

OLD COUNTY TOPS RACE

Promoted by ACHILLE RATTI CC

Supported by Hangar18

Saturday 16th May 2026

Information, Rules and Regulations

1. The Old County Tops is organised by the Achille Ratti Climbing Club (ARCC). The race is a circular route of approximately 37 miles with 10000 feet of ascent, which starts and finishes close to the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, Great Langdale. The route visits the three high points of the old counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire, these being Helvellyn, Scafell Pike and Conistone Old Man respectively.
2. **The race is run under FRA rules and is covered by FRA Insurance and we could not run this race without the support provided by the FRA. Whilst it is not obligatory for a competitor to be a member of the FRA, please consider joining the FRA if you are not already a member** <https://www.sientries.co.uk/membership.php>.
3. The Old County Tops is an arduous mountain event in which navigational skills are essential. Your signature on the entry form confirms that:
 - You understand that this race is held in accordance with, and that you have familiarised yourself with, both the rules and safety requirements of the FRA and the Organisers information and requirements.
 - You have the navigational skills appropriate to take part in this race and will carry throughout the race any equipment specified by the FRA Safety Requirements and by the Organiser.
 - You accept the hazards involved in fell running and acknowledge that you are entering and running this race at your own risk.
 - Other than the Organiser's liability for causing death or personal injury by negligence, you confirm that you understand that the Organiser accepts no liability to you for any loss or damage of any nature to you or your property arising out of your participation in this race.
 - You are in good health and have no disabilities which may be detrimental to your participation in this event and understand that the race location is in remote

mountain country and that, in the event of accident or illness, help may not be quickly available.

4. Failure to comply with these rules will result in disqualification and a ban from future races as well as disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the FRA.
5. The race is run in pairs who must stay together throughout the race. If a competitor has to retire his/her partner is expected to remain with the retiree. All retiring pairs **MUST** report to the finish.
6. Online entry via Fabian4 will be available from early January www.fabian4.co.uk.
7. Refunds – A full refund (minus fabian4 fee) will be given to those teams who withdraw before 11th April 2026. Half the entry fee (minus fabian4 fee) will be refunded to those who withdraw between 11th April 2026 and 3rd May 2026. No refunds for withdrawals in the final fortnight – sorry! The club does make a donation to the CAFOD charity from the proceeds of the race. Entries cannot be carried over to next year – please re-enter.
8. Substitutions - In the event of one member of a pair having to withdraw from the event prior to the start they can be substituted by another runner with the appropriate experience. Substitutions can be made on the fabian 4 race page. Contact the race organiser if any problems or queries (chris.lloyd731@gmail.com).
9. A maximum of 160 teams will be accepted on a first come first served basis. All entries should be with the organiser by 9th May 2026. Late entries may be accepted, at the discretion of the organiser, if the maximum of 160 teams has not been reached.
10. All entrants must be 18yrs or older and one member of each pair must be 21yrs or older.
11. The event will start at 08:00 hrs and competitors are asked to gather at the start at 07:45 hrs. Registration and kit check will take place in the marquee on the parking field from 06:30 hrs.
12. The race is deemed unsuitable for novices. All competitors **MUST** have previous fell/mountain running experience and must be able to navigate in the mountains in adverse conditions. The suitability of all competitors to start the event will be decided by the Organiser based on information provided on the entry form. This should include other Class A fell races recently completed and/or other fell/mountain running experience.
13. Due to the demanding nature of the event it is recommended that all competitors who have no previous experience of the event spend time reconnoitring the course.

14. Runners are expected to pass through the following checkpoints:

Checkpoint	Location	Grid Reference	Cut off time
	New Dungeon Ghyll	296064	Start 08:00 hrs
1	Path Junction	339098	Head Count Only
2	Helvellyn Summit	342152	
3	Wythburn Car park	324136	
4	Angle Tarn	245077	13:30 hrs (mandatory)
5	Scafell Pike Summit	215072	
6	Cockley Beck	247017	16:15 hrs (mandatory)
7	Coniston Old Man Summit	272978	
8	Three Shires Stone	277027	
	New Dungeon Ghyll	296064	Finish 20:00 hrs

15. The cut off time at Angle Tarn is the last arrival time – i.e. anyone arriving after 13.30hrs will be timed out of the event.

16. The cut-off time at Cockley Beck is the time that the last competitor will be allowed to leave that location and **not** the last arrival time.

17. It is the responsibility of the competitors to ensure that their race number is recorded by the marshals at all checkpoints except checkpoint 1. Checkpoint 1 will involve a headcount only and race numbers will not be recorded at that location.

