

Lakeland Classics – Top 20 Ladies All Time Ranking

In the Fellrunner magazine of June 2005 an article compared the performances of the top male fell runners throughout the history of the Lakeland Long 'A' races, so this article is an attempt to complete the same exercise for Lady fell runners.

Initially lady runners were not allowed to run these long races, and had to wait in some cases 5 to 10 years or more before being officially recognized, although a few ladies tried to hasten this process by running in the all male race fields.

Due to this shorter race history and the much smaller entry for Ladies races, the number of top performances at these races is considerably fewer than that recorded for the men, and hence the selection of best times and the ranking method used has been modified to some extent.

This article refers to the winners and top performances from some 142 races throughout the years 1978 – 2006

'Statistical Bit' – Standard Race Times

As demonstrated before it is possible to derive a single statistic for each runner's performance, no matter when the runners competed at these races, and from this statistic to construct a performance ranking of the top fell runners.

By establishing a common reference time – a Standard Time - for each race, it is feasible to assess all race times within the history of these races. Thus Time Points are calculated from relating the race times to the Standard Time for each race, rather than that year's winning time.

The setting of Standard Times is somewhat arbitrary, but so that it also acts as an achievable Target time for the top runners, Standard Times have been set at approx. 10% slower than the current records. This means that the measurement or yardstick for assessing performance ranges from 100 equivalent to the Standard Time up to close to 110 points if the record time was equalled. Times slower than the Standard gain points from 100 downwards to zero.

The Standard Times (ST) set are for Duddon Valley 3.45, Ennerdale 4.35, Wasdale 4.50, Borrowdale 3.35, Three Shires 2.20, and for Langdale 2.40. Thus, these ST's are some 15 minutes slower than the current records for both Three Shires and Langdale, some 20 & 25 minutes for Borrowdale & Duddon, and approximately 30 minutes slower for Ennerdale and Wasdale.

Top Fell Runners PB's

From the Top 50 or so best times for each race it is possible to extract the top runners' Personal Best times, highlight those times close to the current record, and establish the sequence of records set since the races started.

Name	Club	D-V	E-D	W-D	B-D	3-S	L-D
1 Sarah Rowell	P&B	3.24.00		4.33.51	3.15.34	2.21.45	
2 Helene Diamantides	Carnethy	3.36.12	4.32.20	4.25.24	3.14.45	2.20.26	2.23.25
3 Mari Todd	Ambleside		4.32.26	4.22.10	3.41.07	2.05.29	2.43.15
4 Clare Crofts	Dark Peak	3.24.38	4.33.38	4.45.20	3.31.07		2.29.58
5 Ruth Pickvance	Kendal	3.43.49	4.23.49	4.31.12		2.12.49	2.38.40
6 Angela Brand-Barker	Keswick	3.38.51	4.40.37	4.36.47	3.45.46	2.20.43	2.34.28
7 Jackie Lee	Eryri	3.47.02	4.41.08	4.19.08			
8 Sally Newman	Calder Valley	3.31.53	4.29.52	4.51.41	3.42.23		
9 Pauline Haworth	Keswick		4.27.52	4.51.20	3.26.05	2.18.44	2.40.14
10 Sue Parkin	Kendal		4.40.32	4.45.39		2.15.38	2.48.51
11 Nicola Davies	Borrowdale	4.01.00	4.39.01	5.03.53	3.26.19	2.14.29	2.33.54
12 Vanessa Peacock	CleM		4.21.31		3.46.54	2.08.45	2.37.01
13 Louise Roberts	Keswick	3.26.27			3.46.06	2.18.28	
14 Christine Howard	Matlock		4.23.34		3.46.30		2.37.55
15 Nicky Lavery	Ambleside			4.50.23	3.37.47	2.19.23	
16 Sarah Haines	Ilkley	4.10.57	4.43.57		3.29.19	2.24.50	
17 Sharon Taylor	Bingley	3.47.19		5.02.49	3.44.11	2.20.18	2.47.26
18 Jackie Hargreaves	CFR	3.49.38	4.45.21			2.22.58	2.40.37
19 Stephanie Quirk	Kendal	4.03.30		4.43.10			2.44.17
20 Wendy Dodds	CleM	3.56.28	4.57.35	5.20.51	3.46.06		2.37.30
Record Time		3.19.52	4.06.41	4.19.08	3.14.36	2.05.29	2.23.25
Standard Time		3.45.00	4.35.00	4.50.00	3.35.00	2.20.00	2.40.00

No recorded time in this table means either the runner has never run that race, or that she has a PB time slower than the Standard or cut-off time.

