

The Bath Plug

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Robin Lewis and Damian Hall after their UTMB-weekend performances (and not even looking tired!)

UTMB weekend & Autumn racing season underway

By Thomas Davies

With track and field meets drawing to a close over the next few weeks, attention is starting to turn back to road/trail races as we move towards Autumn and not long now to the much awaited return of cross-country season.

Last weekend was dominated by Ultra Trail Mont Blanc (UTMB) weekend, something of a pinnacle for the ultra-trail race calendar. Damian Hall, after 12th place last year, finished in an astonishing 5th place against the most competitive of elite fields. There's been lots of coverage, and i'm sure somewhere out there is an article where Damian credits all his improvement to Paul's tough Thursday track sessions. Holly Rush (Asics Fronrunner) finished 21F in 31:34.

Earlier in the day, Robin Lewis had

an excellent run in the shorter (just a casual 101km) CCC race, and his race report is below.

In more sensible racing, three TBAC ladies took on Dartmoor Marathon last weekend & a number of other TBAC athletes raced at Cardiff 10K. Full reports from Beccy & Owen below.



Robin Lewis celebrating a successful CCC (left), Robin enjoying the run-in through Chamonix (top-right), and Damian Hall's finish line celebrations (bottom-right)!

CCC By Robin Lewis

The CCC is an epic mountain race named after the places it passes through – Courmayeur (Italy), Champex-Lac (Switzerland) and Chamonix (France) – part the prestigious UTMB race series.

Following the Grande Randonnée du Tour du Mont-Blanc path, the race is 101km long with 6100m of vertical climbing. I started on Friday 31st August in the centre of Courmayeur. The atmosphere was electric; nervous runners, expectant supporters, pumping music and a French (or possibly Italian) MC whipping the crowd up into a frenzy.

At 9am I set off on my epic adventure that would test me to my limit. The first kilometres quickly led to the first of the big climbs, a 2500m ascent up to the Tête de la Tronche, to one of the most exceptional views of Mont-Blanc. There was no time to admire the view, however, as I was caught up in a fast, single-line 'train' of runners,

tackling the steep decent on the rocky, twisty, undulating path – my quads were burning, but I felt alive.

The pace was good; I was nailing my nutrition & hydration and was ahead of my predicted time – so far so good. The 'train' lead us ultimately down to the bottom of the Grand col Ferret (2537m) 27kms into the race and to the border with Switzerland.

Passing through two checkpoints, up until this point, the weather had been kind to us with the warm sun on our backs, all very pleasant. But this changed abruptly towards the top of the Grand col Ferret where we were welcomed into Switzerland with freezing fog and very limited visibility; the pace slowed and the conditions turned very muddy and slippery. It felt like I was back training in the Brecon Beacons, so I knew I was prepared; the race was still very much on.

To be honest, I can't remember much of Switzerland. The conditions were very British – cool, dank, with heavy drizzle – so I just got my head

down and got on with it, ticking off the kilometres as I went. My first big mental milestone (apart from getting to the start) was to arrive in Champex-Lac – the mid-point of the race at 55km – and still feeling 'good'. I arrived at the checkpoint just before dusk, still ahead of schedule, but I was hungry. I knew I had to have a good meal, hence my feast of pasta & bolognese, big chunks of Swiss cheese, salami, bread, gels and noodle soup. For an ultra-runner, eating this amount of food is normal, I promise! Some people say ultra-marathons are "eating and drinking contests with a little exercise and scenery thrown in" – I'll let you be the judge of that.

So I was fuelled, in my warmer top and jacket, and was ready to tackle the final four climbs. The first was a brutally steep ascent through a forest to the top of La Giete. This almost killed me. It was horrible. I almost quit there and then. I wanted it to be over. But I told myself to just put one foot in front of the other and I'll be another step closer to the finish. It worked and I made it – just.



Beccy, Claire & Cath enjoying the trails and moors during Dartmoor Marathon.

The food started to kick in as I made short work of Les Tseppes and Col des Montets. Then came a detour around Tete aux Vents due to a landslide the week before. The detour was a severe transverse through a boulder field, with added tree roots, all soaking wet, super-slippery and in the dead of the night; I had to have my wits about me to avoid going over on my ankle that could have spelled disaster in the last quarter of the race.

87km in, it was starting to get light and I had one final climb to the ski station at La Flégère. I knew I was still doing well on time, but there was no time to relax. Getting into a metronomic rhythm, I ascended 'red 5' ski piste, seeing the lights of the checkpoint at the top – I passed straight through the final checkpoint – I didn't need any water or food, there was only 8km to go. Oh and it was all downhill.

