

Hardmoors 55

22 March 2025

by John Boothman

I travelled over to Helmsley in the camper van on Friday afternoon which is where the Hardmoors 55 race finishes.

I got parked up not far from the rugby club , race finish HQ, then went for a wander round town and found a nice Italian restaurant where I had a good evening meal.

A quick check on the forecast which was for some rain and cool weather all day, then an early night in the van ready for a 5.15 AM wake up to be ready to catch the coach at 6.00 am to Guisborough rugby club, race start HQ.

We arrived around 7.15 with plenty of time to get kit check, tracker fitted, toilet stop and then a coffee before the 8.00 AM race start.

All was going well, caught up with several friends and felt well prepared as it was starting to rain so confident my choice of clothing was correct.

Start was slightly delayed due to getting all runners up a narrow path onto the disused railway line where we start.

We were off and as usual we all get caught up in a far too fast pace and it was quickly becoming clear that the rain was disappearing and I was getting way too hot.

Running well up and down Roseberry topping then past Captain Cooke's monument and down to Kildale checkpoint (11 miles) where we had a small re supply bag. Up to here, I hadn't packed much nutrition so topped up ready for the next 20 miles where our next drop bag would be. There are water top ups in between.

Way too warm I rolled up my sleeves and rolled up my running tights above my knees, removed my hat and gloves, all to try keep my temperature down, but I was sweating hard and despite drinking as much as I possibly could stomach, supplementing with salt tabs, but I was still dehydrating resulting in me suffering some serious bouts of cramps, especially after ascending many steps and transitioning to flat running again.

On Cringle Moor, before Lordstones, a lady walker (not part of the race) had collapsed and was being helped by what I understood to be her family. I offered any help I could, but a runner just in front of me had given his survival blanket and warm layers and mountain rescue were called. I understand from a post last night that the lady was stretchered off the hill but not heard how she is. I combined fast paced pole assisted hiking with run/jogs in between to maintain a reasonable pace and arrived a Osmotherly CP where my second drop bag was, arriving around 14.43.

At this stage it is easy to get settled at a checkpoint and lose a lot of time plus you can stiffen up so I planned a short visit. A quick toilet break, then washed all the sweaty salt from my face and head which was very welcome . Topped up food and water. Completed compulsory random kit check (items asked for were hat and gloves) I thought, "Well I won't need those".

Before leaving, I spotted another guy who is same age category as me and who beat me last year by a few minutes so I thought I'll get a move on and out before him which I did.

The weather was now clouding up and starting to rain which was a relief.

After a few miles, the guy I had got in front of at the CP, caught me up and passed me, so I dug in and decided to try keep near to him, which I did, even passing him only to end up swapping places several time, I'm sure both spurring each other on. We were together at Sneck Yate water stop and then emerged at the top of Sutton bank nearly together.

From here there is an out and back to the bottom of White horse where the last checkpoint is for water top up and snacks. It's a knarly decent and we arrive together. A quick top up and drink of coke and he heads up the long steps back to the top of the hill where the Sutton bank gliding club airfield is. I'm now quite knackered and whilst I'm sure the other guy is similar, he summits before me and disappears like a stabbed rat into the distance. I share some chat with other runners as we head back to cross the road and head to the finish in Helmsley - about 8 miles to go from the road and predominantly gentle down hill. At this point it is now pissing down and blowing a cold hard wind and I'm now getting very cold so have to stop to get my waterproof jacket on and my hat and gloves and get my head torch out as I know I won't make the finish in daylight.

Then another runner asks me to get his head torch out of his pack to save him taking his pack off. I oblige but know that my chances of catching my target are slipping away so I settle in for my best jog/run/hike with all the energy I have left.

I push hard and finish at 19.53.15 in total time of 11 hours, 47 mins & 15 seconds, which was just 2 minutes and 3 seconds behind my target!! If I hadn't helped the guy get his head torch out, I reckon we would have had a sprint finish up the field, but then again, had I been close behind, he may have pushed harder.

As usual, I felt pretty rough at the end but after a shower and nibbling some food, I started to feel human again.

Final results say I was 68th overall and 4th V60.

This was the 7th time I have done the 55. It's a great event over a lovely route and I'm sure I'll be back there again.

After some socialising in the clubhouse, I decided to drive home as traffic would be quiet and I arrived home just before midnight, so quite a day.

Clocked up just shy of 94,000 steps.