

## Caledon's Atkins race to Spartan World gold



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For Ryan Atkins and Lindsay Webster, winning runs in the family.

Literally.

The husband and wife tandem have combined for multiple Spartan Series wins in 2018, the latest a Spartan World Championships gold medal finish for Atkins in Iceland last weekend.

"The Iceland Ultra was a beast," said Atkins. "I think, mile for mile, it was harder than any OCR event I've ever done.

Webster previously won the Seattle leg of the Spartan National Series in April, while Atkins took the third leg in Southern California in May. The U.S. National Series leads to the 2018 Spartan World Championship at the end of each season, the pinnacle event of the obstacle course racing (OCR) season featuring a field of elite athletes from more than 50 countries around the world, battling it out over a 6.6-kilometre loop in a 24-hour endurance test.

The win was a record for distance covered in the race: Atkins completed 82.3 miles in just under 22 hours. He was the closest to reach the \$100,000 prize offered for anyone who could reach 100 miles, a feat that has never been accomplished in the race's history.

"Took the win and pushed my body until it broke. There is no better feeling than knowing that you gave everything you had."

A one-million dollar prize was offered up for just one man involved in the race, the United Kingdom's Jonathan Albon, who had taken first in each of the first two races of the "Spartan Trifecta." He dropped out just over ten hours into the grueling competition.

This was the most difficult race in Spartan's history and the finish was bittersweet," said Spartan Founder and CEO Joe De Sena. "While I'm happy for Ryan and (women's champion) Janka (Pepova), and the fact that we didn't have to part with one-million dollars, I was rooting for Jon and his historic journey because it would have been great for our sport if he'd won. Atkins came so close to proving that the 100 miles is possible. We'll offer the one-million dollar Trifecta Challenge every year until someone takes it

home.?

Atkins pulled ahead of Albon in lap six of the dark, chilly competition, gaining a fifteen minute lead by the time he crossed the line at the end of the lap.

Albon was heard by Spartan staff exiting the course remarking "Ryan has it. He's a machine."

Atkins was not the only Canadian on the podium: fellow Canuck Morgan McKay, of Ottawa, took second position on the women's side.

It's the pinnacle of a grueling stretch of the season for Atkins, who is just one month off of a gold medal finish in the team portion of the 24-hour World's Toughest Mudder in Atlanta, Georgia, along with Webster and two other teammates, aptly named "Lindsay's Angels."