the first-ever female finisher at the Barkley Marathons. (Photo: Howie Stern)

The pack splintered over the third loop, once again clockwise and into the dawn of the second day. For the second year in a row the infamously fickle weather held off—a boon navigating through the dense underbrush and thick tree cover but also a bane for Paris, who lives in Scotland and is accustomed to inclement weather. The unrelenting sun pushed temperatures up into the 80s on Wednesday and Thursday as Paris and the rest of the remaining runners also started grappling with sleep deprivation and navigating to the hidden books that serve as checkpoints along each loop.

Paris completed her third "Fun Run" (third loop) in 32:15:53, "smiling and looking good," according to Dunn.

At 3:10 P.M. eastern on Thursday, Dunn [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/keithdunn/status/1770890658175127847\)](https://twitter.com/keithdunn/status/1770890658175127847) that eight runners had moved onto loop four—a race record. That bunch included Paris and Campbell, whose quest to break his own Barkley finisher record lived on. While Paris completed loop four 10 minutes back from Campbell, Campbell waited for Paris to start lap five so she could choose her direction.

As the hours ticked off on Friday afternoon, fans frantically refreshing X (formerly Twitter) worried that Paris might run out of time. She was spotted on Rat Jaw with just under three hours left on the clock. Based on Verys's splits she wouldn't make it. But Paris found a higher inner resolve and blasted the last third of the course to finish her final lap with a 13:17 split, just in the nick of time.

It's a poetic ending for the 38 years we've all been waiting for a woman to finish this race. Chapeaux, Jasmin.

Jared Campbell Rewrites History, Again

Jared Campbell (left) and John Kelly (right) rewrote the books with an unprecedented four and three Barkley Marathons finishes, respectively. (Photo: Howie Stern)

With three finishes under his belt, it may seem like a fourth one was clandestine for Campbell, 44. But his last finish was in 2016, several lifetimes ago in ultrarunning time. But Campbell seems to have raced with the patience of a consummate veteran, bidding his time behind the lead pack over the first three loops before surpassing Paris on the fourth.

Some years the race ends at the 48 hour mark with no runners completing a fourth loop. Not this year. At 5:14 A.M. eastern on Friday, Dunn announced that, after Sebastian Raichon began loop five with three minutes to spare, an unprecedented seven runners were on loop five. That included Verys, who set out first in 46:06:32 after 20 minutes in camp (he chose to go clockwise); Kelly (who waited for Verys to start so Verys could choose the direction of his last lap), Hall, Hamilton, Paris, Campbell, and Raichon.

The seven runners who moved onto lap five all completed their fourth loop in under 15 hours, from Kelly's leading split of 14:10 to Raichon's 14:49. Five would succeed. Raichon and Hall would eventually turn back and face Taps, played on a bugle trumpet like at a military funeral.

Campbell, meanwhile, continued his upward momentum to finish the race with just under 30 minutes to spare, cementing his spot as the runner with the most finishes ever.

"That new section is brutal. You're a bad man," Campbell said to Laz at the finish, [according to Dunn \(https://x.com/keithdunn/status/177127797260556593?s=20\)](https://x.com/keithdunn/status/177127797260556593?s=20).

Kelly, meanwhile, is hot on his heels with his second consecutive finish and third overall in seven tries.

Ihor Verys Channels Ukrainian Strength

A Ukrainian now living in Chilliwack, British Columbia, Verys showed remarkable resolve for a Barkley “virgin” at this masochistic event that leaves runners covered in scrapes from bushwhacking through dense and prickly underbrush, sleep deprived from staying up for nearly 60 hours straight, and physically, mentally, and spiritually depleted from covering about 130 miles and more than 60,000 feet of climbing with no course markings and no GPS devices.

He’s the 18th unique Barkley finisher. Hamilton and Paris make numbers 19 and 20.

Even before Dunn [tweeted](https://x.com/keithdunn/status/1771285735833817456?s=20) the race’s closing words, “The 2024 Barkley Marathons has ended. There are five finishers,” the Internet started speculating about what next year would have in store.

Last year (<https://www.outsideonline.com/health/running/racing/races/2023-barkley-marathons/>), Laz told [Trail Runner](https://www.trailrunnermag.com/people/news/barkley-marathons-is-underway/) that he “made it easier to assure a finisher.” People on the ground at Frozen Head say that the course changed minimally this year simply because Laz was recovering from heart surgery.

He has an entirely new route planned for 2025. The entrants, meanwhile, have an entirely new understanding of what’s possible.

RELATED: Here’s What You Need to Know about the Barkley Marathons (<https://run.outsideonline.com/news/barkley-marathons-2024/#>)



Abby Levene (<https://run.outsideonline.com/byline/abby-levene/>)



After running Division I at Princeton University, Abby Levene migrated to Boulder, Colorado to study journalism and run a grad student at the University of Colorado before competing as a professional triathlete. She won the USAT Draft Legal National Championship in 2016. When she’s not clacking on the keyboard or trying to avoid getting sunburned (otherwise known as tracking down a scoop) at a race, you can find her tripping over rocks on the trails and following Boston sports.

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