

A Considered Response from the FRA to the British Athletics MRAG proposal on the future format of the British Fell/Hill Running Championships.

- The Fell Runners' Association (FRA) is the governing body for Fell Running in England.
- Fell/Hill Running in the other home countries (Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland) is administered by Scottish Athletics Hill Running Commission/Scottish Hill Runners; Welsh FRA; and Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association (NIMRA), respectively.
- The British Athletics Mountain Running Advisory Group (MRAG) has a Fell and Hill running subcommittee who schedule the British Fell/Hill Championships, and the British Fell Relays.
- The FRA English Championships is scheduled by the FRA, by the FRA English Championship coordinator (currently Nicholas Barber).
- Since October 2022 Nicholas Barber has also fulfilled the position of FRA liaison to MRAG. This was partly designed to help with planning of Championships and to better avoid clashes between home countries' championships, trial races and international opportunities. Whilst this is not always possible in a congested calendar, it is hoped that this scenario will ensure major clashes are avoided, to aid both GB Mountain Running teams, and the English and British championships.

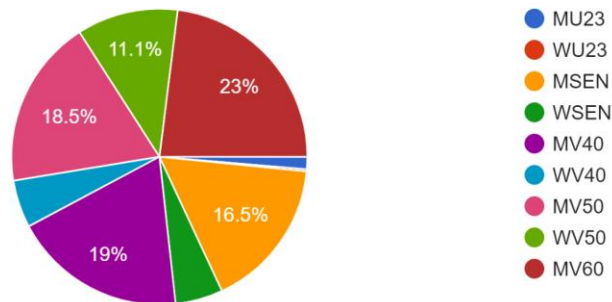
The FRA received a proposal from MRAG on the future of the British Fell Running Championships in February 2023. As the governing body for Fell Running in England, it is the FRA's job to feedback on this to MRAG. The FRA shared the proposal via a membership consultation to gain the thoughts of the English Fell Running community. This has informed the FRA's response to the proposal. This was also designed to ensure as many people as possible were aware of the potential changes. The survey received 443 responses and this represents about 5% of the total FRA membership (though FRA membership status was not checked).

Data Summary.

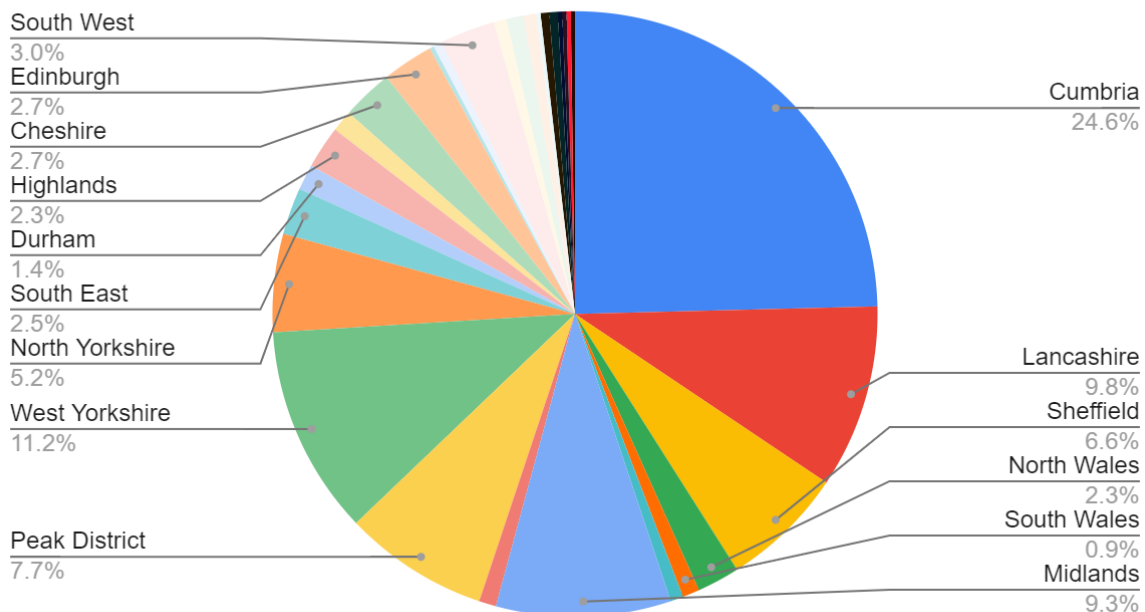
Below there is a brief summary of some of the quantitative data from the survey. Respondents were spread across the English regions with high levels of responses from Cumbria, Lancashire, Sheffield/Peak District, and West Yorkshire. There are some responses from Scottish and Welsh runners, but these make up less than ~10% in total, and as many are likely FRA members their responses are included for information. Data was tidied to collate respondents into meaningful localities. Age spread of respondents was skewed to those in the veteran categories, with only 23% making up senior/U23 categories. This compares against the age spread of FRA members, where 23% are under the age of 40.. Of the respondents, 21% were female, in line with current FRA membership (23% female) and recent Championship race attendances (25% of starters at Long Mynd Valleys English Championship race in February 2023; 25% of finishers at Mourne Maurauder British Championship race, March 2023) .

