

## The La Sportiva Lake District Mountain Trial Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### Planner's Report

Three courses were provided:

**Classic: 26.5 km 2150m ascent 11 controls**

**Medium: 19.6km 1700m ascent 7 controls**

**Short: 16.3 km 1250m ascent 8 controls**

In the event of Bad Weather courses being utilised this became:

**Classic: 21.9 km 1600m ascent 10 controls**

**Medium: 16.3km 1250m ascent 8 controls**

**Short: 16.3 km 1250m ascent 8 controls**

All courses, including Bad Weather courses were planned using 12 control sites.

The bad weather courses that had been planned but not used, utilised existing control points and brought everybody quickly off the severer easterly fells on to the lower and less rocky westerly fells. The intention was to corral all competitors in to a much narrower area of lower fells. Control close times were also narrowed to bring everyone including marshals in off the fells in a timely manner.

Reviews of the routes taken on Routegadget and conversations on the day would suggest that the courses and weather combined to provide the sort of challenges required of a Mountain Trial.

Starting competitors up to Alcock Tarn for map issue meant that we could safely cross them over the A591 before starting the timing. The long hard climb up to the tarn took them above the worse of the bracken and presented them with an immediate route choice, a decision that did not involve any road options which have been the case if the maps had been issued lower down the hill side.

Getting back across the A591 at Dunmail Raise was achieved by using a time out facility within the SI system. This also provided a decisive point for monitoring competitor progress.

Only two points around all the courses were marshalled. This provided sufficient information to be gathered as to competitor progress yet minimised the number of marshals out on the fells. The only downside to this is that the controls needed to be put out on the fells in advance of the event, this I did myself and they were later checked by the controllers Dan and Karen. No problems were experienced from placing controls on the fells up to five days in advance of the event.

Putting the controls out so far in advance meant that they were suitably weighted by stones to prevent possible wind damage. While a short stake was used to give the control flag some height, this did unfortunately lead to the flags being closer to the

ground than would be ideal and some found this a problem with the first control on the short course.

Parallel monitoring of the competitors progress at two points around the courses was made using both Raynet and SPORTident radio controls. The first being at Dunmail Raise where it provided valuable information as to which sections of the fells competitors could be found and then again at a point about three quarters of the way around the courses. This duplication provided a direct comparison between the two systems which may be of use in future trials.

The SI radio control system uses a mobile network to transmit text messages back to the central system of which dibber was used at what time. This interfaces directly with the entry/results system to provide names of those who have and have not been through those controls. This worked very well with one exception. The unit at Dunmail having been working fine stopped transmitting for just under an hour after the unit had been knocked in some way. The Raynet system was used to sort this problem out, although presumably a mobile phone could also have been used. So while the SI system works well it may currently lack the reliability needed to rely on it for safety monitoring purposes.

Raynet provided their usual sterling service. Using this method could be subject to possible errors: Obscured race numbers or transcript errors are both possible as well as being a potentially less timely process.

These control sites had been selected as having sufficient mobile phone coverage for the system to function. This may not be possible in all future Trials.

The Short course appears to have two distinct types of competitor, the longstanding supporters of the event who are relatively elderly and newcomers/young to the Trial who are looking to get an insight into the nature of the Trial. This year's Short course was probably too hard under foot for the older competitors and too long for the newcomers such that the winning time was about 30 minutes too long. In drier and clearer conditions this may have been perceived differently by all.

I would like to thank Dan and Karen Parker for their invaluable help in getting the courses ready for the Trial; Malcolm Campbell for preparing the map; Tim Goffe for organising the marshals; Andrew Leaney for his work with the SI system and keeping me updated as to competitor progress; Jerry Purkis and Julian Lailey for helping collect in controls after the event; Miriam and David for helping guide me through the LDMT machine.

While I was grateful to be asked as to whether I would like to plan any future years' trials, I currently feel that my personal circumstances would not make it an easy enough task to fulfil. Ideally this should be planned by someone who lives in or close to the Lakes. May the Lake District Mountain Trial continue to be successful.

Quentin Harding

September 2018