

Helvellyn and the Dodds

by
Stuart Bryan

This was my first proper Lakeland fell race and at just short of 15 miles and over 4,300 feet of ascent, I knew it was going to be a tough day. However I knew the terrain fairly well when bagging Wainwrights many years ago

Due to a niggling calf injury and as a result very little in the way of training, I was unsure if I could complete my first AL fell race, but dosed up with painkillers and ibuprofen, I was ready, if not raring, to go. Being the only BFR member running, I was a tad nervous and seemed to recognise quite a few faces from the FRA magazine on the start line

After a mile of road then another half mile of boggy moorland, the first climb was the steep ascent of Clough Head at 726 metres. It's essentially a there and back route heading south to Helvellyn taking in most of the Dodds en route. The route was apparently one of Kenny Stuart's training runs who I believe still lives in Threlkeld, the start of the race

The Clough Head climb reminded me of the Buckden race ascent except it just went on and on. Thereafter there were 3 or 4 "gentle" climbs and descents taking in most of the Dodds before the final rocky climb up to Helvellyn. I had arranged to meet my dad at Sticks Pass and was grateful for the water stop before and after the final summit.

The forecast was pretty miserable but on the day, visibility was fine and a slight breeze on the tops making for perfect running conditions. I made it back with a time of 3:12:31 (65/135) and the calf caused no major issues. I would definitely recommend the race and will probably try it again next year.