

NEWCOMER MATT PROCTOR WINS AT KNOWL HILL

THIS YEAR'S KNOWL HILL FELL RACE (2011) attracted a pleasing 127 runners, mostly from the North West of England.

As in the past sixteen or so years, the race was the final instalment of the annual Rochdale Harriers three day event. This consists of a road race, a multi-terrain race and finally a fell race on consecutive days, each being about 6 miles long. Typically 40 or so participants complete all three races and about 100 fresh-legged fell runners join them on the final day for Knowl Hill.

The conditions at Know Hill were cool this year, with light rain throughout, making for good running except on slippery cobbles towards the finish line.

This year a local lad, Matt Proctor of Rochdale Harriers, decided to see what he could do on the fells. He was in good form, having won the road race on day 1 and the multi-terrain race on day 2, but he was inexperienced on the fells and the two previous days of racing put him at a disadvantage.



Knowing he had neither the technical skills or shoes to match the fell runners, Matt's strategy was to put as much distance as he could between him and the rest of the field on the more runnable sections. He started off hard on the first climb leaving much of the field way behind. When it came to the all fours scramble through moss and sheep droppings, Jon Wright of Todmorden and James Titmus of Pudsey and Bramley took the lead.

Meanwhile Anna Kelly of Clayton Le Moors had a significant lead over the other ladies. Karon Forster (Spectrum Striders) was next and Dr Jennie Ransome of Road Runners followed Karon closely. At the top of the scramble, Jennie managed to pass Karon.

With the more technical parts of the course behind, Matt Proctor's speed gave him the upper hand and he was delighted to bag his first fell race victory, posting 44 min 24 sec. Jon Wright and James Titmus were 11 and 15 seconds behind respectively.

Anna Kelly won the ladies race in 57 min 40 sec. Jennie Ransome, who had raced all three days, made up much of the difference but was unable to catch Anna and posted 57:58. Karon Forster was third with an excellent time of 58 min 40 sec.



Jan Atkins of Chorley Harriers used the three days as 51st to 53rd of her 65 races in a year to celebrate her 65th birthday, clocking 70 min 33 sec.

In only her third fell race, newcomer Danielle Beard of Rochdale Harriers entertained



the other runners by squealing all the way down the slippery Lady Lea descent. She was first Senior Lady, 7th lady overall, in 61 min 44 sec.

Rob Jackson from Horwich completed all three days for the 12th time and finished third overall across the event. At Knowl Hill he was placed a tremendous 7th (48:38), winning the male veteran 45 category despite heavy legs from the first two days.

John Mayall
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