

2014 Championship Update

Kentmere Horseshoe (English Championship) - 20th July 2014

Distance: 19.8 km / 12.3 miles

Climb: 1006m / 3300 feet

Entries for the fourth counter in the 2014 English Fell Championships at Kentmere had reached its maximum entry of 650 within month or so of opening. I was one of the many entrants who failed to make the start line but over 350 runners set off on a warm humid afternoon to tackle Ill Bell, High Street and Kentmere Pike followed by fast undulating terrain until the descent back into Kentmere when a heavy downpour provided a respite from the heat.

Tom Addison (Helm Hill) re-established his English Championship credentials after missing the previous championship race at Ennerdale. Tom finished two and a half minutes clear of current championship leader, Rob Hope (Pudsey & Bramley) with Karl Gray (Calder Valley) just 14 seconds further adrift. Fourth placed Rhys Findlay-Robinson (Dark Peak) retained his third place in the championship behind Rob Hope and Morgan Donnelly (Borrowdale) who was sixth at Kentmere. Reigning champion Morgan Donnelly retained his leadership in the V40 Championship ahead of Karl Gray with Darren Kay moving up to share third place with Nick Charlesworth (Wharfedale) but Rob Hope can still overtake the leaders, having celebrated his 40th birthday midway through the season. 2013 runner up William Neill (Mercia) was confirmed as U23 champion with an excellent seventh place overall just over five minutes behind the winner. Runner up Anthony Dalton (Rossendale) moved into fourth place in the U23 championship behind Jonny Malley (Dark Peak), third both at Kentmere and in the championship and Jack Wright (Ambleside) who despite placing fourth at Kentmere still held on to runner up's spot in the championship.

V40 Helen Berry (Holmfirth) took advantage of the absence of unbeaten Women's championship leader, Victoria Wilkinson (Bingley) to register her first Open English championship win over two and a half minutes clear of Mel Price (Mercia) with V45 Judith Jepson (Dark Peak) in third place. Despite only finishing 10th, Caitlin Rice (Glossopdale) heads the championship, three points ahead of Mel Price with Victoria Wilkinson two points further behind. Mel Price increased her lead in the English V40 championship to six points ahead of Judith Jepson with Hazel Robinson (Ambleside) who was fourth V40, two points further adrift but Helen Berry in fourth can still overtake the three leaders. Leading U23 and eighth placed woman, Lauren Munro-Bennett (Helm Hill) moved up to within two points of championship leader, Kate Titlow (Vale Royal); Nichola Jackson (Preston) was second placed U23 and holds third place in the championship;

the only other U23, Charlotte Milligan (Helm Hill) registered her first points in the U23 championship for third place.

Following maximum points at Kentmere, Judith Jepson has retained the English V45 championship; two v50s, Gill Myers (Wharfedale) and Julie Carter (Keswick) currently hold second and third positions in the V45 championship but they were only in fourth and fifth place at Kentmere and were headed by V60 Ann-Marie Jones (Altrincham) and Jann Smith (Ilkley). Gill Myers and Julie Carter head the V50 championship followed by Sally Newman (Calder Valley). The three leading V60s at Kentmere, Ann-Marie Jones, Wendy Dodds (Clayton) and Sue Haslam (Scarborough) hold the medal positions in the V60 championship with Ann-Marie confirmed as 2014 champion. These three runners also headed the V55s at Kentmere but Wendy heads Ann-Marie Jones in the V55 championship with Nicola Davies (Borrowdale) and Kate Beaty (Cumberland), neither of whom ran at Kentmere, sharing third place. Linda Lord (Clayton) was leading V65 five minutes ahead of Lesley Malarkey (Keswick) with Barbara Haigh (Penistone) in third place; Linda Lord heads Lesley Malarkey by three points in the championship with Beryl Buckley (Glossopdale), fourth at Kentmere, holding the bronze medal position.

Craig Roberts (Kendal) was the leading V50 and also headed the V45s; Stephen Pyke (Dark Peak) was second V45 followed by Paul Crabtree (Wharfedale). Paul Cornforth (Borrowdale) was runner up to Craig Roberts in the V50s; Paul has now been second placed V50 in all the three races he has run in the 2014 championship following his runner-up slot in the 2013 championship. Having turned fifty in June, Ian Grindley (Mercia) was third placed V50 less than a minute behind Paul. Although only placing fifth V45, Nick Charlesworth (Wharfedale) took over the leadership of the V45 championship from two V50s, Mark Roberts (Borrowdale) who didn't race at Kentmere, and David Sargent (Eden) who is one point ahead of Stephen Pyke and Paul Crabtree who now share fourth place. In the absence of Mark Roberts, David Sargent and Joe Blackett (Dark Peak) took over the leadership in the V50 Championship one point ahead of Rick Stuart (Helm Hill).

William Proctor (Helm Hill) was leading V55, followed by Mike Egner (Penistone) and Tom McGaff (Cheshire Hill Racers) whilst in the V60s, Nick Pearce (Ilkey) headed David Loan (Keswick) for the first time in this year's English championship closely followed by V65 Ben Grant (Harrogate). The leading places in both the V55 and V60 championships are held by David Loan and Nick Pearce closely followed by Tom McGaff in the V55s and Ben Grant in the V60s. Ben Grant has now confirmed his victory in the English V65 Championship with maximum points; second place at Kentmere for Adrian Dixon (FRA) moved him to third in the championship whilst third placed Michael Crook (Horwich) retained second place, the position he occupied in last year's championship. In the V70s, Norman Bush (Ilkley) remained unbeaten to guarantee the championship; second placed Raymond Brown (Penistone) moved ahead of Peter Heneghan (Horwich)

who didn't run at Kentmere. 2013 runner up Roger Ashby (Pennine) was third placed V70 at Kentmere and still has a chance of a medal.

The fact that the largest number of teams being fielded so far in this year's championship probably reflected that we are reaching the business end of the season; amongst the men, 26 Open teams, 19 V40 teams and 12 V50 teams, together with 13 women's Open and 9 V40 teams. Ambleside and Dark Peak shared the honours in the Women's Teams, with Ambleside having a three point advantage over Dark Peak in the Open teams whilst Dark Peak prevailed in the V40s. Third place was taken by Helm Hill in the Open teams and by Wharfedale in the V40s. Reigning champions Ambleside have now retained their title in the Women's Open championship with four straight victories, with Helm Hill, Dark Peak and Ilkley currently in second, third and fourth place challenging for the remaining medal positions. Dark Peak are now only one point behind Ambleside in the V40 teams with Wharfedale, Clayton and Keswick separated by only two points in their battle for third place.

Dark Peak again dominated the Men's Teams winning both the Open and V40s and coming second to Helm Hill in the V50s. Burnden Road Runners took a surprise third place in the V50s. Second and third places were occupied by Calder Valley and Borrowdale in the Men's Open teams and by Wharfedale and Borrowdale in the Men's V40 teams. In the Men's Open teams, Dark Peak lead Borrowdale by four points with Calder Valley three points further behind. The Men's V40 team championship is likely to go to the wire, Borrowdale and Dark Peak both have 41 points but Borrowdale lead with a lower points aggregate score; Wharfedale are in third place. There was no change amongst the leaders in the Men's V40 team championship; Helm Hill increased their lead over Dark Peak in second who in turn opened the gap from Cheshire Hill Racers.

Ian Hartman

FRA Statistician