

Tri-Adventure Event Report

Open5 :: North Lakes :: 13th February 2022

By Rob Howard, SleepMonsters



The Open5 Returns On a Wet Day in the Northern Lakes

It rained hard and non-stop last Sunday in the Lake District. It was the sort of day when most people opt for a short walk leading to a latte, or just an all day breakfast somewhere warm, a 'café day' for the tourists.

For adventure racers, and specifically those at the Open5, it was the opportunity to make a bigger splash and get even more muddy for 5 hours ... before heading back to race HQ, where they had their own exclusive café!

That was at the Braithwaite Institute, just off the A66 near Keswick, where Joe Faulkner from Nav4 was serving tea, coffee and breakfast for the arriving competitors. At registration they received a two-sided map, one side marked with run checkpoints, the other with bike checkpoints, so they could make some rough plans for the day ahead.



They wouldn't get the points values for each CP, or find out which of them were dummies, until they set off from the start line, but could assess the likely options and the course area. They would have 5 hours to get as many points as possible, choosing their own route and deciding how much of the time

they'd spend running and how much riding. (They had to get at least one checkpoint from each discipline.)

As the hall filled there were many long overdue reunions. The race hadn't taken place for two years, and over the 75 events run since 2005 a close community of racers has built up around the Open5. That's played a part in its enduring success, but this year it was time for a change as Open Adventure is closing down, and the 2022 race was taken on by Tri-Adventure under the leadership of Adam Marcinowicz.



Adam had tried to keep the event much the same as it always has been, and had the help and support of some of its regular volunteers, so it was very much a case of carrying on 'as usual'.

The course area was centred on the Derwent Fells and for the cycling there was a choice (maybe for the stronger riders only), of whether to take on the ride over the steep passes of Newlands and Honister, a route familiar to Fred Whitton riders. (CP20 at Newlands Hause was on the 20% road incline sign.)

Defending men's solo title holder Tom Gibbs commented, "Maybe I should have bought the gravel bike," and Dave Spence, who has won the last two mixed pairs events with an unrelated Kim Spence, seemed unsure about taking on the ride over the passes. "It's quite committing if you go for it, but for a good score maybe you have to," he said. (He was still recovering from his successful finish of The Spine Race last month.)



The majority of the ride checkpoints were to the south and west of Derwent Water, taking in the route of some of the Borrowdale Bash ride and making the most of the scenic trails along the lower eastern slopes of the Derwent fells, and this was where the majority would pick up their ride points.



The running checkpoints were mainly set to the south of Derwent Water and around Cat Bells, and the highest scorer was 40 points on the summit. There were also some on the other side of Newlands Valley and 3 in the valley itself, and from the pre-race discussions there was plenty of debate, no clear conclusions and some confusion as to the best options. That's how the course planner wants it to be! The general opinion was it 'quite long', too big a course for anyone to clear. (And no one did.)



The start/finish and transition area was a short ride away from the hall, at the Newlands Adventure Centre, where the marshals manning the Sportident dibbers to track the times in and out, had a big gazebo under which to shelter from the rain pelting down onto it and creating waterfalls off of the sides. Those running first left their bikes above the bank of Newlands Beck and it was already running fast and noisily, while run-off water was racing across the surrounding roads and pooling in places. No doubt everyone would have preferred a crisp winter day with blue skies, but racing in adverse weather is all part of the challenge of adventure racing, and after the past couple of years just getting out and racing, in any weather, was an opportunity to relish.

Making the right choices (which route, what to wear, when to change plan) is part of the challenge too and with the wind gusting and the combination of wet and cold, it was a day for extra and warmer gear. Tom Gibbs was waiting to start and debating whether to keep on the neoprene cycling gloves he'd worn on the ride to the start, saying, "Anything thinner will get soaked in minutes," and adding, "It's a day for making a good transition rather than a quick one."



From the start the runners and riders disappeared in every direction, down all 4 roads leading away from the centre and into the fells. During the race they would return to transition, some making it back at the time they'd planned, others not.

