



BRITISH  
ATHLETICS

## **BRITISH ATHLETICS FELL AND HILL RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Organised on behalf of British Athletics by the Mountain Running  
Advisory Group Sub-Committee for domestic fell running  
championships under UK Athletics rules and sponsored by Pete  
Bland Sports**



The 2023 British Athletics Fell & Hill Relay will be organised by Keswick Athletics Club on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2023 at TBC.

Contacts:

Host club (Keswick A.C.)                      tbc

Race Referee (Alan Brentnall)              alan.brentnall@btinternet.com

The relay is held under UK Athletic (UKA) rules. All runners must be registered with the appropriate home country athletics federation or be members of the FRA, be first claim members of the club they represent and must wear club vests. The use of GPS for navigation purposes, the use of running poles and the linking of runners by bungee are not allowed.

British Athletics medals will be awarded to members of the first three teams in the following categories:

- Open Men
- Open Women
- Over 40 Men
- Over 40 Women

Championship entries in these categories will only be accepted from clubs that are affiliated to their national bodies for fell running. However, depending on the number of entries, the organising club may:

- accept entries from clubs that are affiliated to the UKA although not for fell running
- award prizes to other categories.

Further details and entry information will be made available on UKA, FRA, SHR, WFRA & race websites.

## **Rules and Guidelines for the British Athletics Fell and Hill Relay Championships**

### **1. Format**

- 1.1 The British Athletics (BA) Fell and Hill Relay Championships are held annually, normally on the third weekend of October, for teams of six runners over four legs. Teams/team members must be registered with their respective home country registration scheme.
- 1.2 As the British national fell relay championship the event should be held on challenging terrain which equates to an A Category fell race as defined by the Fell Runners Association.
- 1.3 Championship categories, for which British Athletics medals are awarded, are as follows:
  - Open men
  - Open women

Championship Medals will also be awarded to first vet 40 men's and vet 40 women's teams.

The event organiser may decide to award additional prizes including additional veterans (male and female) or mixed categories. If additional categories are to be awarded prizes, the organisers should make this known ideally on the race entry form, but certainly in all subsequent information.

All ages are age on day of the race.

- 1.4 Entries are invited from clubs that are affiliated to their national bodies for fell running and who have runners with the right experience and standard for a championship event. There will be a two-stage entry process; in the first stage, clubs may enter more than one teams in any category. If the entry limit is not reached, all entries will be accepted for the second payment) stage. However, if the event is oversubscribed, precedent will be given to teams who have entered the Championship categories and, if possible, at least one team from every club will be accepted but this cannot be guaranteed.

### **2. Event hosting**

- 2.1 The event is normally hosted in rotation using the following sequence – Wales, England, England, Scotland, England, England, Wales.
- 2.2 The event hosts will be appointed by MRAG, on the advice of the MRAG Standing Sub-Committee for domestic fell running championships.
- 2.3 The organising Club will normally be appointed at least 12 months in advance of the event taking place.
- 2.4 Clubs may organise the event in conjunction with other clubs, but there must be one designated, named Race Organiser.
- 2.5 The event host should endeavour to minimise the environmental impact of the relay, for example using local suppliers, maximising recycling opportunities, and encouraging sharing of transport.

### **3. Courses**

- 3.1 The established format for the event is two shorter legs for single runners, and two longer legs for paired runners as follows:
  - a. Leg 1: a short leg with an approximate winner's time of 30 minutes, which is at least partially flagged.