What is your Qualifying Category (as per the current British Championship scoring categories)?

443 responses



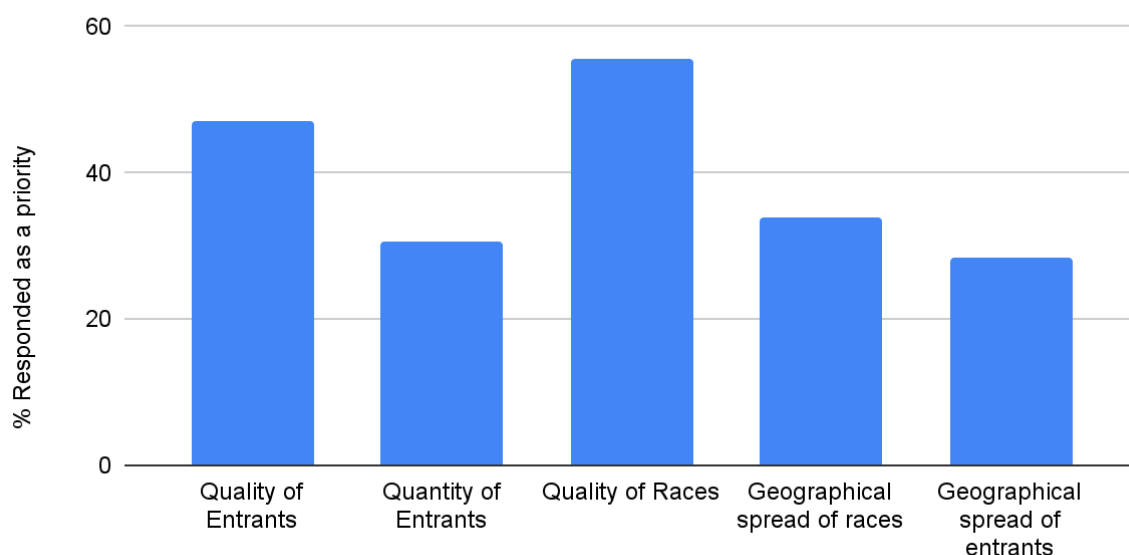
Locality of responders



The club with the most responders was Dark Peak (10.5%) followed by Helm Hill (7.9%). Ambleside (4.5%), Mercia (4.2%), Keswick (4.2%) and Calder Valley (3.7%) were the next best responders. These are clubs who actively support the English and British Championships every year. In the case of Helm Hill, organisation of bus transport to championship races (and offering spaces to other local clubs) has been a big support to the Championships.

When questioned about what the British Championship should prioritise (selecting the two most preferred), the focus was on quality of races then quality of entrants. However, maintaining large fields and a geographical spread of racers and entrants were still seen as a priority.

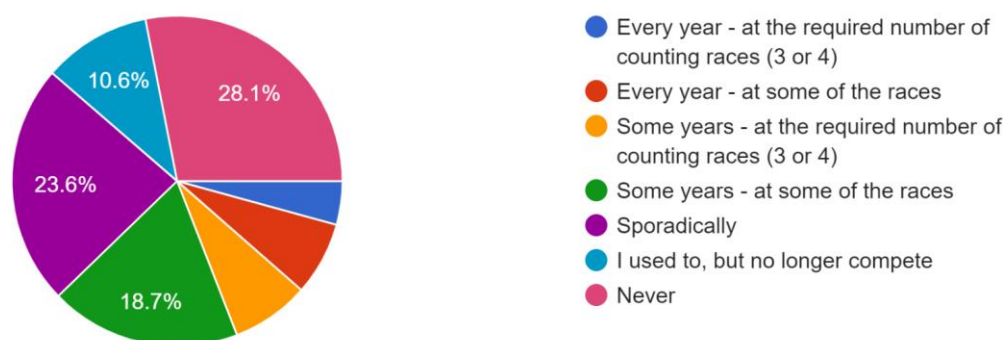
What do you think British Championship Fell Races should prioritise (please select two highest priorities)



Factors impacting upon attendance at British Championship races.

Do you compete in the British Fell Running Championships?

