

# Seven Hills Race vows to seek out “cheating toerags”

The organiser of the venerable Edinburgh Seven Hills Race is warning that extra checks may have to be brought in next year to prevent athletes infiltrating the event without paying the £14 entry fee.

The annual race went ahead in mid June covering a 14 mile course that embraced Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Arthur's Seat, Craiglockhart Hill, Braid Hill, Blackford Hill, Corstorphine Hill and Calton Hill.

It was won in a time of 1hr 39mins 32 secs.

Entrants come from as far afield as The Netherlands.

But Race Director Alan Lawson has hit out at the cheats, branding them “toe rags”.



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"The culprits were mostly young men; some can be seen on photos. We think there were about half a dozen in total.

"This is appalling behaviour in an amateur sports event, and is clearly just cheating.

"99% pay to take part, and 1% don't! It's the equivalent of climbing over a wall to get into a football match or a rock concert for which you have no ticket, and is really just like shoplifting.

"It's extremely disappointing that a minority are abusing the famous event in this way. We would encourage all decent runners to expose any people who are doing this, but extra controls may need to be introduced next year to prevent any recurrence.

"The entry-fee which clowns are avoiding is only £14 – pretty low for what is offered; the problem is that the event is so popular that it fills up quickly, so the clowns miss out and then just decide on a freebie.

"I've had very firm responses from several other race directors re the cheating toerags."

Described as a combination of road-running, cross-country, hill-running, and urban orienteering over a 14.3 mile course and with 2200 feet of ascent/descent it was first run in 1980.

The race attracts around 500 runners (the maximum permitted) of all ages and abilities. Finishers receive a drinks coaster as a memento.

The race website says of the competitors: "These range from leading distance-runners who get round in 100 minutes to the more modest performers who are allowed to take up to four hours."

Alan Lawson and his friend David Salmond, both keen runners, devised the race after the latter came across a guide book to

Edinburgh which used the phrase 'seven hills'.

They investigated the possibility of creating a route which included them all and the race has grown in popularity.

Sadly, David Salmond died in 1984 but Alan Lawson continues to be involved in an organising capacity.



Calton Hill PHOTO ©2024 The Edinburgh Reporter