

3rd May 2026 UKA Athletics Senior Inter-Counties Mountain Race

incorporating the trial race for the 'Up-and Down' race at the Senior European Off-Road Running Championships, to be held in Kamnik, (Slovenia) in June 2026

Carnethy Hill Racing Club athletes, Matthew Knowles (Lancashire) and Naomi Lang (Scotland–West) were the winners of the 2026 UKA Athletics Senior Inter-Counties Mountain Race on the grassy slopes of the Howgills above Sedbergh (Cumbria), over a distance of 14.5km, with 980m of ascent.

For the third time (and the second time at Sedbergh), the Senior Inter-Counties Mountain Race incorporated a trial for the UK Athletics team, resulting in a high class entry with fierce competition for the two automatic qualifying places in each race. On a cold, blustery day, first-year senior Sam Bentham (Ilkley Harriers/Yorkshire) took an early lead in the senior men's race and had a gap of a few seconds over the main pack at the end of the first lap. Matthew Knowles ran a well-paced race to take the win in 65:43, 37 seconds clear of Thomas Hilton (Edinburgh University Hare & Hounds/Scotland– East), another first-year senior, who had a storming run to take the silver medal and the under 23s gold medal. Tom Wood (Eryri Harriers/Wales-North) was third with Oscar Subuh-Symons (Ambleside AC/Surrey) fourth. The second and third under 23s, Sam Bentham and his Yorkshire team mate, Freddie Roden (Abbey Runners) were separated by only twelve seconds.

The senior women's race was a ding-dong battle between the 2025 World Championships Short Trail bronze medallist Naomi Lang, the 2025 World Cup winner Scout Adkin (Ambleside AC/Cumbria) and in-form Elle Twentyman (Rugby & Northampton AC/Derbyshire), with Lang eventually taking the win. Adkin led at the top of the climbs on each of the three laps with Lang's superior descending skills taking her into the lead on the descents. Twentyman was always in close contention overtaking Adkin on the descents and finally being rewarded with the silver medal, half a minute behind Naomi and ten seconds ahead of Scout . Nancy Scott (Edinburgh AC/Scotland-East) was just over a minute back in fourth place but four minutes clear of fifth-placed runner Eve Pannone (Ambleside AC), who had already been selected for the 55km Trail event at the Championships. The first under 23 woman was Alexandra Whitaker (Ambleside AC/Yorkshire) in eleventh place with Efa Baines (Eryri Harriers/Wales-North) and Louisa Brown (Garscube Harriers/Scotland–West) taking the minor medals.

There were 190 starters, 109 men and 81 women. Twenty Counties/Districts fielded complete men's teams with fifteen women's teams. Cumbria took both the men's and women's team gold medals. The Cumbria men packed well with Tim Lamont in 10th, John Battrick 11th, and George Foster 12th, finishing five points ahead of Scotland-North (Finlay Todd 7th, Joseph Wright 14th Ross Gollan 17th) and twenty points ahead of Yorkshire, whose scorers were all under 23s (Sam Bentham 16th, Freddie Roden 17th, and Edward Hobbs 23rd). Only one point separated the top three women's teams; Scotland-West (Noami Lang 1st, Emily McNichol 6th, Ella Peters 15th) had the same number of points as Cumbria (Scout Adkin 3rd, Betty Bergstrand 9th, Hannah Russell 10th) but had to settle for the silver medals as their final counter finished behind Cumbria's. The Yorkshire team of Caroline Lambert 5th, Emily Cowper-Coles 7th and Alexandra Whitaker 11th) were one point in arrears in third place.

I would like to thank Race Director, Angela Mudge and her team of volunteers for staging a great race, Martin Stone for the results and hope that all those selected for the European Off-Road

Running Championships have a great run. Finally, thank you to all the Team Managers and runners. I look forward to seeing you all at the 2027 race.

Ian Hartman, UKA Sub-Committee for International Mountain & Trail