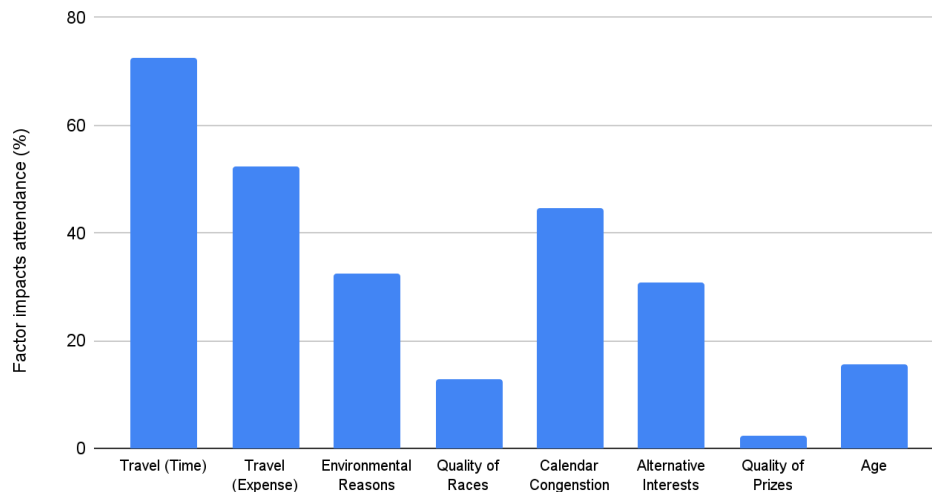
445 responses



Current attendance across the British championship series shows that few target/manage to complete a full set of counters. Those who attend sporadically, and 'some years at some races' make up a large proportion of responders. Those without a full set of counters are not included in the British Championships tables (they are included in the equivalent tables for the English championship, though this is typically reduced to those with 3 or more counters). The format of the British championship, where missing one race likely means you are not included in the individual championship, is likely to have a large impact upon attendance levels and overall championship numbers. For example, a clash with a pre-booked holiday/family event can rule someone out of the championship even if they could have attended the other 3 races, and therefore make them less likely to attend other races. The English

championship mitigates this by having 2 races at each distance, so even missing 2 races a runner can still count in the championship. Earlier planning of British Championship races in the current format (e.g. 1.5-2 years in advance) could help mitigate this scenario.

Factors impacting attendance at British Championship Fell Races



Responses show that travel (both time and expense) are the main considerations for current attendance at British Championship fell races, with calendar congestion also a main impact. Alternative interests and Environmental impact also had strong responses.

Alongside general life requirements, the recent uptick in commercial events in the outdoor sector, over the past decade or so, has led to more competition for the British Championships to attract attention from runners.

Environmental reasons are now also more frontline than they were previously. Whilst driving to a few Championship races may not be a massive burden on the carbon budgeting of an individual/country, it is still likely the largest contributor to an event's carbon impact. Individuals and clubs often mitigate this by organising lift sharing/shared transport arrangement. However, race selection will have an impact on this, as well as travel expense/time.

Considerations that could alter the impact related to these three factors may make the Championships a more attractive proposal. However, by nature a British Championship does need to have a geographical diversity to feature all home nations.

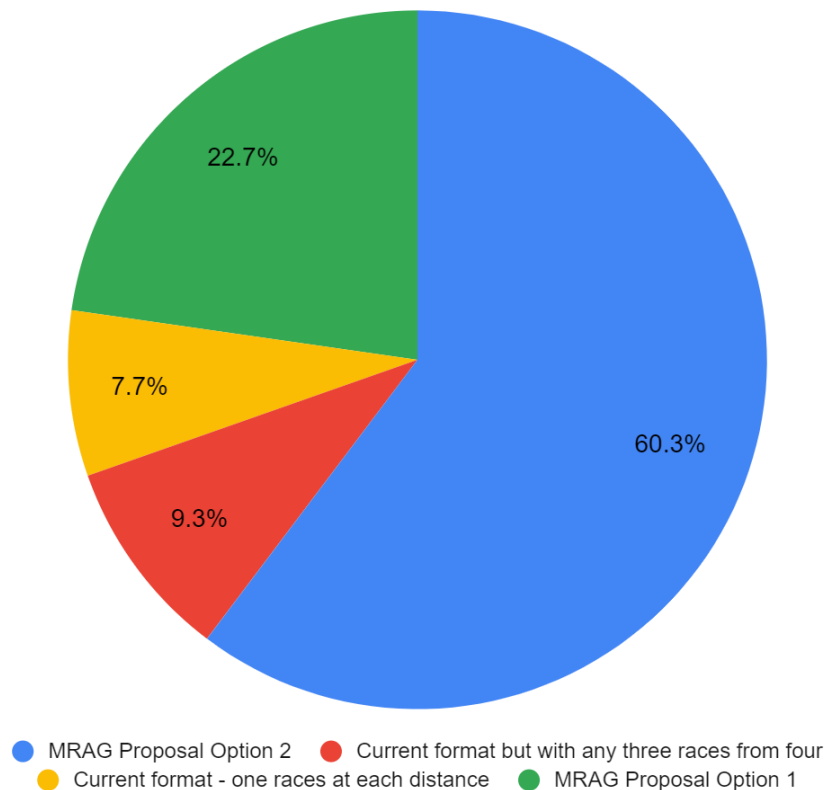
Opinions on different Championship options.

The FRA offered responders a free vote on which option responders preferred. This included

- MRAG Option 1: One Race.
- MRAG Option 2: 2 Races – One Short, One Long.
- The current format with one race in each nation – 3 from 4 to count.

