

# Two hikers race across

Clemson students cover rugged 76 miles in less than 44 hours

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Two Clemson University students completed a through-hike of the 76-mile Foothills Trail in less than 44 hours in early November.

Boykin Lucas and Eric Owensby — and a third friend, Kevin Ferguson, who completed 50 miles of the journey — determined that they needed something interesting and challenging to do.

"It wasn't preplanned," Lucas said. "We just decided to give it a try. We had to do it fast because we had to be back in class Monday morning."

The trail passes through some of the most rugged terrain in the state, connecting Oconee State Park north of Walhalla with Table Rock State Park in Pickens County.

Owensby, a 22-year-old mechanical engineering student from Spartanburg, said he'd always wanted to hike the entire trail but

never had time.

"I thought it would take three or four days," Owensby said, "but Boykin said his dad had tried to do it in 24, and that we could probably finish in less than 48 hours."

They got on the trail about 5:45 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 7, and hiked in darkness and rain until 3 a.m., when they napped trailside for three hours. Cold and wet, they began hiking again at 7:30 a.m. with the plan of going 18 hours straight.

"We got completely exhausted," Lucas explained, about their decision to stop after midnight, and only 17 hours straight on the trail.

At that point, Ferguson dropped out. Meanwhile, Lucas and Owensby slept for six hours.

When they woke, they had to search their souls for the will to finish.

"We talked, and we were like, 'We've come this far, we might as well finish it,'" said Lucas, a 22-year-old history major from Fort

## Foothills Trail

Mill.

Maybe it was exhaustion, maybe the trail was playing tricks on their minds. But the two decided to run the downhill sec-

tions of the trail during the last six hours of their effort.

The duo ran into two friends who had come to pick them up, and they all

ran the last three miles together.

Their total time on trail was 43 hours and 45 minutes. And that may, or may not be a record.

That's because there is no "official speed record," said Robert Stephenson, chairman of the Foothills Trail Conference board.



Submitted photo

Boykin Lucas, right, and Eric Owensby take a breather at the end of their 43-hour, 45-minute race across the Foothills Trail, which stretches from Oconee State Park to Table Rock State Park.