

## **The Musings of a Rookie Runner** by Lorraine Hawley.

*Rookie mistake number 1 – running is easy.* It all started on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017. My long-time friend Catherine had finally dragged me to a parkrun. I was a typical gym goer then. I thought 5k, that is nothing. Only 3 laps of the park. Unfortunately, my park was at Barnsley and I keeled on the first lap! I had DNF'ed. I swear blind those hills were not as big when I was 8 years old! Needless to say, I ran straight into the café and stayed there until everyone had gone. When I left the café, I was approached by a run leader from a Barnsley running club and the rest was history. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 I did my first official parkrun at Nostell with my sister. We finished in 56 minutes after forgetting we were on a timed run. Sorry, Pat!

*Rookie mistake number 2 – they cannot let the lions and tigers and bears oh my - out of their pens.* I did my first race on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at the inaugural Run for Wildlife in Doncaster. I was stood there nervously looking at all the giraffes, lemurs, and assorted fancy dress animals. As we ran into the first part of the course, I overheard one of the marshals say that they were letting the lions out! Freaked out, I finished with a PB of 53 minutes something as a result.

*Rookie mistake number 3 – you improve with every run.* I happily carried on walk/running for a few weeks and hit a plateau. It took a lovely tail walker called Wendy Berry to coax me out of this self-pity. Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017, I told her I wanted to give up. I had had enough. Wendy told me to wait until I had got back to the house and if I still felt the same, stop. I got to the top and carried on with Wendy's support. I finished with a PB.

*Rookie mistake number 4 – not all people who wear Hi-Viz are marshals.* My second 5k race was at the Elsecar Trail Running festival in December 2017. I was running and noticed someone stood on the bridge, so I ran up the hill towards them. It was only when I got closer, I realised he was walking his dog. Back down the hill it was and 52 minutes later I was met with – "Where have you been?".

*Rookie mistake number 5 – running clubs are full of super fit, tee-total Olympic athletes.* On January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 myself, Sam and John joined Ackworth Road Runners. We turned up to the old pavilion where we met the run leaders. Denise you have the patience of a saint! Ackworth Road Runners taught me about true friendships, genuine support and how to drink and not let it affect your race the day after. I am even mastering the art of selfies.

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – my running has improved dramatically and today was no exception. I'm starting to pace myself to get quicker. I knew something wasn't quite right when I hit a speed of 9 minute miles. Then it went to 8. My watch was in kilometres not miles. Still a rookie.

Lorraine Hawley, May 2020