

Race Report
Hardmoors 110 - 18th & 19th May, 2024
Davey Allen



Ready to go

Filey Brigg – Scarborough

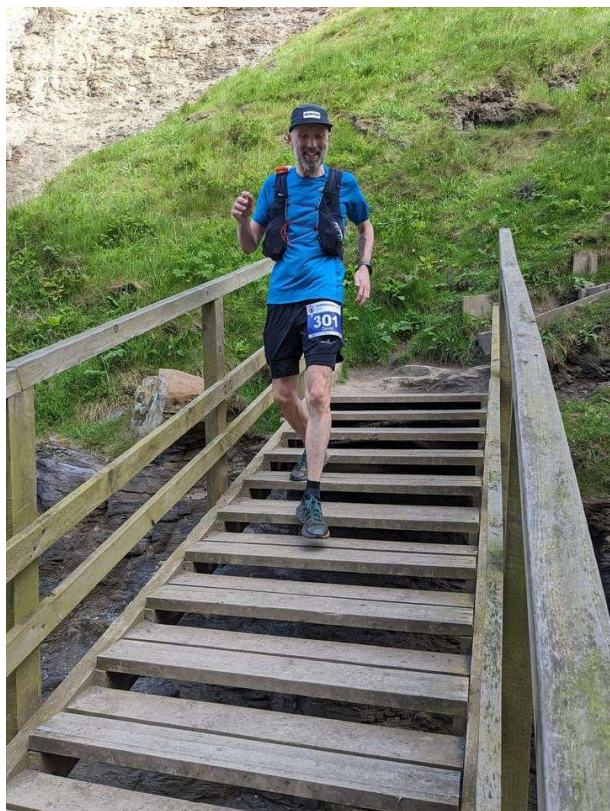
I started off well, apart from getting stuck at the back of the pack and not being able to get my pace going. It was also absolutely chuffing freezing. Very cloudy and with a stronger wind than expected. I hadn't anticipated needing my jacket that early in the race! Once things thinned out a little and the cloud cleared, I got myself shifting and felt good.

Scarborough – Ravenscar

Entirely coincidentally met my bruv-in-law, Matt on Scarborough seafront, who joined me for a few miles to Crook Ness. My pace was strong at this point. I'd had a really good HM110 in 2021 (28 hours) and foolishly, I'd saved those splits to my phone for reference. I was actually making better pace than I had done back then, and my thoughts turned to the possibility of bettering that time. Silly sod! As usual, Ravenscar felt like it would never arrive; it's a tough section with quite a bit of uphill. I'd got into a bit of cat and mouse with another runner, and that always does my bloody head in. As I hit the outskirts of Ravenscar, who should I see but Matt, brandishing a Calippo at me! Absolute legend! I had to do a bit of blister surgery at the Ravenscar CP, which was a bit worrying given how early in the race it was. A cup of hot sweet tea and some snacks and I was off.

Ravenscar – Runswick Bay

Approximately five minutes out of Ravenscar, I threw EVERYTHING up that I had just eaten, which was far from ideal. I was quite appreciative of the course diversion which took us along the cinder track into Robin Hoods Bay. Three miles downhill on firm trail was highly appreciated. Matt was waiting for me in RHB with some chips, but still feeling a bit sick I could only manage a few. From here till the end, I really struggled to get enough food down. Whitby was pure hell on earth. I've never seen it as cramped, and navigating the crowds and the plumes of vape smoke was a challenge! I treated myself to an ice cream cone and a can of coke at Sandsend which went down very well. I perked up again from here, and by the time I reached Runswick, I was in good spirits. The tide had been high all morning and I was concerned the diversion would be in effect, but thankfully that wasn't the case. That steep hill out of Runswick Bay to the CP never gets any easier though!



Dropping down into Runswick Bay

Runswick Bay – Saltburn

A bit of an uneventful section really. By this time, the sea fret was in full effect. It was quite unnerving actually, as you literally could not see a thing over the cliff's edge in some places. It was appreciated though, as it took the sting out of the sun and the heat. I randomly bumped into an acquaintance as they were having a pint outside the Cod & Lobster in Staithes, so I popped into the bar to get a half of shandy, but the queue at the bar was about ten deep, so I gloomily sacked the idea off. I sailed through Skinningrove, casting a deeply jealous gaze at the BBQs that the various support crews had on the go. There was still a mild fret, which looked beautiful as the sun had begun to go down, making for a nice background to the now obligatory snap of the charm bracelet. I had harboured the notion of chips and curry sauce in Saltburn for a few miles, but none of the chippies on route were open, so I pushed through, with my sights now recalibrated on the Co-Op at Skelton.