- The current format with one race in each nation – one race at each distance to count.

Preference of Championship Options



FRA thoughts on MRAG proposals.

The current format of the British Championships (3 races from four, one at each distance to count) is probably the best way to select a British Fell Running Championship fell runner who can excel at all facets of the sport, whilst ensuring a spread of races across the 4 home nations, and not overly overloading the calendar. However, the FRA does recognise that the turnout at the 2022 British Championships was low and accepts that steps should be taken to ensure that the British Championships remain relevant, competitive and prestigious.

The data presented in the Proposal only goes back to 2018 and as such it is difficult to see whether reduction in numbers is a recent phenomena, or a wider trend over the last decade or so..

Furthermore, in 2022 non-professional sport was still somewhat recovering from the impact of the Covid pandemic, with some races not returning in their usual calendar slot until 2023. Whilst none of the 2022 championship races were impacted by Covid restrictions, people may have been less willing to commit travel requirements for the earlier races. Add to this the first race being the Seven Sevens - a long and committing race with a record beyond 3 hours - taking place in early season (April), this may have put people off attending, reducing series uptake and interest in the remaining championship races.

In 2022 there were both European and World Mountain running championships, both requiring separate trial races, adding to calendar congestion and possibly aiding the dilution of the front of the field at championship races. From 2023 onwards this will not be the case, with only one international championship per year, freeing up the calendar for those competing for senior championships. Data from the 2021 one-off British Championship race (nor the well competed 2021 English Championship series) shouldn't be completely discounted, but it should be noted that there were still heavy Covid travel restrictions and a reduced Fell/Hill running calendar. As such, there were less opportunities for people to compete at home or internationally, which will have had an impact upon attendance and field quality. However, the one-off 2021 British Championship race only attracted ~180 runners, with the vast majority representing English clubs.

With a 60% response from all survey responders, MRAG proposal 2 (separate short and long British Championships each year) appears the most popular suggestion. When filtering out those who 'never' or only 'sporadically' compete in the British Championship races, this number stays the same. The tone of the survey responses on the current format is that it's a good format but isn't currently working, and that the proposals seem pragmatic and reasonable.

One major theme amongst older veteran runners was that 10-year veteran age groups leads to drop-off in Championship interest in those at the upper end of the age group, with the suggestion that 5-year age groups should be included as per the English Championships. Creation of a WV60 category (to ensure gender parity), extending age categories to V70, and extension of veteran team categories, were also highlighted for consideration.

It has been noted that English clubs have a strong track record of supporting the British championship series, with Scottish and Welsh club support recently being mainly Carnethy and Eryri at early races, before interest drops off. Northern Irish club teams rarely figure at the Northern Irish counter and are absent at the remaining races. To a certain extent larger English club representation is expected given the population of England compared to the other home nations. Survey responses on travel time/cost are likely a big factor in this, though there may also be some ambivalence towards a British Championship when compared to home championships. However, the popularity of the British Fell Relays doesn't back this up. The Fell Relays have always been known as a big day out with a good atmosphere, with club captains cracking a whip to ensure strong attendances. This is easier for a one-off event with one slot in the calendar, with the atmosphere aided by there always being people in the event arena whilst others race, which is less possible at individual races.

Adjusting the format of the Championships is a top-down way to affect change. A bottom up approach by engaging clubs and federations; more considered selection/scheduling of races; provision of prize money; better publicising of the British Championship; introduction of 5-year veteran categories; and longer-term planning of British championship races could also have a positive impact upon attendance and competitiveness.

There is a risk with the one/two race proposal that those who don't feel as though they are competitive, or likely to help a counting team, see the championship races as an event only for 'the elites'. Whilst the races should select for appropriate champions, they will not be sustainable without attendance from the wider fell running community, and should be organised and promoted as such.

FRA response to MRAG proposals

The FRA would like to thank MRAG for providing the proposal document and presenting pragmatic alternatives. Ideally, the FRA (and many in the community) would like to maintain the current 3 from 4 format. However, taking all things into consideration, it is accepted that change likely needs to be made to maintain the prestige and competitiveness of the British Championships. Whilst a bit more time and bottom-up adjustments could result in improvements, these could require a level of work unsuited to volunteer committees and provide only marginal improvement; too much kicking the can down the road is not to be encouraged. As such, **the FRA will tentatively accept MRAG option 2**, with the following thoughts:

