

54th Three Peaks Race and 5th World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge 2008

Race Report

Where to begin?

- On Line Entries - full within 36 hours.
- The luck with the weather- I understand it rained a few miles away at Kirby Lonsdale.
- The wonderful spectacle created by the record number of starters.
- The brilliant run by Anna Pichrtova who broke a very good Women's record by two minutes.
- The unique introduction of Stage Prizes.
- The great post race atmosphere during and after the Presentation Ceremony.
- The presence of over 100 overseas athletes.
- The success of holding the race on a Saturday for the first time.
- The family entertainment, the Brass Band, the groups playing in the marquee.
- The fantastic team work of the committee and marshals whose efforts made the event a success.
- The profusion of Emails thanking the committee for their efforts.
- The magnificent support of our sponsors and local residents who made it all possible.

We cannot cover all the above in a short report, it would take a book to explain the organisation problems but thankfully it all came good on the day. The feedback from overseas athletes is full of praise for the friendly way they were received and I must thank Settle Harriers for all the help they gave in transporting and entertaining them. The W.M.R.A. also seem to be well satisfied with our staging of a World Championship event.

So, to the race itself. Predictably we had some death or glory runners leading on Pen y Ghent and the stage prize went to Billy Burns who was in 4th place at the summit. Anna Pichrtova (henceforth in this report to be known as A.P.) took the Women's award.

The trog over to Ribblehead took its toll and sorted the men from the boys and the fastest climbs up Whernside were recorded by Lloyd Taggart and Angela Mudge.

I was warned by the Slovenian Team Manager to watch out for Mitja Kosovelj, whose CV includes World Trophy Junior wins and top three places in the World Trophy Senior. Mitja enhanced his growing reputation by leading off Whernside and finishing in a highly creditable 3rd place. Thomas Owens surprised almost everyone by finishing second. He was coming through like a Northern Rail train at the finish and took the fastest descent from Ingleborough prize. I find his descent time of 26.59 incredible. Women's fastest descent award went to you know who A.P.

Which leads to the performances of the Scots and in particular Jethro Lennox. Whilst we expected Angela Mudge to gain a medal, few if any, except perhaps his coach Malcolm Patterson, could have expected Jethro to win. Our congratulations to him on a wonderful consistent run and fine win. As so often happens, the climb and descent of Whernside were the key features of his run.

Which in turn leads us to the relative comparison of national performances and here the English runners, competing on their home fells, may have been slightly disappointed with their medal haul. Whilst they packed well in the top ten they only won one medal. The Scots took a gold and silver and other medals went to Czech Republic, Slovenia and Australia. Only Thomas Owen upheld the honour of England.

Team wise, Pudsey and Bramley took the Men's award and Parsec Club Russia the Women's. We also gave Calder Valley Ladies the equivalent team award for being the first team in the English Championship.

There was some criticism of the entry fee but we calculate that, due to generous sponsorship, 75% of the fee was returned direct to all finishers in either merchandise or refreshments.

Finally, the success of the 2008 race leaves the committee with some difficult decisions for next year. Perhaps the key one is whether to revert to a Sunday race or stick with Saturday. Feedback would be appreciated.

Dave Hodgson

President Three Peaks Race Association.

