

The Mynd Mac Fell Race.

So I'm there earlier on in the year for a family holiday and as granny was available for child care, I skipped merrily off on a Sunday Morning to Shropshire, 45 min drive from holiday house. Got to race with 15 min's to spare and realising if not brought a map, I put my road atlas (this A4 book in my back pack...). Quick jog down to start line and chat with a young pair of lads in blue form Brecon who were just running for the first time in fell races, but one of them had a detailed map. I noted the odd end of the race, important for later amusement folks!, but essentially back down to a fence which you run up by, but then peel of finish down a steep valley. So off we go, jokes about the back pack, me saying I've a library in there, I'm about 9th by the start of the first hill, which is after running out of carding mill valley then taking the north hill to the right and curves up to a fence by a golf course, two local Mercian in yellow take the lead with the two Brecon lads and a selection of others behind, I'm doing ok, field of 40, 25% not bad, first climb, - and these are climbs and the gain, and the Mercians don't walk, so we all soldier on, two drop off and I'm 7th, Mercian's getting further away on the 6 mile course, so I aim to keep up with a fellow lookalike Vet 40, who after the first hill also drops off, saying something about cake a beer for breakfast, used to this psychological warfare of my two favourite things to distract me, slow me and cause me to drool, I clamp my chops shut and run harder. Down, for second hill start, up a long winding valley to near pole hill and the climb summit, now I remembered there are four climbs, so eased off and took stock, so I'm 5th, with me and one of the Blue Brecon lads, (Ben, 19) having a battle on the fourth hill, me practicing my age old psykout of encouraging works in a level tone while running hard. Dispite this Clearly Ben was more encouraged than discouraged and beats me to the top of the hill, The two blues and me have not seen the two yellow, local, 30 something Mercians for some 5 min's so we soldier on, over the last hill and down to the all important fence line, and I note with some interest the two lads, with an accurate map turn left not right along the fence, Ahha, in a good Alan Partridge voice, say I. So I descend, for a short while, getting my breath back before shouting the two lads back, they check map and give chase. That does it, I'm off like a march born hare with some sprint practice, belting down a steep descent i reach an excited Marshall who points me sharp left for a finish line, and jog through some 30 seconds before the two Brecon lads. One turn out to be 16, the owner of the map, came third and although its accurate he was not really following it. So a few more encouraging words of wisdom from me and i scoot to the organiser thank him and start off, thinking maybe third place is pretty brilliant behind two local Mercians. As I stop for a chat with the excited Marshall I note two more Mercians come down , one of them raging bout bad route marking, I defend the organisers by yelling some abuse back, justified I think, he slinks off to the finish and I smugly strut off on the moral high ground for the car, only to realise he was one of the Mercians I was chasing... it was the back view of a sack like mine... ahhhh think I, where did I come then... back to the organiser to find I was first, winner and a vet 40 as well. How chuffed was I! Now all i need it the write up in the FRA mag!

Neb