

Ten Tors 45 Mile Challenge report

Tom Campbell-Barnard

Team: Sam Evans, Jake Taylor, Aubrey Maltin, Oliver Corker, Fin Jones, Tom Campbell-Barnard

Despite the weather forecasts indicating it could be a wet weekend, Saturday morning was a relatively dry one even though there was a mist which resulted in the cancellation of the parachute display to start the challenge. We got to the starting line with plenty of time before we began and watched the other teams as they arrived – some in costumes, with the most eye-catching one being a team dressed in Hawaiian T-shirts and shorts.

We started well, after the initial rush to get as far forward in the pack after the gun went off, and made good progress to the first checkpoint, by which time the mist had cleared and it looked like it might be a nice day. From there, it was relatively easy navigation, and we were walking at a good pace, when we met up with the 35-mile team who were enroute to Longaford Tor as well, so we walked together for this leg of the journey. Once there, we went separate ways and for us we had the longest leg of our route: from Longaford Tor to Peat Cot. We were still making excellent time and aimed to get past Checkpoint 7 to set up camp between 9pm and 10pm, which was when the checkpoints closed. We arrived at Peat Cot and all was going well with the weather perfect for walking and at times, we even had a bit of sunshine! Peat Cot was our 5th checkpoint; however, we had had several waypoints (which were to add additional distance between checkpoints) along the way, so we were well over halfway at that point. Shortly after Peat Cot, we met the other 45-mile team, who were making good progress despite losing one of their members through injury early on.

About an hour after Peat Cot, a couple of members of the team began to be in pain due to many large blisters on their feet, and this slowed the pace down regardless of the blister plasters and talcum powder that were applied. Despite this, they managed to carry on for several more miles, which is a testament to their grit and determination to walk through considerable pain. We managed to reach the base of the tor leading up to Checkpoint 6, however, after around 33 miles of walking, the two members of the team were unable to continue and would have to be crashed out at the nearest safety control checkpoint. This was Little Miss Tor, and by the time we got their it was late in the evening.

At Little Miss Tor, two other members were unfortunately unable to carry on, due to more blisters, and therefore we were left to make the decision to crash out as a team, so we set up camp for the evening and were taken back to Okehampton Camp early the following morning. In the afternoon, we managed to see the 35-mile team cross the line in a very good time, and it was nice to see them succeed after all the training we had done together.

It was disappointing to not be able to complete the challenge, but we certainly had a decent crack at it – covering 33 miles in one day. It is here that it must be said that Sam Evans navigated superbly and didn't make a single mistake the whole day. The injuries our team members sustained could have happened to any team and it was unfortunate that it was us this time around. We learnt many lessons over the weekend, but I think every member will take away something different. The most important thing though, is that everyone was willing to participate in the first place and as many famous sportsmen have said in one variation or another: 'you miss 100% of the shots you don't take'. While we missed the shot this time, there will be other shots and at least we gave ourselves a good chance rather than none at all. Besides, there is always next year, and for the year 11s the year after that, and while it might not be the same without Captain Holt, the challenge will remain as will our willingness to take the shot.