- The selected Championship races are a true test of fell running, in line with the 'FRA principles of fell running' points 1 and 2. The races should not drift towards Mountain/Trail running races in nature. Known tough races (e.g. Wasdale, Arrochar Alps, Peris Horseshoe) should not be discounted for the reason of being tough; a variety of race terrains, lengths (within category limits) and technical challenges should be selected over several years of the championships to ensure different styles of fell runners aren't left out.
- Where possible, already established Fell Races should be used in the British championships. The build-up of excitement from top runners testing themselves over an established, historic course (and against their records) should not be underestimated in building an excitement around championship races (for example, Fairfield in the 2023 English Championships sold out very quickly with an expected strong field and excitement building around the race). However races that can accommodate large fields would need to be selected. The use of known courses would also help fairness with regards to local knowledge (which will be more prevalent in a series with a reduced number of races), whilst still retaining the mountain craft and tactical side of fell running that should be retained.
- If British championship races are to inhabit set slots in the calendar, some flexibility should be allowed around these to ensure more diverse races can be selected, and to not put clashing races at a disadvantage every year.
- The FRA would suggest that the British championship races be split equally between the home nations (2 each year). The proposed format where England hosts a round each year may not improve attendance from other home nations.
- The MRAG proposal states that the format will be reviewed after 3 years. The FRA notes that it would be unlikely to return to the current 3-race format. The FRA would caution that any

change not be the 'thin end of the wedge' and should numbers not revive it be decided that the 'logical' choice be to reduce the British championship to a 1 race format. It is the FRA's thoughts that a one race format should be avoided, as has previously been communicated to MRAG, as it is too narrow upon which to crown champions in a broad sport.

- Addition of a WV60 category and balancing team categories for WV categories should be implemented. There should be further investigations into the introduction of 5-year age categories to ensure that more towards the top end of decade categories have something to race for and therefore a wider pool to draw from. Introduction of V70 categories could be discussed. Extra categories don't necessarily have to be BA 'official' categories but could still be provided for competition.
- Location of, and travel time/feasibility of public transport to, championship races should be taken account of when selecting championship races. Coordination of transport sharing between closely located clubs should be encouraged.
- To make more of an event of the championship races, especially those including long travel, post-race camping fields and social events should be encouraged and highlighted in race literature. This doesn't need to be much - the knowledge of a field, good local pub, and that people will be staying, can work wonders. Close proximity to another local race the next day could also help. This has worked to good effect in Northern Irish and some Welsh and Scottish counters in the past. Some races are known as much for their post-race atmosphere as the race itself!
- Closer consideration of school holiday timings. Not all holidays can be avoided when considering the calendar, but reducing numbers of races in the summer holidays has been highlighted by some responders. Early selection of Championship races could aid this.
- MRAG British Championship coordinators to work with home countries coordinators to select races. British championship races to be selected in good time (ideally by Feb of the preceding year, at the latest) such that home country championship coordinators can better try to plan around the British/trial race requirements.

For any option taken forward, relevance and competitiveness of the British Championships requires the support of clubs and runners from across the British Isles to compete and make it worthwhile for race organisers and the many volunteers who keep the sport going. It is hoped that this proposal, and interaction with fell runners through discussions at races and the FRA membership consultation, has highlighted the difficulties the British Championships face, and that any championships could face if not correctly supported. It is beholden upon MRAG and the home country organisations to maintain this momentum and keep promoting the British and home Championships to ensure they remain relevant and competitive.

Nicholas Barber, April 2023.

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Appendix: Selection of thoughts from survey responders.

Below are selected comments from survey responders. These are not necessarily selected to represent the spread of opinions, more to highlight things that should be thought about around the current format and new proposals.

M60, Cumbria, competes in English/British Championships every year:

"The [current] format tests the abilities of runners across all distances and in each of the home countries". [on the proposed formats:] "The championship would be devalued in my opinion and I would lose interest in competing"

W50, Sheffield, competes in some English/British races every year:

[On the current format] It felt a bit of non competition [in 2022], not enough entrants

WU23, Cumbria, competes in English/British championships every year:

[on the current format] The races have been amazing but it's been a bit sad that there hasn't been the same quality of racers as say English championship races, for example in an English championship I am really happy with a top 10 finish yet was coming away with podium positions in British champs. I feel that completing both the English and British championships is a lot of racing for one year whereas if it was a one off British champs race there would be a much better turn out and it could be much more competitive. It's my opinion that a one off race at a different distance each year would be better than one short and one long because it wouldn't separate long distance and short distance athletes which could decrease entrants, and it would add interest to see if someone could retain the title as the distances changed each year.

MV40, Peak District. Competes in some English/British races every year.

[The proposed format] won't be "fell runner of the year". Should reflect ability over a variety of distances, terrains and conditions. I liked the option to get more points by doing the "harder" long that some might avoid. Fear that we'd never see likes of Wasdale, Arrochar, Peris etc in the British Champs again. I think a one-off British champs will still not have same kudos or participation levels as the English champs, nor will it have as many runners from the other home nations travelling for the British as doing their own national series

MV40, North Wales, competes in English/British Championships every year:

The insistence (generally) that the NI race is first is generally unfair for the Scottish and Welsh races, as far less then turn up to race there. This should have been rotated in the past as clearly when the - quite often - last race is the Welsh, the numbers are terrible.

