

24-hour Race
Saturday 11 July 2009
Report by Kay Farrow of Beverley Athletic Club



Congratulations to Pete Watkinson of Beverley Athletic Club for his fantastic achievement in the recent 24-hour race at Costello Stadium. The vet 50 athlete ran a distance of 105.5 miles, finishing in fifth place and winning first prize in his age category.

Still ecstatic a week later, Pete found the race an amazing experience: "The camaraderie between competitors was brilliant and the organisation was superb," he said afterwards.

The furthest distance Pete had run in competition before this was a marathon so he really felt that he was moving into unknown territory. His target was 100 miles and he was delighted to have exceeded this – especially as he did not stop to rest. Pete ran the first 75 miles and then slowed down to alternating between running and walking and finally when fatigue set in, he walked. He completed 424 laps of the track altogether, reaching the 100 kilometre milestone in 8 hours 50 minutes. Despite feeling some discomfort in his legs as the race progressed, Pete felt strong.

The 24 hour race was organised by East Hull Harriers and supported by Annandale Kitchens and Bathrooms. It started at 10.00 on Saturday 11 July in sunshine and with temperatures in the twenties. By eleven o'clock in the evening the temperature had plummeted and heavy rain started to fall. It rained steadily until 5 o'clock on Sunday morning forcing competitors to change out of their wet clothes and to don waterproofs.

The race attracted a field of 39 athletes from all over the country and included two competitors from Sweden. They set up camp in the middle of the track at Costello. Some runners retired to their tent for a sleep during the night and then continued

the race. The winner was a lady – Angela Sadler of Tewksbury AC. She completed 490 laps of the track, a distance of 121.84 miles.

This race is as much a mental challenge as a physical challenge. Running round a track for 24 hours could become very boring but competitors chat to each other and every four hours everybody turns round to run in the opposite direction. Organisers and volunteers provided food and drinks for the runners and the Northern Institute of Massage was on hand for the duration of the race to revive tired legs with a massage.

Pete did not stop for a massage but with hindsight thought that this might have enabled him to run further. He was supported by his wife Sue who supplied food and drink and lots of encouragement.

Pete had two days of complete rest to recover from the race and returned to work three days afterwards. Despite wearing the same socks and shoes for the duration of the race he had no blisters afterwards. His next challenge is the Brisbane Marathon on 23 August. It starts at six in the morning, 24 hours after Pete and Sue arrive in Australia. Hopefully he won't be affected by jet lag!