Some would just get a few checkpoints or opt to return to base if they were too chilled or struggling in the conditions. That's one of the great advantages of the race format: you make your own course and can be as competitive as you want to be. Your own plans and personal targets are first the priority, and only later do you compare them to others, if that matters at all.



One pair who took the option of an early return was father and son Stephen and Jack Tysome. Stephen is an experienced Open5er (5000+ points) and he was racing with 14 year old Jack, who was suffering a bit from the cold so they headed back home after scoring 125 points. He wasn't the only one shivering in the conditions and they were racing for longer than some other pairs.

There was also a mixed pair racing who may have done something new in the entire of history of Open5's – they raced without any bikes! Esther Illman had roped in Robert Nuthall at the very, very last minute and he had no bike, so they were told they could run to one bike CP and still record a score. And they did, scoring 145 points, and beating several other pairs!

One group of friends from Scotland (mostly Edinburgh) had made a long weekend for the race and their racers had the benefit of some vocal support at the transition. Lindsay and Rachel stood out in the rain for hours and cheered the racers on.

After the points were counted up, their party included the solo winner too. Jonathan Marks scored 450 with 8 penalty points, and Tom Gibbs scored 460 with 18 penalties, so they tied on 442, but Marks was the quicker to finish by almost 5 minutes and won on time. "I was just cold and wanted to finish as fast as I could," he said. "I run for Carnethy, but now live on the Isle of Mull so it was a trip to get here, but we have nothing else like this to race in Scotland."



Gibbs collected his framed photo-certificate for scoring 10,000 points as Tri-Adventure will maintain the all-time points scoring list established over all the history of the Open5's.



Penalty points decided the Male Pairs too, with the endurancelife pair of Ben Turner and Tom Davies taking the win with 390 points, thanks to second place pair Mark Chryssanthou and Jeff Powell Davies arriving back 14 minutes late and racking up 45 penalty points.



Rosemary Byde (who is top of the all time female points list) and Lucy Spain were clear winners in the female pairs (260 pts), ahead of another Carnethy pair, Fiona and Clair McDonnell. The female solo winner, Lucy Jacques, scored just 5 points less, and timed her race well, finishing in 4.57.38. The Spences were equally impressive on their timing (4.58.54) and were clear

mixed pairs winners with 345, to make it 3 wins in a row. (They did ride over Newlands and Honister.)



Solos

Male	Points/Time
1 st Jonathon Marks	442 05:03:07 -8
2 nd Tom Gibbs	442 05:08:13 -18
3 rd Ian Jones	370 04:59:46
Female	Points/Time
1 st Lucy Jacques	255 04:57:28
2 nd Carmen Elphick	245 04:50:21
3 rd Victoria Jones	225 04:52:20

Pairs

Male	Points/Time
1 st Ben Turner / Tom Davies	390 04:50:33
2 nd Mark Chryssanthou / Jeff Powell Davies	380 05:14:01 -45
3 rd Warren Mason / David Lawrance	354 05:02:10 -6
Female	Points/Time
1 st Rosemary Byde / Lucy Spain	256 05:01:03 -4
2 nd Fiona McDonnell / Clare McDonnell	225 04:53:24
3 rd Robyn Furtado / Joanna Furtado	220 04:36:48
Mixed	Points/Time
1 st David Spence / Kim Spence	345 04:58:54
2 nd Bob Smith / Jenny Allen	290 04:36:19
3 rd Laura Butler / David Rice	285 04:58:31



At the end of the race there is always more time, for those who can stay, to get hearty bowls of food and large chunks of cake from Joe, and to compare notes and routes, and that's one of the best bits of an Open5.



There's always a good crowd for the prize giving and Adam thanked those who'd helped him stage the first Tri-Adventure Open5 and gave a special presentation to James and Lisa Thurlow, who started and ran the event for so many years.

James said he was delighted the event was continuing in such good hands, and Adam thanked everyone for their support, saying, "I wanted this first one done and then we can plan for more events. There are no dates yet, but we'll let you know when there are!"