

SOME STATISTICS and a GRAND PRIX OVERVIEW.

Despite the lack of enthusiasm towards the concept, floated last year, of “most consistent runner” the 2004 results make interesting reading – and are worth analysing.

(A brief recap for new members – take your highest and lowest scores in the GP: minimum 8 races, any combination but ALL to count). So let’s get the table out of the way first.

	No races	fell/road	GP position	high	low	diff
Mel Blackhurst	8	1/7	dnq	86.9	80.2	6.7
Dion Bamford	9	3/6	5	90.2	81.1	9.1
Dave O’Neill	8	4/4	13	76.6	67.0	9.6
Paul Brannigan	11	5/6	4	93.8	82.6	11.2
Peter Ehrhardt	11	7/4	10	84.1	72.8	11.3
Simon Galloway	10	6/4	6	89.3	76.6	12.7
Derek Clutterbuck	9	6/3	2	98.8	75.4	13.4
Jim Smith	9	6/3	14	70.2	56.3	13.9
Dave Collins	9	6/3	3	96.2	82.0	14.2
John Newby	12	4/8	12	76.4	61.4	15
Richard O’Sullivan	9	4/5	11	77.9	62.0	15.9
Moyra Parfitt	10	4/6	1	103.6	87.2	16.4
Jane Smith	9	9/-	dnq	95.9	77.5	18.4
Richard Leonard	12	9/3	9	85.9	67.4	18.5
Kath Brierley	8	8/-	dnq	89.9	69.2	20.6
Andrew Bibby	9	5/4	7	93.1	70.6	22.5
Jeff Walker	10	4/6	8	88.0	64.9	23.1
John Crummett	8	8/-	dnq	94.6	71.4	23.2

Interestingly, fewer runners competed this year in less races but the overall results rather than being more compact were less consistent. And for the first time predominantly road runners doing well in the GP were high in the table. You would expect this as road races pace better, but it was due to the inclusion of two maverick fell races: any runners who did both Coniston - where 13 scored their worst points - and Hades - where 12 scored their best - were well out of contention.

Further, looking back at past results a pattern emerged, which may give useful pointers to maximizing your GP points. Looking at the top 30 or so GP runners, this is where their best and worst points occurred, and how many races it happened in:

2002		2003		2004	
17 best on fell	5 races	9 best fell	4 races	21 best fell	3 races
25 worst on fell	6	29 worst fell	9	22 worst fell	6
12 best on road	5	21 best road	6	10 best road	4
4 worst on road	3	1 worst road	1	9 worst road	5
(9 ran only in fell races)		(4 fell, 1 road only)		(8 fell, 2 road only)	

Overall you are more likely to gain more points on the road than the fells. Other than take the John Devlin gambit by running every race, if you have the choice of which to do, better points can be accumulated thus: **Fell races.** Avoid very short fast races – at the Bunny Run and at Burnsall both the great (including fell champions) and the average scored poorly. Avoid medium and long races in the Lakes – Coniston and Langdale are consistently bad scores. Most fell runners get their best points in medium races, or if you’re good, long local ones.

Road races. A much more even spread of good results over short and medium races, - and last years inclusion of trail races fits into this pattern. At least one race a year will yield good points so run as many as possible even if you think you are better on the fells. But, as for long races... just a personal opinion but these seem to be in the GP to be endured not enjoyed. It may reflect in how few people enter them: last year the 3 pure long road races only had a turn out of 4 Tod runners each, and of the 20 who did the long trail, only 4 bothered to do another long road race – compare this to 11 runners who were happy to do more than one long fell. Also as a category they produce the fewest best results than any other. (Conversely, they don’t give a high proportion of worst results – but don’t let that get in the way of a prejudice!).

OK, all races are there to be run; and I hope that this is an encouragement to get runners competing in the GP rather than a dissuasion to do certain races. But in helping to select GP races the pros and cons highlighted above were in the back of my mind – Langdale unavoidable as an English Champs, Beefys Nab could be a Bunny Run or a Hades. Hopefully we have a balanced programme giving some consistent racing. So get out and enjoy them and stop worrying about your bloody points.....

Dave O'Neill