

PRIZES – WHAT PRIZES?

There are plenty of people in Fell Running who compete to win prizes and will stretch themselves to the limit to do so. Perhaps it's a good thing I am not made like that, because my experience of prizes so far has been rather mixed.

I am a Vet 60 so on the rare occasions when I have been eligible for a prize, it is rarely obvious at the end of the race. I end up pouring water down my throat, chatting to club members and generally trying to recover fast enough to get back on the road home. Sometimes I stay for the prizegiving but so far never actually in expectation of being perhaps one of the winners – so more often, like most people, I get on the way home before the winners are announced.

Here are examples of the prizes I have actually “won”. My first ever “prize” was at the Hebden Bridge race in 2012 when it rained so hard the number of runners was down to just 51 (of whom 3 were men's V60). That time I discovered I had been first in my class only 2 weeks later when a pal asked me at pack run if I had got my prize yet!

My next “prize” was first V60 at the Blackpool half marathon this year. I was 184th of 945 starters and never dreamt that would give me a ‘first V60’ place. Publishing of results was late because of a Lancashire mix up on timings and again it was 2 weeks or more before my prize was confirmed. This time I became the proud holder (very proud actually) of a free entry to the same event again in 2016!

Next was the one I am actually proudest of. First V60 in the inaugural Hoofstones. This time Jules told me I had won my class (first of the two men's V60 runners I think) and a week later Dan complained (gently) that I had not come to the prize giving. I could only apologise but actually this was a tough fell race and for me a real achievement to place where I did.

There were also a few 2nd and 3^{rds} in class but the first time I got something of real value (Pete Bland voucher) was at Duddon Valley. I did not complete – getting bad cramps with more steep climbs than I am used to – but even so was given a spot prize.

So my best prize ever was for a race where I really did not perform well. There seems to be a certain random element to actually winning prizes!

Perhaps all in all it is a good thing I am not in Fell Racing for the prizes – and certainly not for actually winning a race. However those who know me will appreciate that I do get a lot out of the sport even when there is little expectation of ever actually winning. Really it is more than enough to know that I have been getting slowly but steadily a little faster over the years.