

Hill & Dale Race 3 Slieve Martin

Report by The Terminator

On Thursday 25th April the third race of the 2019 Hill and Dale race series took place in Rostrevor up and down Slieve Martin. Preparation on the run up to the event went reasonably smoothly – plenty of people had kindly offered to volunteer, the course was marked, and everything ready. Unfortunately, the first aid kit that had went missing on the first race had still not turned up. The kit had been replaced however we were still missing the defibrillator. A lot of discussion was had around how a first aid kit could go missing and where on earth it could be.

With the British Championships at the weekend, 234 runners registered (down on last year) as runners were sensibly tapering in preparation for Saturday. Conditions at registration were pleasant, with the sun shining – it was a different story on the summit. Maybe it was a sign of things to come with storm Hannah approaching - visibility was poor with strong gusts making the temperature drop several degrees. Conditions underfoot were slippery from the rain earlier that day.

Just before 7:30 the runners lined up to listen to the usual briefing by Stevie Rice and the race was started promptly. The race starts with a deceptively steep start through the trees. From the off Seamy Lynch (Newcastle AC) took the lead with Mari Troeng (Newcastle AC) leading the ladies. Seamy remained unchallenged and held his position all the way to the finish, coasting across the line. Colm Murtagh (Newcastle AC) followed in 2nd place overall and 1st V35. Luke Russell (Mourne Runners) had a strong run making the final podium in 3rd.

Rivalries were fierce slightly further back, with Richard Bell (Mourne Runners) leading Sean Russell (Newcastle AC) into the finish for 5th place with Sean just piping Richard on the line. There was just 12 seconds that separated Newcastle AC club mates John Kelly and Pete Grant for 1st V50 with John getting the category win. Another close race between Deon McNeilly (Newcastle AC) and Jim Brown (BARF) for 1st V55, with Deon holding on to the lead. Just ahead of Deon was 1st V60 Dominic McGreevy (Newcastle AC) having a strong run.

In the ladies' race, Newcastle AC's Mari Treong lead the race from start to finish, with Mourne Runner's Lynne Spence having a fantastic run to finish 2nd, with Newry AC's Sarah Quinn finishing 3rd. We had Barbara Hunter (Southville Running Club) over from England running her first Hill and Dale on Thursday evening. Hazel McLaughlin (Lagan Valley) talked her into running the race while she was over. I don't know how Hazel described the race to Barbara – Hazel's idea of "easy" is usually far from it!

Once sweeper John "Butcher" Kelly had arrived, it was off to the Cloughmore Inn, for refreshments, food and presentations, including the much sought-after H&D Mug spot prizes. The race organisers would like to thank everyone that gave up their time to help make another successful race, in particular the marshals out on the hill who had to endure cold conditions. For those that are still wondering about what happened to the first aid kit, well you will be relieved to hear the kit (including defibrillator) was found left mysteriously by registration... apparently it was in the boot of someone's car!

Next week's race returns to Slieve Binnian, the only summit finish in the series.
Remember to bring your number and full body cover.