Mari Todd did hold two of the six records – Wasdale and Three Shires both from 1997, but in 2006 Jackie Lee established a new record time at Wasdale.

Helene Diamantides holds the Langdale record from 1992, and previously had set the records at Wasdale 1990 and Borrowdale 1991 prior to the current record times.

The other race records are held by ladies not featuring in this Top 20 – Yvette Hague holds the Duddon Valley 1992 record (NB Sarah Rowell's 2nd best time from 1995 has sometimes been mis-quoted as the record). Tricia Calder, Edinburgh holds the oldest established record of these six races, that at Ennerdale in 1990.

Menna Angharad, Eryri set the Borrowdale record in 1997.

Top 20 All Time Ranking

The following table shows a ranking of these runners using the same selection as the current Lakeland Classics Trophy; the total points being derived from the best two points scores of the Super Long races – Duddon Valley, Ennerdale and Wasdale, plus

the next best points score from any of the other 4 races – points from 3 races in total.

Rank	Name	Club	D-V	E-D	W-D	B-D	3-S	L-D	Total
1	Sarah Rowell	P&B	109		106	109	99		324
2	Helene Diamantides	Carnethy	104	101	108	109	100	110	323
3	Mari Todd	Ambleside		101	110	97	110	98	321
4	Clare Crofts	Dark Peak	109	100	102	102		106	317
5	Ruth Pickvance	Kendal	101	104	106		105	101	316
6	Angela Brand-Barker	Keswick	103	98	105	95	99	103	311
7	Jackie Lee	Eryri	99	98	111				308
8	Sally Newman	Calder Valley	106	102	99	97			307
9	Pauline Haworth	Keswick		103	100	104	101	100	306
10	Sue Parkin	Kendal		98	102		103	94	303
11	Nicola Davies	Borrowdale	93	99	95	104	104	104	307
12	Vanessa Peacock	CleM		105		94	108	102	307
13	Louise Roberts	Keswick	108			95	101		304
14	Christine Howard	Matlock		104		95		101	300
15	Nicky Lavery	Ambleside			100	99	100		299
16	Sarah Haines	Ilkley	88	97		103	97		296
17	Sharon Taylor	Bingley	99		96	96	100	95	294
18	Jackie Hargreaves	CFR	98	96			98	100	294
19	Stephanie Quirk	Kendal	92		102			97	291
20	Wendy Dodds	CleM	95	92	89	95		102	291
	Record Time		111	110	111	109	110	110	332
	Standard Time		100	100	100	100	100	100	300

The Top 10 Ladies includes both past and present British and English Champions from the last 25 years headed by Sarah Rowell, British and English Champion in 1995 & 1996. Within 1% of Sarah's score are both Helene Diamantides and Mari Todd, English Champion in 1997, closely followed by Clare Crofts and Ruth Pickvance both British Champions from the late 1980's.

The next five ranked runners include two further multiple British Champions, Angela Brand-Barker / Carson spanning the years 1986 to 1993 & 1994, Pauline Haworth, Champion in 1980, 1984 & 1985, plus another British Champion from 1982, Sue Parkin. Also ranked in the Top 10 is Sally Newman, English Champion (2000 & 2005), and Jackie Lee following her successes at Super Long races in the last few years including her 2006 Wasdale record.

In order to extend the ranking beyond the Top 10, other runners have been included on the basis that Borrowdale also qualifies as a Super Long race.

Thus, the next three ladies, ,Nicola Davies, Vanessa Peacock, Louise Roberts, score higher than 300 using this alternative ranking, and Christine Howard enters the Top 20 ranking after her fine winning time at the 2006 Ennerdale. Nicola Davies has the distinction of being the only lady runner to have won all of these six long Lakeland races.

