

Phil's long Run - Joss Naylor Challenge - May 28th 2005

Friday all day, 30mph winds from the SW forecast for tomorrow - should I even start!?! But the forecast was completely wrong so I assumed (hoped) tomorrow's would be as inaccurate as Friday's and hence set off to a Pooley Bridge camp-site. The night was disturbed by noisy campers and then strong winds.

4am Saturday, calm, warm and high clouds - lets get this done!

5am From Pooley Bridge with Andy Addiss and Stephen Watts. Relaxed on to the steady climb on to the High Street Range. I miss a path junction and detour for a minute - a reminder to concentrate on route finding!

6.30am Oh dear, in to the cloud and head on in to a breeze. If it stays like this I face most of next 13 hours running in to wind. Andy doing a great job as wind break running in front of me.

7.30am Andy drops off the pace and we lose him in the mist. Make the mistake of not waiting a minute to agree what he will do (Sorry Andy!). 8.10am Surprise Annette at Kirkstone by arriving 20 mins early. Feeling good but wonder if I'm working too hard by going fast in to wind. Good climb up Red Screens with Stephen and on to Fairfield and Seat Sandal. Cross wind less troublesome. Stephen going superbly only a week after his successful rapid BG. Annette never found Andy!

10.25am In to Dunmail for tea and sandwich. Chris Rhodes and Mandy Calvert (who both had arrived just in time) took over from Stephen. Martin Rands and Stephen went in search of Andy to no avail - where is he?

11.30am Navigation still going well as the wind and visibility worsen and a steady rain sets in. We evolve a system where Chris concentrates on keeping us on the bearings I give him and the two of them shelter me from the wind as much as possible. Still climbing strongly up Rossett and Bowfell, lose several minutes on Great End because its so thick we don't see the short cut.

2.45pm Good to see Annette and Chris Cripps at Sty Head with more food. Though still on the 14 hour schedule, I'm worried that the wind may be too strong to allow a safe traverse of the Pillar ridge. Stopping seems crazy with an hour in hand but if its not safe I'll have to. Debate with team whether I should stop now but told firmly to at least do Gable and Kirkfell to give the wind time to relent (optimists!). I'm worried about the still missing Andy Addis - nobody else is! Chris R sets off back to Dunmail in a fetching pair of Annette's tights (did anyone get a picture?).

2.50pm Mandy carries on with Chris C navigating on his home patch. Strong climb of Gable despite repeated gusts taking us off our feet or the path. Desperately slow descent on slippery rocks. On up to Kirkfell where Chris loses the route momentarily. Now confident in getting round within the 15 hour limit provided the "Steeple arête" is do-able.

4.15pm Martin Rands, Jim and Lindsay at Black Sail pass offering drinks and encouragement. (Martin had failed to find Andy Addis). Off we go for the penultimate big climb up Pillar. Still climbing well, and with Chris concentrating on keeping us safely away from the edge, we descend to Scoat.

6.15pm Relief, the Steeple arête is less exposed to the wind than we'd feared and is soon done. I struggle for the first time on the gentle climb to Haycock and have to take a break for a Jelly Baby and then 2 more for a look at the view (good excuse?) on the way up Seatallan.

Time to note the clouds had lifted, and guess what? The wind has dropped. Finally Middle Fell and then best views of the day - Annette and Greendale! Great to be welcomed in by Joss Naylor - whom the challenge was devised by and named after.

7.30pm FINISHED! 14 hours and 18 minutes - nearly half an hour lost to schedule lost over the last few miles, but inside the limit by 40 minutes. Thank you to all my supporters who braved the elements. I later heard that the strong winds had caused a major yacht race to be cancelled and the Cader Idris fell race to be shortened.

Apres Phil's Long Run: Gosforth Hall Hotel for Tapas. Guess what? Andy Addis has turned up. And what did happen to him? Why did he go to Ambleside? He spent the rest of the day trying to reunite himself with road support and/or his car - he had a 13 hour outing! Good training for a Naylor Round! Predictably Sunday and Monday were sunny with a gentle breeze.

The end!