

Sand Dancer 10k - 11th April 2010

The day of my first official race as a 'Stocksfield Strider' had arrived!

I had been entered into the race by my brother, Nick, who runs for South Shields Harriers and we arrived at Gypsies Green (race HQ) bright and early and ready for action!!

A fun run for children was held at 10:30am, which was a 4K loop around the coastal paths. The 10K began at 11:00am and I felt apprehensive and cold on the start line (it was chilly down on the sea front!). The course was altered slightly due to cliff erosion so the distance ended up being 6.2 miles. It consisted of a short run on the promenade and then a climb up to the cliff tops, where we joined the coastal paths. Two laps of the multi-terrain course were to be completed before dropping back down onto the promenade and into the Gypsies Green 'Stadium' for a lap of the track to finish.

I had planned to just run at my usual pace and to ignore all of the 'very professional looking' club runners racing off into the distance! I felt comfortable and managed the long uphill sections well (must be living in Broomley that helped me with that). Due to the nature of the course, the runners became very spread out, very quickly. I was really pleased as I maintained a steady pace and began catching and passing others who had obviously gone off too quickly! This was a real confidence boost for my first race.

After seeing the 5 mile marker, I increased my pace slightly and felt strong coming into the finishing lap of the athletics track. However, Nick (my brother) was waiting for me in order to crack the whip!! He ran around the final lap with me and pushed me to a virtual sprint. I was really pleased that he did as I finished in an unofficial time of 56 minutes and 18 seconds (just over 9 minute miles)!! Nick had been waiting for me for around 20 minutes as he had finished in 37 minutes - but that's what brothers are for!!

Jill Robertson