

## Runner number 268 - timed out by 9 minutes at Jevington!

I signed up for your SDW-50 mile way back in July 25. A month earlier, despite a bad fall at mile 18 resulting in a head cut and badly spraining my left ankle, I carried on and completed the Maverick South Downs Marathon within the 7-hour cut off. I am not a quitter!

In September, I ran the route Hill Barn to Housedean Farm. Later that month I ran Housedean to Eastbourne. I also repeated both on different days during in March. Being familiar with the route, I knew what was yet to come at each stage. Whilst being aware in advance, of your aid station cut-offs and the 4mph speed required, I did not really think they would be so vigorously and zealously enforced. I discussed how rigid these would be enforced should you miss the time by just 5 minutes whilst at Housedean Farm. The reply was *"if you miss it by 5 seconds at any of the cut offs you are out."* I then asked what if you get to Eastbourne and finish in 13hours 5 minutes, surely they would give you a medal as you would have finished? The reply was, *"there was a chap that was half way round the running track with 200m to go at 13 hours passes and he didn't get a medal."* Leaving Housedean Farm with 25 minutes ahead, I asked the nice lady and chap marshalling near the road again about the cut off and getting a medal and I was told I would be OK (ie under 13hours) *"as long as I walked the hills with purpose."*

At Southease with 4 minutes to spare I was counted down by a volunteer *"3 minutes, 2 minutes and then told in a strong manner to go and go now!"* At the time I found this somewhat strange. In hindsight, she was actually helping me and it was a pity that at the earlier aid stations no one, including any of the other runners, had given me good advice to get going and bank my time in hand. Once around the corner at Sourthease, I had to stop to put my flasks of water and supplies in my vest. This is supposed to be fun! A recreational pursuit. I don't get told when I go sea fishing that if I haven't caught fish inside two hours I have to stop!

On the way to Alfriston, I caught up with a lone runner and we talked and helped each other as best we could. He too had heard of the runner that was 200 metres from the finish and didn't get a medal. We found had a lot in common. The weather had changed, it was even windier, the wind direction now against us, cold and the hills seemed to go on forever and the thought of quitting started to cross my mind. Your lovely lady Jade (Barrett) was behind us collecting your race markers so we knew we were the last runners out there. She said we could get to Alfriston before the cut off and encouraged us to go for it. I decided I would and ran the downhill section. Before I even got to the aid station your people were telling me to hurry up and what would I like. I said I would love a cup of coffee to be told *"you can forget that, that's not going to happen"* From the moment I signed up and all through the day, I was looking forward to a hot cup of coffee at Alfriston. So I gave her my water flasks which were ready and filled when I arrived inside and just had a few seconds to grab a couple of gels and a few slices of melon (the first that were available since Botolphs!) and that was that Go Go Go! The chap I had talked to was sadly timed out, yet strangely not listed at Alfriston in the results!

On to Jevington, and one of your chaps suggested that I run the flats before the hill, this while I was trying (again) to put my flasks away, eat some melon and look for somewhere I could have a piss. On the penultimate hill climb, Jade caught up with me in the twilight and we talked about the cut off and the chances of my getting to Jevington and Eastbourne. She was lovely and the highlight of what ended with disappointment on generally as bad day. It became obvious to me that if I finished in Eastbourne even a second after the 13 hours you would take some sort of weird delight in not giving me my well-earned medal. This played on my mind, so much negativity and a degree of anger that being so close, I would lose out by 9 minutes on even trying for the opportunity to finish under your 13 hours. I began thinking "no medal no tracker return" It was cold and dark before Jevington and

the downhill was quite treacherous in the dark despite my 1,000 lumen headlight. I couldn't risk an injury trying to get inside the Jevington cut off and the "valley of death" is an accident waiting to happen at the best of times, but especially in the dark. It was a great pity, because Jade would have appreciated my company over that 4 miles and I would have been quicker with her ongoing encouragement and positivity to get close to your 13 hour time. Now no one will ever know.

I was taken to Eastbourne running track by your sweeper bus, collected my bag and had my first hot drink in 12 hours. The lady marshal at Housedean was there and congratulated me on "finishing" but when I pointed out I had failed at 46 miles Jevington by only 9 minutes beyond the cut off and was inconsolable that I would not have a medal to show people in my care home in 20 years time, she flung her arms open and we had a hug.

Given my experience, I would like to think that all the aid station marshals would give runners the benefit of doubt being up to 15 minutes late, but for the tracker (which by the way is a very good idea) showing that they would be at fault for not enforcing your cut off time.

So you are probably wondering why I would take the time to write to you at length and express my complete utter disappointment. This morning I registered for the Race to the King - Castle. Reading the website and having done the Race to the Kind - Coastal in 2024 (in very bad weather for half of it) They too now have cut-offs, but state "We aim to cater for all abilities and therefore the cut-offs times are calculated based on a minimum of 2.5mph (24mins/mile)"

<https://www.thresholdtrailseries.com/threshold-trail-series-2026/race-to-the-king/>

So my 53km 33mile event I have 15-hours to complete.

I think you really need to re examine the cut-off times so no one ever feel as desolate as I do today. You should also give medals to everyone who finishes as stated on your website.

All finishers under the 13 hour cut off will receive a medal.

Runners crossing the finish line after the 13 hour cutoff will not be listed as official finishers and will not be eligible for awards.

#### **WHAT DO I GET FOR MY ENTRY FEE?**

Principally you get a fully supported race day experience including:

7 fully stocked aid stations including the finish.

Pre-Race Webinar

Live Tracking through open tracking. [Click here to see a replay/ tracking of the 2025 event.](#)

In-Race Professional Photography for you to download after the race

Full Medical Support in the form of dedicated race ambulances and roving vehicles as well as static first aid teams and medical volunteers at aid stations.

#### **Finishers medal**

(note not a finish in less than 13 hours to get a medal) Although I note this is stated elsewhere on your website as above).

In your webinar you said:

*"Most of all we want you to go away feeling like you were looked after as a person not a number...and you will find that our community and our volunteers and our staff treat you as an individual and as a person. **You are all important to us.**"*

*"Just relax and be excited. It's an amazing race an amazing course. **You will have such, such a great day.....we want you to have an amazing day.**"*

Well I didn't "have an amazing day". It was without question, one of the most clique-ridden, elitist events I have run. Apart from Jade and the lady that hugged me at the end, there was nothing on the day that made it special. OK the views but "what is life is full of care we have no time to stand and stare" It wasn't anywhere near the enjoyable experience of the Race to the King 50km, or London/Brighton/Southampton/New Forest/Maverick marathons I have run.