My feet were tender from all the pounding, but still in good order. Quads were on fire with every step,

so I employed the run/walk strategy as I descended on the blue ski piste. It seemed to go on for far too long, a bit like this report, but eventually it evened-out and I hit civilisation and the glorious sight of Chamonix. Suddenly all the aches and pains disappeared and I was being cheered on by people of all nationalities, as I twisted through the heart of Chamonix, finally reaching the last straight and the arch that signalled my race was over in a time of 22 hours and 34 minutes in 833 place overall from 2300+ starters. I was done.

It was the toughest race I've done (so far), and as I continue my post-race recovery, I'm already hatching a plan for something longer, harder and undoubtedly harsher; the 'normal' mentality of an ultramarathon runner!

Dartmoor Marathon By Beccy Tarling

The appeal of running across the

wilderness of Dartmoor was only tempered slightly by the 1600m of ascent that came with it, so it was with a mixture of nerves and excitement that three of us Team Bath AC ladies set off down the M5 on a Friday evening heading for Okehampton College, the starting point for the race and where we were camping that night.

The day of the race dawned with perfect weather; dry and not too hot and we were all grateful when we were told on the start line that we could remove our waterproof trousers from the compulsory kit that we had to carry with us.

A friendly, bunch of 150 of us crossed the start line following the course of a stream through the woods and out onto the moors heading for Yes Tor, one of the highest points in south-west England. We followed orange flags (the race was fully signposted) up tors, down valleys, across peat bogs and through streams for 26 miles and on the way we enjoyed some of

the most stunning scenery in the UK. Much of the race is across open country with no discernible trail to follow so it's pretty tricky underfoot in places plus there's just no getting round those enormous hills but there were 4 well placed and fully stocked checkpoints to top up our energy levels.

For my first trail marathon, I really can't fault this race. I loved (almost) every minute of it; the race organisation was fantastic, the atmosphere was friendly and the route was stunning.

Cardiff 10K

By Owen Davies

I went into the race with mixed feelings: I was feeling fit and in PB shape, but having had to abort Tuesday's session with a tight hamstring, and barely running the rest of the week, I didn't really know what to expect. My aim was to dip under 40 minutes for the first time; I knew that was within reach if everything went to plan.

After a tortuous delayed start - which only served to heighten my nerves and tighten my hamstring - we were off. I took the first quarter of a mile or so fairly cautiously, paying very close attention to my hamstring. I was certainly aware of it, but it didn't seem to be getting any worse, so I increased the pace and went through the first kilometer at target pace.

I felt good throughout the first half, and went through the halfway point in 19:49. As expected, things started to get harder after that, but I held target pace well through to 8k, at which point I knew I had a PB in the bag (as my previous best was around 40:30). I went through 9k in exactly 36 minutes, totally in the red by this point, but very determined to hold on. As I rounded the final bend I realised it was going to be extremely close, and commenced a sprint finish of sorts (in reality it was slower than 5k pace...). I crossed the line and stopped my watch at 39:59! Initial delight turned quickly into anxiety: had I stopped my watch too early? Would the official results be kind or cruel? They were kind. I had

a new PB and a first sub 40 clocking!

I would recommend Cardiff 10k to everyone, despite the problems with the delayed start this year. They've reverted to a similar course to the one of two years ago, and it's extremely flat with very few turns. Definite PB potential, and perfectly timed preparation for an autumn half or full marathon!

Melvyn Potter Club Athlete of the year award

By Graham Mattacks

We are looking for nominations for the Melvyn Potter award. The award honours Melvyn Potter's involvement with the club and dedication to athletics, and is awarded annually to a club member that shows the qualities that he held so dear. Please make nominations via the website, where there is also more information available.

