

British Night Championships

For those of you who read my last article, I'm sure you've been dying to hear the sequel. Well, your waiting is over.....

Where were we? Oh yes, well I did manage to get back from Kazakhstan late on the Friday evening, and luckily, my Manager (Adele) had got everything ready for our trip up north. As we were not running until Saturday evening, we left Cornwall mid-morning with the view to catching a good pub lunch en-route which we duly did off the M5 somewhere up near Gloucester. So, fed and watered, we continued on our trouble-free way up to Leeds.

This year, the British Nights were to be held at Middleton Park, just to the southwest of Leeds, but still within the urban area. This all felt a little odd as we peeled off the motorway and were directed to the John Charles Sports Complex for parking apparently located in the middle of an industrial estate.

Needless to say, it was a forested park, with some large open areas, and also as a bit of a novelty, a recently decommissioned golf course! Take a look at the M50 course here (on the night it was a back-to-back map).



As usual with the British Nights, they were full length courses, so I had 8.8km and 235m of climb which went up and over the big hill twice and onto the golf course twice. In between times, I was in the very detailed forest with lots of pits, but with the good track network and excellent map, was able to stay on track and avoid any major errors.

For those who like detail, I'll simply say that for me, the hardest legs were those re-entering the forest from the open, ie 4-5, 5-6 and 15-16 as you really had to throttle down on entering the forest and make sure you got your attack points right.

Unfortunately, I keep coming up against Quentin Harding who is probably one of the best in the world at M50, and as usual, he won in just over 60 minutes, 8 minutes ahead of the next man! He would usually have some close company in the guise of Charlie Adams, but unluckily for him, he unknowingly missed out Number 8 - pretty gutting when you get to the end of a presumed "good" run to find out you've missed one! Still, this sort of error is somewhat comforting to mere mortals, and I was pretty pleased with my 79 minutes in 7th out of 20 runners (I think I ended up running about 10.5km on the GPS).

Adele was not very pleased with her run of 5.6km and 140m of climb, as she made "loads of errors", but in the end, missed a Bronze medal by only a minute! We also caught up with Arthur who was the only other Kerno representative, but he also had a poor run saying that he'd "got lost twice".

Altogether, we both really enjoyed the event, much less so the Sunday event nearby which seemed to be situated entirely in a bramble patch - neither of us had our finest hour. I think Adele summed it up by saying that she had "had enough" by about half way round!

As a footnote, I'm writing this at Moscow airport on my way home from a short trip to Khabarovsk in Far East Russia. Two points of interest, on the flight over there, I managed to eat three breakfasts at different stages of the flight (+10 hours' time difference), but when I arrived at the hotel and was offered a fourth breakfast, I had to decline! The second point was that the snow blizzards were so bad (nearly a metre of snow in 24 hours) that my client had got snowed in at the deposit, and I was stuck in the city, so I never actually got to the site! As this is a prerequisite of the type of work I was doing, I'm probably going to have to repeat the whole trip in a couple of weeks!!

No wonder I can't keep up with Quentin.....

Phil Newall 12th March