Approaching Saltburn, lost in the sea fret

Saltburn – Kildale

My favourite stretch of the race. I was still feeling OK at this point. Made it to Skelton thankfully in good time to catch the Co-Op, but then had a crisis of indecision and could not make up my mind as to what to have. For some insane reason, I opted for sushi and an iced latte. It's almost as if I was TRYING to make myself sick. It was getting darker by the second now, so the headtorch was strapped on, and the forecasted mist was already drawing in. I found myself running in proximity to a few other guys through Guisborough Woods and up High Cliff Nab, which was a blessing as I am incapable of navigating my way through there in the dark at the best of times, never mind in thick fog. The blast down towards Roseberry was great fun. It was very eerie up on top of Roseberry though, as the mist was so thick you could barely see in front of you. A quick blast down and straight through Gribdale, up past Captain Cook's, and down into Kildale, where I managed to get some pizza down at the CP. This would be the last moment of the entire race that I would feel OK.

Kildale – Clay Bank

The trudge from Kildale up to Bloworth Crossing was the most miserable experience. I was EXHAUSTED. Just could not get going at all, literally nodding off as I walked, and on one or two occasions I lay down on the hard ground to rest for a moment, questioning my life's choices. At this point, I was still wearing just a t-shirt and a lightweight wind jacket, and the temperature started to drop. In my exhaustion, my mind just could not comprehend that extra layers may be a good idea, so I pressed on, getting colder and colder. Farther up the slog to Bloworth, the mist became so thick that it was actually blinding – as the beam from my headtorch simply illuminated the mist itself. It was so bad that you could hardly see the ground beneath your feet. All of this badly added to the exhaustion and at one point, when I walloped my foot against a large rock, I couldn't help myself from howling expletives into the night! Honestly, this section was just bloody awful. Despite the temperature dropping further and further, I still didn't muster the common sense to stop and layer up. It was around 3am, and my thought process was "the sun will be coming up soon, so I'll only have to take the layers off again." I eventually saw sense on Round Hill and slung on every spare layer I had. When I got to the Clay Bank

CP I felt very bloody miserable and asked the marshals if anyone would let me rest in their vehicle. An absolute saint by the name of Sharon obliged, and also gave me a cup of piping hot tea and a chocolate biscuit. I could have wept. I got about fifteen minutes' sleep and then set off for my hot date with three sisters.

Clay Bank – Scarth Nick

Going over the three sisters (actually four really) was slow, hard work. I got chatting with a couple of runners and we ran together until Lord Stones. While I'm usually a bit of a misery guts on these events, preferring not to socialise, the company was most welcome as it momentarily took my mind off how utterly dreadful I was feeling. Coming down the back side of Carlton Bank I threw up once again and would continue to do so for a good few hours. I was also cursed with really bad hiccups, which was an extra annoyance I could have done without. When I got into Scugdale I had a five-minute nap on a park bench and then set about the hell-steps towards Scarth Nick. I was genuinely very close to DNF'ing here, as being unable to eat or drink, and being so exhausted, I just couldn't comprehend being able to get through another 25 miles, especially with four big climbs still to come. I decided to move on, thinking I would probably drop out in Osmotherley. I'd even worked out my bus route home!



"Locals have reported sightings of a dishevelled, smelly vagrant sleeping on a park bench. Approach with caution."

Scarth Nick – White Horse

As soon as I stepped back onto the trail, my sister-in-law, Jill called me to check in and see how I was going. If the tracker was to be believed, I had made good progress, so I don't think she was expecting the mournful desperation in my voice! I confessed my DNF thoughts, so she said she and Matt would be out ASAP to drag me to the finish line. That gave me the impetus to keep going, and keep going, I did. The long pull up from Scarth Nick to Square Corner was a rough ride. No power to the legs whatsoever, and all uphill. I had to do some more blister surgery at Square Corner, and then made very slow progress again up to High Paradise. I bought myself a little pot of ice cream at High Paradise Farm which was heavenly. Jill and Matt intercepted me just before Sutton Bank, and they had brought chilled grapes and strawberries, which I managed to eat and keep down. The sun was absolutely baking down

by this time, and I was still wearing a merino base-layer, because being the total idiot that I am, I didn't have any sunscreen and needed to keep the sun off my arms and neck.



Don't be fooled by the smile – I was absolute agony

White Horse – Helmsley

Jill joined me for the drop down to the White Horse CP, where I was the beneficiary of yet more Hardshall saintliness, where I was offered some sunscreen and chilled melon! The marshals on this event are absolute angels sent from heaven. The climb up the White Horse steps was brutal. I could only manage a few at a time. We met Matt back at the roadside, who had brought me a Calippo, which was sheer icy heaven. By this time I could only manage a shuffle for twenty seconds or so before the legs would just go NOPE. It's a shame I was feeling so rubbish because I absolutely love the stretch down through Cold Kirby and Rievaulx. Matt took over accompanying runner duties at Rievaulx and his banter did a great job of keeping my spirits up for the final few miles (can't quite believe I'm saying that LOL). After the final climb up through the woods we reached the finish in a time of 32:07 – four hours slower than my previous 110, but with the horrible changing conditions, and being unsupported, this was a very different day, and I was no less happy with my time.

Huge thanks to Jill and Matt for getting me to the end x