

## **Organiser's report of the 2023 Mountain Trial**

The 68<sup>th</sup> running of the Mountain Trial took place from Eskdale Youth Hostel. We had use of the small entrance lobbies which provided a sheltered base from which to run the various administrative procedures before, during and after the race. An indoor space provides security against bad weather and gives us a good supply of power. It is certainly worth considering a location with indoor facilities along with the area for running when choosing a location. We were able to secure a good parking field a couple of hundred metres away from the event base, and the farmer was kind enough to allow us park and camp the night before. The venue lacked access to the internet nor was there a mobile phone signal.

We had an entry of 185 runners, and there were a number of people who did not start. Leaving for 2023 - 4 completions from 48 starters on the Classic. 17 from 36 on the Medium and 40 from 72 on the Short. A total of 156 starters from the 185 entries. Around 18% non-starting.

( 2022 figures - 54 starters on the Classic with 44 successful completions, 35 out of 45 starters completed the Medium trial and 62 out of 69 starters completed the short. A total of 168 runners.

( 2021 figures 64/86, 41/66, 81/82 with 186 /234 )

The weather tried to hamper the day. Despite a good weather forecast from the Met office on Saturday, Sunday's forecast suggested a possibility of thundery showers. This turned out to be correct – making a few things more challenging. Especially true for the fell marshals and radio operators, with some radio masts being taken down for short durations. The catering was provided by the Youth Hostel and well received, though I managed not to order warm drinks, and the warden didn't spot this either. First aid was provided by Derek Allison, who has provided cover for many years. There was no serious first aid required. This will be his last as he is not renewing his certificate, and thanks are due to him for his support over the years. Pete Bland's van was in attendance, but they weren't as well supported as in previous years. This might be a combination of the weather and the car park being remote?

Sadly, the planning of the courses was a little optimistic with regard to the lengths and climb. Whilst many runners had enjoyed their day, and we did receive a great deal of positive feedback, it is clear that we need to review the procedures and timings of the planning process to help reduce the chances of these issues recurring. I am conducting a review at the moment.

As the issues with the course lengths became apparent, and the likelihood of runners returning late, we had to extend the 5pm deadline for rescue team involvement– though most runners had returned by then. We did have to make a decision some time after this to call the police with regard to an unaccounted-for runner. Thankfully they returned to race HQ seconds after the phone call was completed and so we were able to cancel the call out before the rescue team had processed the call.

There was an issue with laminating the maps, which resulted in the maps not being laminated and having to be bagged with a very late delivery.

The Lyon equipment Mountain Trial offers remarkable value for money for runners. This is due to significant sponsorship. Lyon Equipment continue to provide significant

financial support for the event. Pete Bland's shop provide a very generous package for the extensive prizes. Without them the entry fee would have to significantly increase.

Permissions for the use of the area was the usual challenge. The area was almost entirely National Trust but there were a number of individual owners, tenants, graziers and commoners. There were no access fees to pay this year. We are indebted to the many farmers and commoners who gave permission. Everyone spoken to was very supportive of the event and grateful for being asked for permission.

SportIdent provided the main results service, and once again this worked very well. They are also able to provide details of runners' progress, once a box is returned. Raynet provided some support from some of the checkpoints which allowed us to track runners around the course.

The event is only possible due to the significant help from a number of people who take responsibility for significant aspects of the organisation, making the named organiser's task much easier. David Rosen looks after the website update and completes all the liaison with SportIdent – the entries, start times and production of various registration and start lists. There are also a good number of individuals who offer their services for the many essential on the day tasks like registration, car parking etc. Pete Nelson undertakes a tremendous amount of work in producing the race maps and liaising with the printers.

We are always looking to expand the team of helpers, so will welcome offers whether people are members of the LDMTA or not. This is likely to require more fell marshals as we look to enhance the safety support on the fell.