Secondly, the thought process going into choosing certain races is poor. Using a long in South Wales as the last race in 2022 was clearly a poor choice, especially considering the journeys for most people. In 2023, two champs races are in August, 2 weeks apart, any close analysis of August races proves they're not as popular due to summer overseas holidays and family holidays in general. Maesgwm is being used yet again for Wales, this is the third time since 2014 - albeit a slightly modified route [and is often used for intercounties]. Another combination of poor race choice was the Scottish short in 2019 - a near 6-9 hour drive for most people, a decision replicated for 2023! Therefore, considering all this, I agree a change is certainly required, with the method used to choose races, certainly needing to be improved also.

I suggest rebranding the English as a 'National' champs and keep all the races in England and allow anyone to race, regardless of club or region. The English races are always varied and generally accessible. The Scottish, Welsh and NI runners rarely compete in the British anyhow - has anyone number-crunched this?

MSen, Cumbria. Competes in some English/British races every year. Club Captain.

The issue I have with the current format is that you need to race all three disciplines to count. If you cannot make a race where it is the only one in that discipline, then you cannot complete the series. This year I wanted to do the series but I cannot attend the short race in Scotland and so I am out of the running. I like the two race format but perhaps it could also alternate in a medium too or widen the two other formats to encompass races currently sitting in the medium range.

MSen, Cumbria. Competes in some English/British races every year.

The format is really restrictive such that if you miss one of the two race lengths that don't repeat, you're out. So most people don't bother. As opposed to the English where it's far more likely you can get your counters in given the two bites at the cherry for each distance. The races are usually very well organised and a good event. The prizes are poor and the medals for winners are tacky in appearance. It's a shame it's fallen from grace but I believe there's a good appetite to bring the prestige back and this shakeup is sorely needed - It's amazing that the British fell relays and the brit champs are under the same umbrella given the relays overwhelming success and excitement.

Ultimately the English Champs have more competition, often better prizes, easier to get to and easier to complete the series. Brit champs has been left behind.

[on the proposed formats] the short and long champ race runs the risk of diluting the field but gives flexibility in choosing a suitable race. I think ultimately this is the best option as you'll get a good idea of who the best short and long fell runner is, and ultimately that's the goal of what the champs is trying to find out in any given year. Whichever way you go, pump the prizes up big time and I think you'll have no issue. Also, you MUST make vet category prizes every 5 year. So many vets snub the Brits when in the back end of the ten year category through difficulty competing.

MSen, Cumbria, competes in English/British Championships every year:

[on the current format] The format is theoretically good and the selection of races is often better/more interesting than the English championships. However the lack of entrants makes it feel uncompetitive and devalues it as a competition.

[on the proposed formats] Would reduce calendar congestion and likely improve competition, assuming it avoids major clashes (e.g. European mountain running championships last year). The one off race in 2021 did produce a high level of competition however there were limited other races available as well as international travel restrictions which may have helped on that front.

A one race, medium distance that moved around the countries could still have a good level of variation (e.g. could be a ~1 hour race one year, ~2 hours next year depending on the route and terrain) and allow runners to run in new and exciting areas (rather than simply staying in the north of England). I believe a split into a long and short British championships would devalue the competition.

MSen, Cumbria, competes in English/British Championships every year:

A one or two race championship is likely to improve the level of competition. The two race championship respects the two traditional ends of the spectrum of fell running, allowing athletes who specialise in one discipline the chance to be more competitive. This may also improve the level of competition at both ends as athletes have more time to specialise (instead of trying to juggle all distances at once), and would likely improve international performances too. The new format may also allow non-championship races to flourish and boost the level of competition in these events. However both of the new proposed formats neglect certain types of

races. For example, over time the two race system may make the medium category become obsolete (eg. the decline in popularity of 10 mile road races).

MV50, Midlands, competes in English/British Championships every year:

[On the current format] I love the opportunity to travel to all 4 nations to race and try out races far afield and compete against such a variety of other fell and mountain runners. The atmosphere is always welcoming, fun and competitive. It does require a commitment of time and money to get there but by sharing transport and making a long weekend or longer of a trip you can get a lot out of the event. The current format properly tests the runner at all 3 distances and given the best mountains are in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland why would you not want to test yourself and the best of us there? We must also encourage fell running in Wales, Scotland and NI. I am particularly worried at the low turnout at Welsh races all of them real crackers! I actually tend to prefer the Brit Champs to the English due to the more challenging races in proper mountains!

[On the proposed formats] The problem is not the race format but that the vast majority of younger people can no longer afford to live in rural areas so travelling to fell and mountain races therefore becomes tougher as most do not live near where the races are. I would rather we found ways to subsidise or sponsor runners under 30 to participate so they could afford to travel to where the best races are and experience them. I worry that the proposals downgrade all the other nations where the best mountains are to once a year in favour of England. Whilst I love the fell relays and would like to see that atmosphere replicated at Brit Champs races I am not sure this is the way to go about it. Maybe add another English race and make it 3 from 5? Participation is dropping across so many areas post pandemic and cost of living crises so whilst I recognise need to change not sure this is the best way to do it and could kill it off?

