

## Courageous team complete 54mile charity challenge

Posted: 2016-06-14



### Cateran Yomp Challenge success for Team from Forth Ports

A team from Forth Ports successfully completed the gruelling 54mile Cateran Yomp challenge over the weekend to raise money for the Soldiers' Charity. Writing about the tough challenge, Jason Thirwall said:

"I can't even begin to describe the last 24 hours, I honestly don't think there's any way of portraying the mental and physical challenge that myself and my team from Forth Ports had let ourselves in for, but I'll try.

**07.10 Saturday morning:** Our wave of competitors left the start line in Blairgowrie, the same start line that would ultimately be our finish line, 54 long wet horrible miles later! I could say we were slightly naive, we certainly completely underestimated the challenge. This would come clear to us throughout the day!

The course was divided into sections with various water stops and check points throughout the day and night, giving everyone a chance to replenish and to sort any blisters. Some sections were much tougher than others and although we had the ideal temperature, it rained...a lot! This made the footing difficult especially when it got dark. The terrain was relentless at times, some seriously steep inclines up the side of mountains, slippery ridges, forestry & marsh.

I was very fortunate to have the best team I could have asked for and I am extremely proud of all of them. We kept each other going and the moral was high throughout the majority of the day.

Unfortunately I had gained two blisters on my heels by mile 18, not something you want to carry for a further 36 mile. As we worked our way through more mileage, more injuries and niggles surfaced, that was inevitable. Blisters, trench foot, chaffing, muscle and joint pain, back pain, it started to take its toll.

At check point three (36 miles) we lost one of the main pillars of our team through injury, at the same check point I also very nearly collapsed through exhaustion. The amazing paramedics and first aid teams had their work cut out up there, people were dropping like flies.

After very, very nearly throwing in the towel at this point, the four remaining decided to carry on, it was dark and cold by this time, and we were completely exhausted, mentally and physically. Not to mention the pain each of us was in.

The last 18 miles seemed like 80, navigating up mountains and glens, with nothing more than torch light. By this point all the competitors were very spaced out, so we were pretty much on our own. I'm honestly not sure what came over us in the last 10 miles, the pain at this point was so sore I began to feel ill, but we soldiered on, for the charity if anything. I remember calling my mum in tears at about 2am - things really did get that bad but I am not ashamed in the slightest.

At 0630 on Sunday morning, shaking violently with exhaustion and adrenaline, we crossed the finish line with a huge cheer. We made it in under 24 hours and crossing the line was seriously emotional. We did it!

Never in my life have I been challenged like that, I learnt more about myself and my body than I ever did, I cannot emphasise how proud I am of all my team. None of us have ever had to dig that deep and it was a huge test, relentless, savage, trying times. Despite not being able to stand up or walk as I write this, every single step was worth it. We raised a load of cash and our team made top ten out of 1040 competitors, we smashed it!

I'd like to say on behalf of the team a HUGE thank you to our support team and everyone who sponsored us, wished us good luck, gave advice and the Cateran yomp team for looking after us. What an achievement!"

Jason Thirwall - 14 June 2016