

Knaresborough Bed Race – Beth Constantine

Imagine the whole population of London taking over the streets of Knaresborough. No gaps between people and all you can hear is screaming and shouting from everyone all the way round. That is the Knaresborough Bed Race in a nutshell.



The day started off with fancy dress where our team dressed up as grannies from the Shreddies advert. Me personally wearing a long dress that nearly touched the floor, a cardigan, a pair of glasses with a bead chain to dangle around my neck, and a wig that was covered in rollers (it did get warm at one point). I took my role of granny very seriously that morning.

A lot of time was spent waiting for the parade. Itching as we wanted to keep moving. Inspecting all the other beds (and of course checking out the competition).

After the long wait, we then lined up for the parade. Walking along the second half of the route through the streets of Knaresborough. Smiling at everyone watching us behind the barriers. Trying not to crash into the car in front of us. Looking around to see if there was anyone we knew as well as checking out the course. It felt different walking through Knaresborough dressed as a granny. It's not something you would do on a regular basis. We turned right down the road towards Conyngham Hall, placed our bed in the correct starting spot and that's when it started to get more intense.

We stripped our bed, taking all the boards and decorations off and took everything back to the car parked next to Conyngham Hall (our wigs were taken off way before walking up to the car). We got dressed in the shade, putting on our claret Ripon Runners vests, shorts and 'fast' shoes. And then we went out around the field to do a warm-up.

The nerves were starting to kick in more at this point. It felt warm and I felt like I was getting a stitch (I suppose it's better now than during the race). We stayed together and tried to give each other positive vibes to try and calm the nerves. After bracing ourselves, we went back to our bed and tried to stay hydrated before the event finally kicked off.

It felt like forever waiting to start. Nick Hancock went round some of the beds (including ours) asking about what we were most looking forward to (of course it was the river crossing). Then the time had come for the final countdown. The first bed was off. The moment we had all been waiting for was finally happening. Deep breath after deep

breath to calm the nerves. Jumping up and down on the spot trying to keep ourselves moving. Before we knew it, we were next. 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1! The horn went off. We were out and up the grassy hill.



Keeping it controlled along the main road, getting into our stride, before then speeding down the mini hill past the World's End pub. Heading closer and closer towards that hill. Not just any hill though. A very steep uphill climb that was tough on its own without the bed. The screams from the crowd were unreal to the point where I zoned out and before I knew it, we had made it to the top.



Turning down the streets in the middle of town until we made it back onto the main road. The noise again from the crowd was unreal. Sprinting down the hill towards the mini roundabout, turning left and putting all of our effort into getting down to the bottom as quickly as possible. The speed down that final hill was crazy. Clinging onto the bed and striding out my legs to keep with the pace. The cheering was ringing more in my ears at this point.

The final stretch was the final battle. Putting the last bit of effort into the race. I felt like I had nothing left in me, but the adrenaline must have kicked in. The river fast approached. No time to think. I jumped straight in without a second thought (it felt nice after a hot run), straightened the bed in the water and set off on the final section of the race.

Already tired from the running. Trying to find the last bit of energy to get us to the other side of the river. Stroke after stroke. Kicking the water behind to propel us forward. Every effort counts. The moment I could touch the floor, I did not hesitate. We all sprinted through the water, grabbing onto the handles of the bed and we went all out up the final little hill towards the finish line. The race was over.



Collapsing onto the floor trying to catch my breathe. All of us had given it our all. We were all winners just by crossing that finish line together. The heat had been unreal. To the point I didn't think I was going to finish. So crossing that finish line felt very emotional.

All that build up just for seventeen and a half minutes of running / swimming. Over in a heartbeat. The adrenaline still pumping through my veins. The sounds of the crowd still ringing in my ears. I've experienced tough races in the past, but I can guarantee this was the hardest of them all. So I wore my medal with pride, knowing I had completed my first Bed Race. I couldn't believe it, but my medal and red face told me otherwise.

The Bed Race is a different experience to anything I have done before. Fuelled by adrenaline, pushing through the pain even though your mind and body is telling you to stop. If I can do that, then I can do anything. I feel unstoppable. And most of all, my dream of doing the Bed Race has finally come true".

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