



FIT FOR LIFE

Going for the win

Carol Westmorland says sport isn't just about tactics - it's also about honour

It began as a tactical manoeuvre, but ended up being a battle of conscience. My own.

At the end I was left in no doubt that I am nothing if not a girl of standing. My moral compass points in exactly the right direction and, in this case, south to Burnley.

It began when, during the late season of the cycling time trial calendar, I was made aware that I stood 11 points clear of my nearest rival in the North Lancs Time Trial Association Champions League. In time trialling, you either win or you lose so I will continue to use the word 'rival', for she was. The end of season wind-down was halted.

Cleverly, the final event of the series is a hill climb and hill climbs attract fewer entries, possibly because of their brutal nature. So it was at this point that I found myself in a dilemma. Points are awarded relative to the position you finish. The most you can collect is 120 for a win, so fewer riders equal more points. I had to enter.

But it turned out I did not need to race up a hill that was 1,000m with a 15 per cent gradient and a round trip of 250 miles. Yes, 250 miles, because my rival had not entered. More sense.

Sending apologies is not the behaviour of a champion. Far from it, it is the behaviour of someone who, it would be plain for all to see, was being tactical. How could I go on to collect my trophy with my head held high?

So it was that yesterday, I woke at 4am - you never sleep well race



'SENDING APOLOGIES IS NOT THE BEHAVIOUR OF A CHAMPION'

day - left home at the unearthly hour of 6am to arrive at 8am. Whipped up a 1,000m hill with an average gradient of 15 per cent in 4:23.6s, with an average heart rate of 169, to finish my season. Heart pounding - no breath in my body and legs entirely full of lactic but readers, my head held high.



Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.uk