

Country to Capital 45

14th January 2012

Near perfect conditions greeted record numbers of runners at the opening race in the 2012 UK ultra race calendar. The frosty start, as the mercury dropped to 6.5 degrees below freezing, resulting from clear skies and rewarded runners with idyllic views stretching across the Chilterns as almost 200 runners started the journey to London. A select group of 9 runners set the early pace, arriving at 8 miles just over one hour after the off in the usually quiet market town of Wendover in Buckinghamshire, at this point 4 minutes inside the course record pace set by last years winner Craig Stewart.



Nearly 200 runners take to a fast start
down Wendover high street.

As the early pace started to tell, the lead group was whittled down initially to 7 runners and then to 5. The real damage being done in the few miles between the second checkpoint at **17.5 miles** and the Grand Union canal. Edward Catmur reached the halfway point on his own closely followed by Kwame Okojie, Matthew Lynas, Rob Heaslop and Mark Jefford, all pursuing gaps of less than 1 minute to the man in front as the pace heated up.

Edward continued to stretch his lead on the Grand Union canal, ultimately winning the race comfortably in 5:22:38. Behind him Matthew and Kwame joined forces: working together to build a near 10 minute gap to fourth place. At this point the first three positions looked secure, but Oliver Sinclair had other ideas. Starting to make his move at around the 30 mile mark Oliver slowly closed the gap to the podium and eventually caught Kwame within the last few miles. Mathew Lynas held on for second place in 5:35:40, claiming the prize for First V40 runner in the process with a fast finishing Oliver Sinclair third in 5:38:11.



Runners enjoyed the Chiltern trails

Another candidate for performance of the day came from Harry Hunter, the oldest man in the field at 63. Harry belied his years to claim the V50 category prize in 7:27:30. - an improvement of over 30 minutes on his time from 12 months earlier. Prizes on the day were donated by Apex Sports who provide regular support to many local runners being less than 5 miles from the start of the race in Wendover.

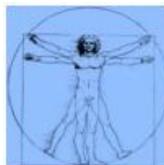
The ladies race was an even closer affair with only 2 minutes separating the leading 3 at the finish. The early pace was set by Claire Shelley who built a 5 minute lead over the first 8 miles which she maintained over the rolling countryside of the first half. Cath Holloway in second started to close the gap once the runners reached the canal and moved into the lead shortly before thirty miles. Behind them Trinity Booth, Sandra Bowes and Wendy Shaw were vying for third place some 13 minutes behind the lead. By the 32 mile mark these 3 had caught Claire and were making serious inroads into the race leader. The four pursuing ladies were within a minute of each other and had closed the deficit to Cath to just 6 minutes. Wendy Shaw was the first to make a move getting within sight of the leader at the final checkpoint before falling back to third place. Trinity Booth finished strongly to claim second place in 6 hours 50 minutes but the winning lady on the day was Cath Holloway in 6:49:30, also claiming the Female Vet prize in the process.



Edward Catmur (centre) held off the challenge of Mathew Lynas and Oliver Sinclair

Our thanks go out to Pal Therapies who worked tirelessly at the finish working their own particular brand of magic on tired and aching legs, Richer Sea sports photography for capturing your achievements and of course our prize sponsors Apex Sports and DB Apparel.

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