

“Hills- mounds of opportunity”

Hamsterley winter Half marathon race description.

Approx. 14 miles and 2000ft of ascent.

The race leaves the start area at the main car park and then heads along the main forest drive for approx. ¾ of a mile on road before turning right and starting the first small climb onto the forest tracks. Once you're up, the trail undulates for a couple of miles then heads into the first single track section of mountain bike trails, technical and muddy underfoot the route winds its way through the deep forest for a mile or so before reaching the first river crossing. You can cross the river which is only mid-shin deep on stepping stones or by just going for it and splashing across.

At approx. mile 5 there will be the first check point area where you can refill your water and grab some fruit/snacks in preparation for the real lung buster. You will need to get your pacing right here and be prepared to dig deep as you ascend the largest climb on the course, the uphill lasts for approx. 1.6 miles but the views of the forest and valley at the top are spectacular and make all of the sweat and tears worthwhile! You will reach almost 1300ft at the top. A fast descent on an excellent grassy trail will lead you to the top of the steep technical descent where you will cross to the other side of the valley, with a Gazelle like leap over the river in the process.

Once across the river you will wind your way back up the valley and onto another single-track section, steep and muddy (sense of humour required) at the start but quickly opening onto a stunning section of moorland running. You have pretty much done all of the climbing now.... Honest!

At approx. mile 10, you will be greeted by our cheery marshals and second checkpoint, where another bottle and fuel top up will be provided.

Excluding a few minor undulations, you're now heading for home, the trails passes through some young plantations, a few meadows, down a steep rocky path, a short road section and then heads along a beautiful woodland trail parallel to the river. If you have nailed your pacing and saved some energy the last few miles are fast and fairly flat.

Your efforts will be rewarded by a nice cup of hot soup and roll at the race HQ where we will do prize presentations and cheer in the rest of the athletes still to finish.