- b. Leg 2: a longer leg, run in pairs with an approximate winners' time of 60-65 minutes. The route should be equivalent to a category A medium fell race and should be at least partially flagged. If there is a route choice on leg 2, then runners must be allowed to recce in advance.
  - c. Leg 3: a longer navigational leg, run in pairs with an approximate winners' time of 60-70 minutes. The route should be equivalent to a category A medium fell race, and in addition must require navigation skills (see 3.6 below). The number of personnel involved in planning the navigational leg should be kept to a minimum, and those involved must ensure that details, other than optimal distance and climb and likely winning time, do not go beyond the navigational leg planning group.
  - d. Leg 4: a short leg with an approximate winner's time of 30 minutes, which is at least partially flagged.
- 3.2 Legs 1 and 4 are normally expected to be equivalent to category A short fell races. While there will be some discretion around this if needed, organisers should as far as possible, plan the relay location with this in mind.
  - 3.3 Legs 2 and 3 may be switched around if appropriate (eg because of the terrain) with the agreement of the MRAG Race Referee if this is agreed in the early planning stages.
  - 3.4 If possible, alternate routes should be available in the event of adverse weather conditions.
  - 3.5 The BA Fell and Hill Relay Championship is a senior event. Runners who are 16 or over and under the age of 18 on 31 December 2023 may run legs 1 or 4 and only if the course is suitably marked and marshalled to junior standards. The Race Organiser, in agreement with the Race Referee, must make it clear in all literature and as early as possible whether junior runners will be allowed on these two legs.
  - 3.6 The event is a fell relay, not an orienteering one, and the navigational leg must therefore be designed to test runners' route choice between well-established features. It must not be designed to require fine navigational skills. However, to provide fair competition in the championship categories, the route should avoid footpaths/ trods where possible and use the profile of the ground to minimise the visibility of checkpoints. All check points on the leg must be visited in a pre-stated set order. Runners on the navigation leg must be notified if the leg overlaps with one of the other (flagged) legs.
  - 3.7 The overall predicted winning time for the senior men's team must be under 3 hours 30 minutes, and ideally nearer 3 hours 15 minutes.
  - 3.8 It is recommended that there is a reasonably long visible run-in to help ensure that teams are ready for the changeover. Marshals should also be deployed at the approach to the finish area to ensure that both runners finish together on legs 2 & 3 .
  - 3.9 The start and finish of each leg needs to be designed so that runners starting/finishing other or the same legs do not impede each other's progress by marshals firstly restricting entry to the changeover zone to runners who are about to take over and directing finishing runners to the 'downloading' area.
  - 3.10 For safety reasons it is normal for the Race Organiser to apply a cut off time at the end of leg 2. This should be set at approximately 60% of the leader's time at the end of the leg. Therefore, if the leader's total time after leg 2 is 90 minutes, then the cut off would be 2 hours and 30 minutes. However, this is a Championship event and any teams who think they will not meet the cut off time are discouraged from taking part.

- 3.11 In addition a 'mass start'/'dib & go' should be used for all remaining leg 4 runners after an elapsed time which has been agreed in advance with the Race Referee. This should be well published to all teams and must be clearly displayed at registration on the day. Flexibility may be applied to this rule by the Race Organiser. Where possible, the championship categories should be 'true' races, i.e. the teams in contention for British Athletics medals should not be impacted by mass starts. The objective should be to minimise the number of teams involved in mass starts whilst at the same time ensuring that runners are not held in the handover pen for long periods and marshals do not have to spend excessive time on the fells, especially in the event of adverse weather conditions.
- 3.12 For legs 2 and 3 the Race Organiser should consider either issuing a dibber to both runners per leg or deploy marshals at key check points to ensure both runners visit the control and use the dibber.
- 3.13 If dibbers are being used, the Race Organiser must advise runners what they should do in the event of losing their dibbers, specifically, how change-over/finish times are to be recorded and in what circumstances teams might be disqualified. It is at the discretion of the organising club whether they charge for lost dibbers. Every year, there are a small number of runners who have problems with 'dibbing' and it might be useful to provide a 'practice' dibber and some printed hints.
- 3.14 If there is excellent mobile phone coverage in the area, a non-contact system could be used instead of dibbers.

#### **4. Facilities**

- 4.1 The following facilities must be considered obligatory:
- a) First Aid: A designated first aid tent or vehicle with qualified personnel must be at the start/finish area, with mountain rescue or similar services available for support on the hill.
  - b) Shelter: Some shelter must be provided for runners and their gear near to the start and finish.
  - c) Toilets: Unless adequate facilities are within 1km of the start, mobile toilets must be provided (including in the change-over holding pen).
- 4.2 Parking. It is desirable that a reasonable car parking area is offered within a maximum distance of 1km from the start.

#### **5. Event Organisation**

- 5.1 The British Athletics Mountain Running Advisory Group (MRAG) will nominate a Race Controller who is responsible for ensuring consistent application of these Rules and Guidelines from year to year. The Race Controller will be British Athletics' key point of contact with the Race Organiser for all matters, including verifying and signing off the planned race routes for all legs. All pre-event documentation (including entry forms), rules and instructions must be signed off by the Race Controller before they are published/distributed and include a version number and/or date released with changes highlighted. Team captains must be alerted to any changes.
- 5.2 The host club will appoint a Race Organiser who is responsible for the delivery of the event in line with these Rules and Guidelines as well as liaison with Race Controller.
- 5.3 The race organiser will be asked to present their plans early in the year they host the event; this will normally be to member(s) of the MRAG Fellrunning sub-committee and the Race Controller.