WSen, Midlands, Competes in some English/British races every year.

The quality and quantity of the field in all but the English race is usually poor. So few meet the requirements of the series that it makes a bit of a mockery of it. In the women's it's extremely poor. I think a lot of runners don't see it as important anymore because it's not well attended. I think if there are just two races that makes it a lot more achievable for people to attend, from the perspective of money, time and fitting in with other races. Only having to travel to another country once or twice a year, and knowing which countries those will be in advance will help people to target those races, plan travel and make the trips over more special if it's not something that happens every year. People also will be able to choose to do just one or both so won't feel forced to do a distance not suited to them (lots of people don't like long races). I really like the idea of the team score being taken from both races and feel with just two to count, clubs would really make an effort to encourage their runners to attend. I am rarely able to afford to travel to Ireland and Scotland every year, these also usually require some days off work due to travel time. Having these on alternating years would make it much more manageable. It would be useful if entries opened enough in advance that those using public transport could book to get better prices (I prefer to get a train to Scotland but it's very expensive and advanced tickets sell out quickly).

WSen, Midlands, Competes in English/British Championships some years

I like the all-round challenge the current format presents, and that it's not a one day performance, it requires dedication. I don't like the idea of reducing it to one or two one off races. It reduces the challenge and the opportunity. The current format could be tweaked to make it friendlier from a participation and environmentally friendly perspective. ie late starts and races chosen that can be reached by public transport. Make the most remote races a) long to make it worth it and b) have the distance repeated elsewhere.

MV60, Cumbria, Competes in English/British Championships some years.

A single race championship for both long and short races sounds a good proposal. Increasing the length of what qualifies as a short race and decreasing the length required to qualify as a long race would enable some of the classic medium race routes in the four countries to be used occasionally. Alternatively perhaps some of these medium race routes could be lengthened or shortened to create a one off championship race route.

MSen, Lancashire, Competes in some English Championship races.

There is a comment in the proposal about the committee's vision to achieve the "same level of enthusiasm as for the British Fell & Hill Relays". The "event hub" and general atmosphere that the Relays create is fantastic, but this no doubt comes with a cost. Wouldn't this therefore push up the British champs race entry costs to meet the expectations i.e. facilities / equipment hire costs etc, which could deterring people to enter.

MU23, Peak District, competes in some British races and all English Championships.

I like the current format, I understand the issue with it but I'm not too heavily effected by them so it has not yet been to much of a problem . I think the proposals are both good ideas and could improve the champs in one way or another, the only caveat is it would be a shame to see the irish race not feature as regularly as it is always a good weekend away mixing with your own and rival clubs but I completely understand why the proposals are the way they are and agree with the issues they are trying to solve

WV40, Peak District, Competes in some English/British Championship races every year.

I find it difficult to justify travelling significant distances for short / medium races so, currently, I would only really consider the British when the Scottish / Irish races are the long ones or it's possible to combine those races with a holiday. I agree that something needs to change and I don't envy those trying to make the decision as it's really hard to please everyone or even to please most people. I suppose it depends what you're trying to achieve (e.g. do you want the maximum number of entrants and highest quality field or do you want to identify the "best" fell runners over a given distance). After all, if you want the maximum number of entrants, you're probably not going to select the "best" long races in option 2, the classics like Wasdale, Buttermere, Jura, Peris etc. As you say in your write up, people avoid those races but they will do tamer and more runnable long races like Edale Skyline or South Mynd Tour. I quite like the idea of a long championship in some form (either as in option 2 or every third year in option 1) but it really does depend on the quality of the races selected.

WV50, Lancashire, competes in English/British championships some years.

[Current format is] hard to fit in with other races - and travel for a short race doesn't make sense! (I like the longer races!). As more LV60s race it would also be good if the ladies and mens categories could be equalled out ie addition of a LV60

MU23, Cumbria, Competes in some English/British Championships each year.

[The current format is] A good format which in my opinion is the fairest - short medium and long race must count, races are spread around the UK allowing for participants from all home countries. Also gives me an opportunity to travel to places to run where I would not otherwise. Cost of travel is worth thinking about, but when compared to other sports it really is minimal. On the issue of the sponsorship - fell running is one of the only sports where sponsors and money have not had a substantial impact. This is an incredibly worthwhile position to maintain and it would be such a shame to see it go - and many of the sport's loyal supporters (including myself) would be lost if the influence of money and sponsors gets any more.

MSen, Cumbria, competes in some English Champs races most years.

[On MRAG proposal option 1] I think it will make the races a little more prestigious and exciting and worth travelling for if it is deemed to be THE date in the fell running calendar.

MV40, Cumbria, competes in Championship races sporadically

I feel a championship weekend is the way forward. Something like the JK Orienteering Festival concept, so it reduces travel cost and makes it the social event of the year. A 4 year rolling plan, with Junior and senior races all taking place. Split the male and female starts so families can compete.