Bath Plug to your inbox

By Tom Davies

I am now sending out the link to the Bath Plug as an email. If you wish to sign up to receive these weekly updates please confirm by sending a quick email to plugeditor@teambathac.org, and I'll add you to my list. Alternatively you can enter your details here: <http://teambathac.org/2018/07/27/bath-plug-mailing-list/>

Calendar

September

9 Avon League
9 Chippenham Half
9 Swindon Half
9 Great North Run
16 Foxtrot 5
22 Midland Road Relays, Sutton Pk
23 Bristol Half
23 Mells Scenic 7
30 Ealing Half

October

6 Natl Road Relays, Sutton Pk
7 Cardiff Half
7 Chester Marathon
7 Oxford Half
7 Basingstoke Half
13 Glos League XC, Old Down

November

3 Glos League XC, Charlton Pk

December

9 Glos League XC, Wooton
9 TriCounties XC, Bath

February 19

17 Glos League XC, Pitville

June 19

8-9 Welsh Castles

Results

Running Bath 5K TT

04 Sep 18

1	Josh Taylor	0:17:20
2	Mike Dooley	0:17:51
3	Steve Rose	0:17:57
4	Dave Coales	0:18:44
5	Luke Sturgess-Durden	0:18:53
6	Ian Dunning	0:19:05
7	James O'Grady	0:20:10
8	Steve Henderson	0:20:16
9	Ben Corlett	0:20:43
10	Dave Gunstone	0:20:53
11	Dylan Stoneman	0:21:30
12	Alex Knight	0:21:30
13	Lizzie Nobes	0:21:33
14	Megan Clements	0:21:59
15	Cath Dale	0:22:51
16	Nicola Cracknell	0:22:57
17	Sarah Street	0:23:48
18	Josie Carter	0:23:52

UTMB, Chamonix (170.1km)

31 Aug 18

1	Xavier Thevenard (FR)	20:44:16
5	Damian Hall (Inov8)	22:35:13
33	Francesca Canepa (IT, 1F)	26:03:48
162	Holly Rush (21F, AVR)	31:34:23

CCC, Chamonix (100.9km)

31 Aug 18

1	Thomas Evans (Hoka)	10:44:32
11	Miao Yao (CN)	11:57:46
833	Robin Lewis	22:34:01



Joel Mattacks in action at the Godiva Classic

Cardiff 10K

02 Sep 18

1	Dewi Griffiths (Swansea)	29:10
30	Lily Partridge (1F, Aldershot)	33:27
116	Otto Copping	37:07
211	Owen Davies	39:59
1612	Keith Jones (V60)	54:20

Dartmoor Marathon

01 Sep 18

1	Tom Carthey (Freedom)	03:55:46
20	Katie Littlejohns (Okeh)	05:14:35
33	Beccy Tarling (6F)	05:41:42
38	Catherine Dale (7F)	05:53:39
60	Claire Riou (16F)	06:26:25

UK School Games

31 Aug 18

400mH U17M

3	Harry Meredith	58.2
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4x400mH

2	MID	3:21.85
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(inc Harry Meredith; 51.1 split)

Godiva Classic 2018

Warwick Uni, 01-02 Sep 18

100m SM P1

3	Joel Mattacks (T20, U17)	12.64
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200m SM P1

3	Joel Mattacks (T20, U17)	25.85
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400m SM P1

3	Joel Mattacks (T20, U17)	57.93 PB
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Parkrun – 01 Sep 18

Albert parkrun, Middlesbrough

38	Chris MILBOURNE	00:22:38
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Bath Skyline parkrun

5	Mark MACKINTOSH	00:19:01
20	Lee ALLEN	00:20:38
37	Lizzie NOBES (3F)	00:21:50
38	Harry WILLIAMS	00:22:02
42	Tim LUCK	00:22:07
44	Tom HUTCHISON	00:22:16
92	Owen DAVIES	00:24:27
98	Ilana WIGFIELD (14F)	00:24:42
101	Ewelina WOJTAŁA (15F)	00:24:52
114	Nigel OSBORNE	00:25:25
128	Rhys CROW	00:25:57
129	Sue BRIGDEN (22F)	00:26:00
153	Natalie HARGRAVE (32F)	00:27:02
165	Colin HITCHIN	00:27:50
179	Edward FEIL	00:28:22
235	Pat ROGERS	00:29:54
338	Janice RAMBRIDGE (126F)	00:35:26

Eastville parkrun

134	Nicola CRACKNELL (15F)	00:24:26
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Chippenham parkrun

26	Toby FIRKINS	00:21:44
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Chipping Sodbury parkrun

26	India IBBOTSON (2F)	00:21:33
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Harry Meredith (2nd from left) representing Midlands at the UK School Games.

The Bath Plug is the weekly magazine of Team Bath AC. Copy and comment for publication, questions and corrections to the editor at plugeditor@teambathac.org. Notify the editor of expected copy the week before. Copy to the editor by Wednesday 18.00 for inclusion. Available online at teambathac.org.