- 5.4 MRAG will appoint a Race Referee to act on race day. The Race Controller and Race Referee may be the same person. The Race Referee and team captains must be notified of all team disqualifications. In the event of any disciplinary actions or infringements of the rules, the Race Referee's decision will be final; there is no appeal procedure except for issues relating to the eligibility of team members.
- 5.5 In the event of adverse weather conditions, decisions regarding event cancellation and/or route changes will be the joint responsibility of the Race Organiser and the Race Referee.
- 5.5 Race numbers for the event will be provided by British Athletics, with different colours used to designate each leg.
- 5.6 Whenever possible the host club should publish general course details on an event website, including leg distances, profile and indicative winning time, at least six months in advance and after agreement with the Race Controller.
- 5.7 While the checkpoints and race route of the other legs must be made publicly available to all competing teams ideally at least three months prior to the event, knowledge of the navigational leg (other than distance, climb and likely winning time) must be restricted to the navigational leg planning group.
- 5.8 The number of teams accepted for the event is at the discretion of the Race Organiser. However, there must be room for a minimum of 120 teams to take part, and all teams should meet the minimum experience and standard requirements. The Organiser is encouraged to use the Race Controller to assist with ensuring clubs are of the correct standard if they are in any doubt.
- 5.9 As part of the race entry, teams should be provided with good quality (clear and waterproof) maps for every runner (apart from the navigational leg) at event day registration. Maps for the navigational leg should be given to each navigational leg runner as they start the leg or after a short, flagged run out.
- 5.10 All maps must be marked in a way which makes it very clear to competitors where mandatory routes are to be followed, where areas are out of bounds, or where walls/fences must not be crossed. Maps must have numbered grid lines so that grid references can be given, for example in emergency situations.
- 5.11 Maps must be signed off by the Race Controller before being printed.
- 5.12 The Race Organiser should make sure that pre-event literature clearly carries details of the leg 2 cut off time policy and that teams should only enter if they believe they can meet this. Cut off times will also apply to legs 3 & 4.

## **6. Event Rules**

- 6.1 As a British Athletics championship event the race permit (also known as the race licence) must be obtained from the relevant National Body (Fell Runners Association, Scottish Athletics or Welsh Athletics). Races must comply with the UKA Rules for Competition. Race Organisers must also ensure that their event meets the safety requirements stipulated in the race permit.
- 6.2 All runners must be fully paid-up, first-claim members of the Club they run for and must wear club vests. A runner not wearing a club vest will normally result in disqualification of the whole team.
- 6.3 All teams must be made up of six individual runners and runners may only count for one team in the event. If, on the day a team has fewer than six runners, with the agreement of

both the Race Organiser and the Race Referee, they may run in the relay on a non-competitive basis (either by missing a leg or with a runner from another club). It is not permitted for a runner to run more than one leg or for an individual runner to run in the 'paired' legs.

- 6.4 Given the nature of the event, individual runners need to have the experience required to cope with the conditions they may face. Given the difficulty in policing this, the Race Organiser should place the onus on policing this requirement on the teams competing. This must be stated on all advertising and on the entry form, which should require all teams to sign to say their runners have the experience required.
- 6.5 Runners who are serving a disciplinary suspension/ban imposed by any of the National Bodies (Fell Runners Association, Scottish Athletics, Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association or Welsh Athletics) are ineligible to compete.

## **7. Awards**

- 7.1 British Athletics provides team medals for each of the two championship classes (men's and women's).
- 7.2 Championship medals will also be awarded to the first vet 40 men's and women's teams.
- 7.3 Additional prizes, including additional veterans team awards and fastest leg awards for both men and women may be made at the discretion of the Race Organiser.
- 7.4 For avoidance of doubt, all single sex teams will automatically be eligible within the open championship classes, those teams of the requisite age may also enter the respective veterans team categories.
- 7.5 Especially if the event is held on a Sunday, prize presentations should be done as promptly as possible to enable as many people as possible to be present before leaving on journeys home.

## **8. Finance**

- 8.1 The event is intended to break-even/make an acceptable profit for the host club. It is for the event organisers to set the race entry fee per team based on this principle.
- 8.2 Should the host club wish, an interest free loan can be applied for from the BA Fell Championship account to assist with any expenses in advance of race entry fees being received. This must be paid back within one month of the event being held at the latest.
- 8.3 Event budgets and race plans from previous events can be made available to the Race Organiser.