MV60, Peak District, competes in English Championships at some races every year.
I like Option 2 but would add an overall prize decided on the times of both races combined.

MV60, Highlands (formerly Peak District), used to compete in English/British Championships.
I favour option 2 because I hope that, by effectively allowing two parallel championships which will allow individual runners to compete in distances where their strengths lie, that this will encourage more participation by clubs and runners beyond the English boundaries. Regarding option 1, subjectively, I have always considered that the quality of the medium length races tends to be higher than either the long or the short races, and, while I do think that quality matters, we are considering the British Championship here, and it shouldn't be what some people call a re-run of the English Championship. It is important that we attract the best quality and numbers from the other home nations.

MV50, North Yorkshire, used to compete in English/British Championships:
How do you cater for people wishing to enter and not getting an entry particularly younger runners. I would ensure all under 23 given an entry. Keep the short races to hub areas as for reasons stated in your survey I would not drive long distances for a short race.

MV60, West Yorkshire, competes at some English Championship races.
There needs to be no minimum number in each class so if only two M75s run, they win Gold and Silver or equivalent. The current English Championships format is very unfair for older runners in age categories where not many compete and it is out of line with most Masters athletics policies on rewarding those who compete.

WV50, South Scotland (formerly Peak District), competes in some English Championship races
I used to be of the opinion that the four race system was good. But speaking to runners that compete in the British they all preferred the single or two system race format. And travel to a short race for me is too costly for the running time I achieve.

MV60, Peak District, competes in some British/English championship races each year.
Fell running is a grass roots sport for everyone and not about promoting the mindset that elite athletes are the priority. An unintended consequence will be an increase in athletes from non fell running seeking to scoop the prizes.[...] The quality at the front may improve but at the expense of the grass root fell runner. Fairfield this year is a demonstration that entries will be more difficult to secure in the new format leading to congested races, greater erosion and more crocodile line races.

MV50, Cumbria, competes in some British/English championship races each year.
There is a lack of spread of competitors from across the four home nations. There appears to have been a decline in the depth in the quality of the competitors ie. the top ten in are not representative of the best men and women fellrunners in Britain. It seems sensible to move away from the four race championship, which is similar in format to each nation's national championship and seemingly given lower priority and has had declining participation for a number of years. The proposal to move to a one-off race(s) for the championship seems sensible and gives the opportunity to give the event higher profile and prestige. Two championships - short and long - is a good idea and gives opportunities to those who prefer one or the other.

MSen, Lancashire, competes in some British/English championship races each year.
Particularly not in favour of just one race to decide the Championships. I think this creates too many limitations for athletes i.e. if they have an off day / injury / travel problems at that particular time, that is literally their whole year / championship challenge written off, which I do not think is fair or sporting.

MV60, North Yorkshire, used to compete in English/British championship races.

Option 2 possibly ok as long as some of the events are close to Medium so Championship is not just for Short or Long specialists! Where there is a Long event it might be helpful to have alongside it a Medium non-championship event for those who are no longer able to do the Long but want to come along and support the event, meet friends, etc. (e.g. like Short Duddon).

MV60, Cumbria, used to compete in English/British championship races.

[The current format] is adequate and up to individuals to commit themselves to the championship. [The proposals are] also adequate, but basic fell running has never been about 'premiere' events. We have classic fell or hill races. I'm not against change, I don't like change for change sake.

MV60, Cumbria, competes in English/British championships each year.

Nothing wrong with [current] format, just too many other options for fell runners these days. Try [the new format] and see if there is any improvement.

WV40, Peak District, sometimes competes in English Championship races.

Separate men's/women's races so you can watch your club mates and so the women's race has a competitive feeling at the front end - particularly for the short race.

WV50, North Yorkshire, used to compete in English Championship races.

I recognise the need to include home counties, but when so few participants come from outside England, this does not seem to be increasing participation. For the younger (U23) athletes cost of travel and timing races in the year to avoid exam periods may make a difference to encouraging participation? Ultimately without grass roots participation we will not have the numbers moving into Mountain running. What is the way to improve this? I guess we need to try as the old way has been tried and found wanting.

MSen, Cumbria, competes in English/British championship races each year.

I have travelled to NI for the past two years primary to play my part in the team classification rather than any individual ambitions. I wouldn't have done this otherwise but I'm one of those who have unfortunately missed a race here and there, it doesn't mean I'm not involved. A single race I don't think finds the best fell runner all round runner and just like you can miss one of the current races you could also end up missing that race. The point is to find a series winners, not a one off champions. Before hastily changing the format is it worth considering dropping the one of each distance criteria. You could argue it not an all around runner then but same is true for a single race to a greater extent. And then more thought should be given to date clashes with selection races. Can the British have first dibs then national series select around that? Hopefully that will increase numbers, however as I've said before if the individual races are well attended does it actually matter. If one of the other options then two race seems more attractive, but essentially just a compromise. Takes prestige away from unified champions.