

Controllers' Report

SLMM – Howgills 2019

We hope most competitors enjoyed their sunny weekend in the Howgills. The area offers much potential for route choice and looking at the linear courses on Routegadget we can see that there were significant variations on many legs, so congratulations to Andy for posing some challenging problems. To clear up any confusion, the distances and climbs on the control descriptions were measured on a “sensible” route; they were not necessarily the “best” route which varies from person to person, or even the marked planner’s route.

Fairfield also shows a huge variety of routes, even for competitors achieving similar scores. From a planning point of view, it proved a bit of a challenge to make sure the top competitors were kept busy over the two days and at quite a late stage in the planning process a couple of extra controls were added to make sure no-one would actually get all of them. We estimated that a top elite competitor taking the best route could get 1120 out of the available 1200 points, so congratulations to Tom Gibbs for getting so close to this target.

Winning times for the courses were generally close to the targets with the notable exception of Carrock Fell (especially Saturday) where the winning time was about 25% too long and to a lesser extent Scaffell. The problem on Carrock Day 1 was that we seriously overestimated the speed that competitors would be able to achieve on the rough but relatively flat western slopes of Wild Boar Fell where it can be hard to run even downhill. This issue also affected the other courses that crossed the road (Kirk Fell and Scaffell) but they reached the higher ground on Wild Boar Fell where it is a bit less rough and were therefore slowed down less. With hindsight, we can see that the Carrock Fell course should have stayed west of the road despite the risk that competitors covered the same ground twice. We sincerely apologise to those who were out much longer than they expected and didn't enjoy it. We will learn the lesson from this and correct things for next year, so please don't be put off doing Carrock again.

Dan and Karen Parker
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