

Rivière Noire 10k (Mauritius) Sunday 14 November 2010 Report by Kay Farrow of Beverley AC

The inaugural Rivière Noire 10k road race and supporting fun runs took place on Sunday 14 November 2010. There was a choice of three distances – 2k, 5k and 10k – on an out and back course on a road through the forest leading to Black River Gorge National Park.



The 2k attracted a handful of children who completed the course in no time. Runners in the 5k event set off with 10k runners and were trusted to turn back when they reached a sign at half-way – there were no marshals. 10k runners continued to the car park at the entrance to the national park where thankfully water was available at the turnaround point.

The national park is a mountainous and heavily wooded area and the access road climbs steadily upwards with one short steep section. Even though the race started at 7.30 in the morning the sun was beating down and it was very hot. The trees provided welcome respite from the sun but the last kilometre on the open road offered no shade at all. This last kilometre was also dead straight and getting to the finish and the shade seemed to take forever. I was gradually closing the gap with a man in front of me and sprinted past him in the last few metres much to my satisfaction. The crowd was most impressed

The prize giving ceremony for all races took place after all runners in the 10k had finished and started with the 2k fun run. The children had had to wait over an hour after finishing their race for the presentation of prizes. The ceremony took place in front of all the adults and the kids enjoyed the applause and recognition.

The 10k prize list was extensive and with only 35 runners in the race the prize giving ceremony should have been straightforward. However, the registration forms did not include a field for gender and there was some confusion. I finished in 28th position and was awarded the prize for third male over 40. This was later changed to fourth lady over 40. I was actually the third lady over 40.



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It was the first race for the organisers – “3 athletes” – and it was a shame that the administration of the results and prizes was so poor as the event had been well organised. On the positive side – bib numbers were so big that they could be seen by the most short-sighted funnel official from 100 yards. I wondered if they had run out of bib numbers as some runners had numbers written on their arms.

At the finish we helped ourselves to fresh watermelon, bananas, huge cheese baps, water and orange juice. I chatted to the organisers and offered to help with

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future events. Everybody was really friendly. I spoke to a man and a lady that I recognised from the half marathon I did in September. I was pleased that I had run consistently and had beaten them both again but I was not impressed by my finishing time of 1 hour and 37 seconds – I must do better next time.

A friend from the Hash also did the run. He finished in a very respectable 48 minutes and ran back to support me along the last few hundred yards. He was most impressed with my finish which he described as “reminiscent of a trademark Kenyan sprint.”

The advance publicity for this race consisted of posters on supermarket notice boards and banners at a couple of junctions on local roads. I'm checking the notice boards every time I go shopping to make sure that I don't miss the next event.

NB The race was won by Christophe Marena in 35.46. The first lady to cross the line was Christiane Louis in 47.54.