



Race Report

CAPE WRATH CHALLENGES

Date: May 2008
Location: Durness – far North West of Scotland

5 Races over 6 Days.....

By: Peter Chittenden

Just back from competing in the above challenges, 5 races over varying distances and terrains, in 6 days at Durness in the far North West of Scotland.

I travelled with two fellow runners from Liss Runners and Hadley Runners, we flew to Inverness from Gatwick and travelled by car to Durness.

Unfortunately we were all carrying injuries, mine was an Achilles problem and I had not run for 5 weeks. So we were all concerned as to how we would perform. In my case, fitted out with a new pair of supportive trainers and supportive insoles to help with over pronation and plenty of sticky plaster tape to bind up the ankle and back of the calf, I was at least ready!

Monday 12 May – choice of Half Marathon or 10k Road Race around Sea Loch Eriboll, very undulating and hilly with stunning scenery. We all opted for the 10k, I finished in 54.13, 25th out of 37 runners, the 10k winners time was 38.58. The Half Marathon winner finished in 01.08.39.

Tuesday 13 May – again choice of 5.5 mile Hill Race or 4.0 mile 'without Hill Section', I decided to tackle the Hill Race, both mainly off road on gravel footpath, grass and through heather. The hill section also included passing through two Burns and a climb of approximately 0.75 of a mile. I finished in 51.26, 54th out of 65 runners, the winners time was 34.01. The shorter race was won in 34.36.

Wednesday 14 May – again another choice, 8.5 mile or 6.5 mile, multi terrain – tarmac, gravel and grass. Longer race included extra Hilly Sections, I tackled the 8.5 mile, again stunning scenery, one of the best races I have ever run. I finished in 01.29.59, 59th out of 67 runners, the winners time was 56.31. The shorter race was won in 49.10.

Achilles problem had been holding up well till now, had been applying a pack of frozen peas to the ankle after each race.

Thursday 15 May – Ankle was sore this morning, so applied cold pack of frozen peas before the race which was an approx 3 mile Beach Run over wet/dry sand, up/down and through sand dunes. I finished in 28.48, 4th out of 90 runners, the winners time was 28.18.

Saturday 17 May – Cape Wrath Marathon, we opted to run as a 4 person team in 5 stages, so we roped in another veteran runner. We named our team 266 – our combined ages !! The stages were from Start, 4,7,7,4 and 4.2 mile to Finish.

The start was across a Sea Loch, via small ferry boats to the Cape Wrath Headland, I opted for stage 2, from Inshore Lock up to the Cape Wrath Lighthouse, the most northerly point in Scotland. Very undulating and hilly on rough track, this area is Army Firing and Target Area, so just keep to the track, no short cuts advised, fantastic scenery, must be one of the last great wilderness areas in the UK, and to finish at the Lighthouse was a bonus. You do not get a sight



of the Lighthouse until you come around the Headland and there it is standing at about 500 metres away, a truly stunning sight. I finished my stage in 66.54, and as a Team our time was 04.00.29, finishing 3rd out of 14 teams in the 5 stage category. The winning team time was 03.35.53.

Saturday night and Sunday ankle was swelling up so again applied cold pack of peas and strapped it up. It took about 7 days on getting home with applying cold packs for swelling to reduce, currently have not run since arriving home about 5 weeks, have been advised not to run for some 8-10 weeks, so its out on the bike and a programme of exercises to sort out and keep some form of fitness.

Was it worth it – YOU BET, would certainly attempt the Challenge again but next time without injuries.

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