In addition to those others listed in this Top 20 ranking, several other ladies have race scores averaging 95+, and thus total scores better than or equal

to 285 - Ros Coates 288, Bridget Hogge 286, and Alison Wright, Jackie Smith, and Sue Ratcliffe all with a 285 score.

Besides these Top 20 ladies and the other Lakeland record holders – Menna Angharad, Tricia Calder, Yvette Hague – there are just three other runners, Janet King, Angela Mudge and Angela Priestley who have achieved top scores (105+) at individual races, but have not competed in a sufficient number of these long Lakeland races to warrant inclusion in this ranking.

In fact, Yvette Hague has top performances (105+) from three lakeland classics – Duddon Valley 111, Three Shires 106, & Langdale 105 – an aggregate score of 321, surpassed by only two of the Top 10 runners.

All but four of the twenty past British or English Champions have been mentioned so far – English Champions Carol Haigh / Greenwood 1986 & 1993, and Cheryl Cook 1990, plus the two recent British Champions from Scotland, Tracey Brindley 2004 and Jill Mykura 2005.

(The 2006 British and English Champion is Natalie White, Bingley.)

Perhaps the most notable exception is Carol Greenwood, holder of many short and medium race records. Carol has two wins at these classic races – Langdale 1986 & Three Shires 1993 – but no other long classic results of note.

Winners & Records

The following traces the progression of the race records and highlights the number of classic race wins of these top runners during the last 25 years or so.

1978 – 1989

The first Lakeland Long ‘A’ in 1978 at Langdale was won by Bridget Hogge, and the following year Ros Coates reduced this Langdale record below 2.40. In 1980, Pauline Haworth set the initial records at Ennerdale, Wasdale and Borrowdale, plus winning at Langdale during her first year as British Champion.

The inaugural Three Shires race in 1983 was won by Linda Lord. In the following year Pauline Haworth / Stuart reduced the record time of both Three Shires and Borrowdale and won four of the five classic races held that year. In 1985 Pauline set a new record for Ennerdale to complete 10 classic wins during her career.

Angela Carson / Brand-Barker set records at Langdale 1985 and Wasdale 1986 following a win there in 1985. Vanessa Brindle / Peacock won Three Shires three times setting new records in both 1987 and 1989, plus reducing the Ennerdale record in 1987. Ruth Pickvance gained four wins in 1988/89 - Wasdale, Langdale twice, plus a record win at Three Shires in 1988.

Sarah Haines won the first official long race at Duddon Valley in 1987, and completed four consecutive Borrowdale wins in 1988, plus a fifth win in 1990 that reduced her PB to below 3.30 - then the second best time at Borrowdale.

Sarah also won the 1988 Ennerdale to accumulate 7 classic wins in total.

Clare Crofts was the other record breaker during this period – at Langdale in 1987 and Duddon in 1988; she also won the 1988 Wasdale and became the first lady to be both British and English Champion in the same year.

1990 – 1999

Records had been broken in each of the previous 12 years, and this sequence continued for the next three years in the 1990's. Tricia Calder established a new record at Ennerdale in 1990 which remains the oldest record of these six races.

Then Helene Diamantides set three records in consecutive years – Wasdale 1990, Borrowdale 1991 and Langdale 1992 – the latter still the record. Helene won Borrowdale again in 1992, and later in 1999 won both Borrowdale and Langdale again to total 6 classic race wins in the 1990's.

Another record set in 1992 that has yet to be beaten was Yvette Hague's at Duddon Valley. Yvette won Duddon again in 1997 and together with a Three Shires win, plus two Langdale victories, has 5 classic wins to her credit.

Ruth Pickvance continued to win more classic races in the early 1990's, three races in 1993, plus Wasdale in 1994 to total 10 classic wins; only failing to win at Borrowdale of these six Lakeland races.

During this period the last year in which Lakeland records were set was 1997. Menna Angharad first reduced the Borrowdale record by some 30 seconds in 1995, then Sarah Rowell knocked 10 minutes off the record in the 1996 Championship race, only for Menna to return in 1997 to regain this record by just 9 seconds. In 1999 Helene Diamantides failed by only 10 seconds to reclaim the Borrowdale record that she held earlier in this decade.

