

The First V50 Challenge, 1997

Age before Beauty

The 1997 Epic Challenge between HPRC Senior Ladies and the over 50 Men resulted in a convincing win for the latter by 59 to 76 points. The win was celebrated by the Post-Peak Plodders receiving the winner's cake rather than the humble pie in the bar afterwards.

Ever since Bernard's observation that the two groups should be broadly equivalent in road race terms, and the subsequent arranging of the race, Val and I were very much aware that it was going to be dependent on who ran on the day, given the small number of runners involved. In the event there was a good turn out with most eligible runners participating in what was a keenly fought race, run against a ferocious Holme Pierrepont wind on the home straight.

While the more attractive, and at the time unbeaten team, resorted to tactics often associated with other team sports, such as mass huddles and affirmative shouts, the over 50 men used the well-cried, and indeed, only valid approach for road racing:

- a. Get as many eligible runners in your team as possible
- b. Run faster than the opposition

One of the attractions of the race was the fact that the runners involved were not swamped in numbers and performance terms by hordes of senior and 40-50yr vet men. Runners were challenging for the first 16-20 places rather than the 50th, 80th, 250th or 1000th place as is usual in road races. Indeed, in a moment of revelation afterwards Bernard admitted that it was in fact the first race he had ever won in over 35 years of running (we were unable to ascertain if Mary Mills knew this prior to the finish and held back to give him his moment of glory....)

I would like to highlight a couple of significant factors in what was a good all-round team performance by the Post Peak Plodders. One was the excellent run by Dave Sigs, in one of his somewhat rare forays in to racing, and the other was the group of Tony, Phil, Dave Wragg, Derek Dent and Laurie who split the women's team with some astute and tactical running.

Using a Matthew Moore distance calculation method involving wind speed, altitude, Saturn's position relative to the Sun, and the strength of the curry the night before, I calculate the race was run over approximately 4.8723145676342 miles. As no-one will have run over this distance before, everyone did a PB. Congratulations to all participants!

In order that we men can gloat once more, I include the results for the record:

1. Bernard	29:34	10. Dave W.	33:33	19. Neil	38:17
2. Mary	30:15	11. Derek D.	33:44	20. Alison G.	38:36
3. Derek P.	30:56	12. Laurie	33:45	21. Tom	39:36
4. Jane	31:39	13. Jackie	33:37	22. Chris	40:22
5. Patti	32:02	14. Linda	34:11	23. Ron	43:44
6. Dave S.	33:02	15. Val	34:23	24. Julia	46:21
7. Lesley	33:15	16. Jo	34:28	24. Lynne	46:21
8. Tony	33:29	17. Sandy	36:13	26. Jenny	46:42
9. Phil	33:32	18. Angela	37:11		

Derek P.

P.S. Bernard on returning from his victory lap of 250 miles to Norfolk has offered to get the running performance tables out to see if any other amazing facts can be used as a basis for another intra-club challenge. As for the two groups involved in this one, it has been suggested that a challenge based on ironing would help the 'only-defeated-once' East Midlands Elite team square the series (I expect however that they will ignore this, preferring to win the East Midlands Road Race League instead).