18. Route choice is largely at the discretion of the competitors except for the following:

- Competitors will not be permitted to run along the main road between Wythburn car park and the road junction at the end of Thirlmere. Competitors will be directed along the footpath that runs parallel to the road.
- Mickledore is strictly out of bounds and therefore descending Scafell Pike via this route is not allowed. Teams seen heading south west towards Mickledore will be disqualified.
- For those that finish the route along the fell/path to Side House Farm (GR296061), rather than descending to the campsite and along the road, the last section of the route through Side House Farm will be marked so that all competitors must follow the footpath rather than short cutting through the farm.

19. The route includes the following road sections:

- A short section between the end of the track and the start of fell path in the Langdale valley.

- Through Grasmere and along to the start of the path up to Grisedale Tarn.
- Crossing the road at Thirlmere - there will be a marshal at this road crossing – please follow any instructions given.
- Run into and away from Cockley Beck.
- Run down Wrynose Pass.
- Finish section to New Dungeon Ghyll.

Besides the Section of Road in the Langdale valley just after the start and the crossing at Thirlmere there will be no monitoring of the traffic and runners are expected be responsible for their own safety on these sections.

20. There are two accepted routes to descend off Scafell Pike – either a direct descent from the summit or by retracing the ascent route to the col and descending down Little Narrow Cove. The organisers consider the latter to be the safer route as it avoids some very steep terrain and the possibility of getting caught up on some even steeper ground if you miss the optimum line. For anyone who has not reconnoitred the descent off Scafell Pike the organisers advise using the latter route.
21. The race is classified by FRA as NG – GPS units cannot be used as a navigational aid during the race. All runners are expected to be competent with a map and compass. A GPS unit and mobile phone may be carried by competitors for use in emergency situations, although competitors should be aware that the mobile phone signal may be limited. Use of the GPS will render the team no longer competitive.
22. The option of introducing a shortened course avoiding the summits of Scafell Pike and Conistone Old Man will be considered in the event of extremely poor weather. The shortened course will be the following:
 - Avoid Scafell Pike - from Esk Hause descend the valley down to Great Moss and continue to Cockley Beck along Mosedale (there will be no check point between Angle Tarn and Cockley Beck).
 - Avoid Conistone Old Man – there will be a check point at the col between Grey Friar and Great Carrs (grid reference 266007) and then descend Wet Side Edge to Three Shires Stone.

The decision to implement the shortened course will be made by the race organiser on the day.

23. Food and drink will be provided at Wythburn car park, Cockley Beck and the finish. Due to the length of the event it is likely that most competitors will need to eat and drink before, between and after these check points. Competitors are expected to

carry sufficient supplies to cover their needs. This should include some isotonic fluid to prevent dehydration (especially important on a hot day). When conditions are dry there is very little water along the route; there should be the opportunity to fill water bottles at Wythburn and Cockley Beck, but this will depend upon demand and the amount of water that can be transported to those locations.

24. Competitors **must** carry full waterproof body cover (as stipulated in FRA rules – i.e taped seams, jacket with hood), hat, gloves, map, compass, whistle, emergency food and a survival bag or mountain safety blanket. All runners will be provided with a waterproof 1:40000 scale Harvey's map of the course.
25. There will be compulsory kit checks before the start for all competitors and anyone not carrying this minimum requirement of kit will not be allowed to start the race. There will also be random kit checks at the finish. Action as outlined in Point 3 above will be taken against any teams who are found not to be complying with the equipment requirements at the finish of the race.
26. The kit listed above is the minimum requirement and competitors are strongly advised to carry additional clothing in poor weather conditions.
27. Prizes will be awarded to the first six pairs, and to the following categories: Ladies, Mixed, V80-89, V90-99, V100-109, V110-119, V120-129, V130-139 V140+ (the veteran age is the combined age of both competitors on the day of the race; both competitors must be over 40 to qualify). The number of Ladies, Mixed and Vet (men, ladies and mixed) prizes awarded will depend on the numbers in each category. A club team prize will also be awarded to the club which has three teams with the lowest aggregate time.
28. An Old County Tops buff will be given to all starters.
29. A T-shirt will be awarded to all **finishers** who enter the event by the 9th May 2026. Whilst every effort will be made to give T-shirts to late entrants, this cannot be guaranteed.
30. Results will be published on the Achille Ratti web site as soon as possible after the event.
31. All entrants are expected to check the Achille Ratti web site after 6th May 2026 for final instructions.
32. Please note that any relevant information will also be posted on the Old County Tops facebook page (search 'Old County Tops').

33. Achille Ratti Climbing Club would like to thank Hangar 18 for their support of this event. Hangar 18 representatives will be around on race day and some of their great kit will be on display and for sale.
34. Achille Ratti Climbing Club would like to thank the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel for allowing us to use the field for the day. Accommodation is available in the hotel for anyone requiring a little bit of luxury before/after the event. Minimum stay two nights. Please contact the hotel directly.

Chris Lloyd

January 2026