Mari Todd claimed three victories at the Three Shires race, the last in 1997 being a new record time. Mari also reduced the Wasdale record in 1997 and won 5 classic races in total, including the 1993 Borrowdale race.

2000 – 2006

Probably the most competitive Lakeland runner, Wendy Dodds won her first classic race at the 1990 Langdale, followed by two wins at Wasdale in 1992 & 1999. Wendy won three races in 2000 (in her 50th year!) at Duddon, Wasdale and Langdale, and won Duddon again in 2003 to claim 7 classic wins in total.

Nicola Davies has 8 classic wins to her credit, four of these in the 1990's starting with two wins in 1994, and more recently winning Ennerdale 2002 and Wasdale 2004, plus two further Borrowdale victories in 2003 & 2005.

Angela Brand-Barker has 4 classic wins during a 20 year fell running career – her initial successes in 1985 / 86 and her most recent at Wasdale in 2002.

Sally Newman won the 2000 Ennerdale and the 2005 Wasdale, and gained second place to Louise Sharp / Roberts at the 2002 Duddon, all these three PB times being achieved at Championship races.

2006 proved to be an outstanding year for Ladies performances at these classic races. Helene Diamantides improved her ranking in the Top 20 from 5th to 2nd place by setting four new PB's, gaining three wins and two second places to wins by Christine Howard at Ennerdale and Jackie Lee at Wasdale. Thus Helene won the 2006 LCT Ladies Trophy, established the best ever total points score in one year, and increased her classic wins to 9 in total.

Jackie Lee also improved her performances at the Super Long races during 2006 notably by setting a new record at Wasdale, her fifth classic win to-date, and warranting a 7th place ranking in the Top 10.

Yearly Total Scores

In addition to those top fell runners that have dominated certain time periods, some ladies have also gained an impressive total points score in a single year.

Pauline Haworth	291	1980
Stephanie Quirk	291	1986
Alison Wright	285	1991
Ruth Pickvance	305	1993
Nicola Davies	287	1994
Wendy Dodds	273	2000

Since the start of the Lakeland Classics Trophy series in 2002 no runner had achieved a yearly total score higher than 280 points, until 2006 when the two highest yearly scores were set : (2002-06 LCT on same basis as PB ranking)

Helene Diamantides	313	2006
Jackie Lee	307	2006

Summary

The purpose of this article was to highlight the performances of the top lady fell runners at these long classic Lakeland races. Not surprisingly most of the top performances have been achieved at the more competitive Championship events and many of the Champions appear in this Top 20 ranking.

During the 1980's several ladies helped to establish a high standard at these events notably Pauline Haworth, Sue Parkin, Sarah Haines, Angela Brand-Barker, Vanessa Peacock, and a few others that appear in this ranking.

The late 1980's and early 1990's saw further improvements in performance at these classic races particularly by Clare Crofts, Ruth Pickvance, Helene Diamantides,

and also by two of the current record holders Tricia Calder and Yvette Hague.

All of the six race records were improved during the 1990's, that culminated with a series of record breaking at Borrowdale by Menna Angharad and Sarah Rowell, and two new records by Mari Todd at Wasdale & Three Shires in 1997.

More recently in the late 1990's and 2000's some new names have enjoyed success at these Lakeland classics, and several of the Top 20 ladies have demonstrated their ability to maintain quality performances when moving up to the Veteran categories - notably by Sally Newman, the 2005 English Champion, and Helene Diamantides achieving the best ever yearly points score in 2006.

Finally, it is left to the reader to nominate their 'Lakeland Classics Lady Champion'.

Sarah Rowell heads this particular ranking, but several other ladies have been shown to have top performances to their credit and to have secured their place in the history of these classic races.

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Update

This article appeared in the Fellrunner of June 2006 with an initial update in October 2006, and now has been fully updated at the end of 2006.

The new 2006 Wasdale record has resulted in the Standard Time for Wasdale being reduced from 4.55 to 4.50 – the effect of this is to lower the points derived from Wasdale PB times by approx. 1.5 from those previously shown.

In summary, the 2006 performances have resulted in three main changes – the ranking of Helene Diamantides from 5th to 2nd place, and the introduction of both Jackie Lee and Christine Howard into the Top 20 ranking.