

Ten Tors Warminster School 35 Mile Team 6/7th May 2017

We set out from school at 9 o'clock in the morning, all smiles. The bus journey flew by, as we were all buzzing with excitement, looking forward to what was to come. We arrived promptly to Dartmoor around 2 and a half hours later. The breeze down there certainly blew away any cobwebs. We dumped our bags into our military tent and sorted our admin. We had a walk around the camp and decided it would be a good point to buy a nice big cheeseburger. Thanks goes out to the school for organising Warminster School Ten Tors hoodies. This helped us bond as a team and feel like a true unit.

The bag scrutineering went perfectly with no problems arising. We took some time on Friday night to pick out the most efficient route to each tor. Unfortunately, due to the luck of the draw, we were given a particularly challenging route. We found that rather than last year's perimeter walk, it was a meandering figure of eight. It was very early to bed as we wanted as much energy as possible for the following two days. The tannoy woke up the camp at five in the morning. As we were rubbing our eyes, it sunk in what challenge was lying ahead of us. We headed up to Anthony Stile, ensuring we would be up there for 6:40. We walked towards the K section, as our team name was KL. K for the route and L for our specific team.

We casually slotted ourselves into K. We made sure we were near the front, ending up second from the front. The buzz of thousands of people raring to go was incredible. This brought back many bouts of déjà vu from captaining the team last year. The chaplain read out the Ten Tors prayer, a traditional ritual. We were completely in awe as a navy merlin helicopter flew overhead. Once we had recovered from that, it was time for the artillery gunfire. As that happened, we blitzed towards our first checkpoint in the midst of a tidal wave of eager teams. Our terrain started unpromising as we had a hill and a tor before our first checkpoint of Cosdon Hill.

Our aim was to reach checkpoint seven on the first day, which would have been Postbridge. Unfortunately, that goal became unachievable due to the difficulty of the route and the difficulties faced by me and by team members. We finished at checkpoint six which we could deal with. This was Higher White Tor. We were in the queue for 5:45 the next morning waiting to receive our route cards. Most of the second day flew by. Our last tor we had to climb happened to be the highest point in the United Kingdom south of the Breacon Beacons, High Willhays. This filled us with joy, as you would imagine. Within a few miles of the finish, we all gained a second wind. We began to pick up the pace, as we could smell the finish. We came over the peak of the hill we were walking over and saw the mass of people standing around the finish. We were filled with an overjoying sense of ecstasy.

As we neared the finish, we unravelled our Warminster School banner. We held it proudly to our chests as we walked across the line as a tight knit team, or should I say brothers. I have to honestly say, I will never see these group of lads the same way again. We all felt extremely proud of ourselves and each other as we received our medals on the podium. We left Oakhampton on Saturday as six individual and returned on Sunday as one efficient team. Many thanks to the organisers from Warminster including Captain Holt and Miss Carbin. The School for giving us this incredible opportunity. Most importantly, a very special thanks to my great team mates for pushing through everything alongside me. These brilliant people are KL2 Gus Baxter, KL3 Ben Austin, KL4 Ben Pearson, KL5 Freddie Mowbray and KL6 Milo Stretton-Cox.

Finish time: 12:53

KL1 Alexander Maclaren – Team Captain
KL2 Gus Baxter
KL3 Ben Austin
KL4 Ben Pearson
KL5 Freddie Mowbray
KL6 Milo Stretton-Cox