How I Reached 43 Loops

A Backyard Ultra Mini Case Study

Introduction

I never planned to go 43 loops. I showed up with one goal: just keep going. This is the story of how I survived nearly two days in a backyard ultra - the strategies, setbacks, and lessons that carried me to the final few.

Training That Paid Off

Instead of long weekly mileage, I focused on back-to-back hourly restart simulations. Every Saturday for two months, I ran 5 loops with 10-minute breaks. This helped build my mental rhythm more than any long run could.

My Basecamp Setup

I brought two pairs of shoes, 8 pairs of socks, a recliner chair, a thermos of soup, and a printed checklist. My crew knew their jobs: timing, feeding, and reminding me of why I was here. That calmness saved me when things got weird.

Loop 29: The Wall

At loop 29, I wanted to quit. My left foot hurt, my headlamp flickered, and I started crying at the start line. Then I said my mantra aloud: 'I go again.' I restarted, walked the first half mile, and the loop became lighter. Every loop after that, I repeated that phrase.

What I Ate

I ate something every loop: banana bites, rice cakes, electrolyte drink. Every 4 loops I had warm soup. It wasn't about calories - it was about rhythm and comfort. I avoided caffeine until loop 30, then used it surgically.

The Final Loops

At loop 42, only two of us remained. The other runner looked solid. But on loop 43, they didn't return. I finished my loop - alone - and finally heard the bell: I had won. 179.18 miles, 43 hours, no sleep, and a lifetime of perspective.

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Final Thoughts

You don't win a backyard ultra with speed. You win it with rhythm, patience, and belief. If I did it, you can too - one loop at a time.