

## Stanbury Splash

The opening round of this year's fell championship got off to a wild and windy start. There was some tight competition from the word go between Mark Goldie and Paul Branigan with Dave Collins making his presence known as a contender for a position on the finishing podium at the end of the year - if not in the open competition, then certainly in the vets. Mark managed to pull away from Paul and took the honours for Tod in 15<sup>th</sup> place overall, whilst Dave Collins was 28<sup>th</sup> overall but was the first V50.

The severe weather of recent weeks had not turned the course into the bog-trot I was expecting but it was still a bit of a Splash. The pissistant rain we have been training in since the new year had been replaced by a howling gale, which left most people cowering in their vehicles until minutes before the start. However, it was the quarry on Penistone Hill that was taking the brunt of the bad weather. Once out of the quarry and on to the open moor, the wind did not seem too severe. With the amount of clothing I had put on (base layer, thermal jumper, cagoule, vest, powerstrech leggings, shorts, fur-lined jock-strap) I was starting to get a little warm after a while.

As usual there was a good turnout for the race, although numbers were down on previous years. Given the weather conditions, that was hardly supprising. Ian Holmes won the race for the umpteenth time, but was being challenged hard in the early stages of the race. He only started to pull away after the turn round at the far point of the race. The challenge among the Tod ladies was equally as close as that between the men. Alison richards was in the lead from the early stages of the race but was always being challenged by Christine Preston. Eventually speed/stamina/youth paid off and Alison drew clear to win as first Tod lady. For the record, Alison was third lady overall. The Ladies race was won by Helen Glover of K&C only a minute in front of Alison.

Whatever the conditions might be, Stanbury remains an excellent early season race. It may not be a classic but it is always well attended, and proved to be a good opening race for Tod Harriers.

Dave Wilson.

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