

# DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

## Portland 10 Race Report

Many thanks to Richard Brawn for supplying

The day of reckoning finally arrived as a gaggle of Dorset's finest made their way over to the kooky isle of Portland for a 10-mile showdown like no other. The Portland 10 is unique for many reasons, but most notably, the hilly nature of the course. It might even be the most gruelling of the entire Dorset Road Race League schedule and that's saying something!!

The race took on an additional significance this year in that it presented a golden opportunity for Egdon Heather Harriers to win their first ever Men's Division One title. It was to be a mementos occasion for the reds of Weymouth way if they could secure their seventh league win of the season. But standing in their way, as ever, it was the yellow and blue army of Bournemouth AC.

The BAC men did not want to relinquish the title so early on in the season, with three fixtures still to go. But would they be able to derail the Egdon train? That was the question. It was something they had failed to do in the first five league races of the season and the Egdon men's victory at the Puddletown Plod had brought them to the brink of being confirmed as champions.

There was still work to do though and they brought their A-Team to Portland in the hope of wrapping it up once and for all. Sensational youngster Ben Foyle was in the line-up, along with Christopher Peck, Martyn Bell, Adam Davies and a host of others.

Bournemouth AC had serial Portland 10 race winner Jacek Cieluszecki in their arsenal but they were struggling to build a strong enough team around him that would be capable of challenging for top spot in the fixture. Rich Brawn was in the squad but he'd been struggling with a knee injury which had again forced him to take another week off in the build up to the race.

They also had Sam Jackson who is going for top spot in the 45-49 category for the league. It's looking like it will be tightly contested throughout the season, with Egdon Heath Harriers man Simon Arthur and Paul Hilton of Lytchett Manor Striders also in the mix. Sam knows that he has to stay on it and keep churning out solid performances to stay ahead.

Signing up to the race late on, Szymon Chojnacki gave BAC a scoring team of five and boosted their chances of competing for the fixture win. Whether it would be enough to topple the mighty Egdon Heath Harriers remained to be seen.

With four race wins under their belt, the Egdon Heath Harriers women were also in pole position to make it a men's and ladies first division double. Another win would see them on the cusp of securing the title with just three races remaining.

In the men's second division, Twemlow Track Club were looking in command with five race wins thus far. Another one would almost guarantee they would top the division and advance

to the first division the following season. It was only Wimborne AC who could stop them and they badly needed a win in this fixture to harbour any hope of doing so.

With four race wins so far it was looking good for Dorchester RIOT in the women's second division and another win could see them edge very close to promotion to the top division with Dorset Doddlers the only team left in the hunt.

When the race started it was superstar triathlete Chris Weeks who broke off the front, bringing with him Egdon Heath Harriers whippersnapper Ben Foyle. Those two quickly established a huge advantage over the rest of the field, setting off at a ferocious pace.

Chris Weeks did run for Bournemouth AC at one point so some of the more senior athletes in the race may have remembered him from that. And he was clearly still extremely quick on the road.

Twemlow Track Club man and defending champion of the men's individual, Lee Dempster, was leading the standings once again for the 2022 season. But with Christopher Peck hot on his heels, he knew it was vital to keep challenging at the top end of the field.

After his victory in the Charmouth Challenge the previous day, Jacek Cieluszecki was hoping his exertions wouldn't harm his chances of putting in a strong performance. He'd won all four of his previous appearances at the Portland 10 and would have loved to have added to that impeccable record. He wasn't feeling quite as fast on the road as he had been in previous years though so knew it would be much tougher to come out on top this time round.

At first it was a downhill stretch to the bottom of the isle before climbing steadily all the way back up to the top of the isle. That was effectively almost three and a half miles of incline. It was quite a hot day as well, which added to the difficulty level.

The intensity at the front of the field proved too much for Ben Foyle in the end and he decided to abandon the race with what looked like an injury of some sort. That left Chris Weeks to sail in for the victory, in an impressive time of 55:21. It wasn't quite as fast as Jacek's best time of 54:24 but it was still a superb run from Chris, showing that he is very much a man in form.

Softening the blow of losing Ben for Egdon Heath Harriers, Christopher Peck arrived to take 2nd place, although he still secured minimum points for the Dorset Road Race League, since Chris Weeks wasn't representing any of the clubs. His time was 56:11.

Working his way up to 3rd place in the end, Jacek Cieluszecki was the next man over the line, getting round in 56:30. It didn't quite match his times from previous years but given that he'd raced hard the previous day and he barely does any road running these days, it was still an excellent performance.

4th place went to Lee Dempster as he ran well to secure a time of 57:12. Daniel Cahill of Wells City Harriers was the next man over the line, taking 5th place in a time of 57:44, although again, he was not a scorer for the Dorset Road Race League.

Szymon Chojnacki sealed 6th place and was 4th scorer for the Dorset Road Race League in 59:09. He took the terribly tough hills in his stride to give Bournemouth AC their second scorer on the board.

Christopher Wright of Dorset Doddlers was 7th man over the line and the only other person to get in inside 60 minutes. He raced in for the 59:31 finish, before Steven Rigby of Twemlow Track Club arrived to take 8th place in 1:00:15.

Claiming 9th place in a fantastic time of 1:00:38, Martyn Bell was the second man in for Egdon Heath Harriers. He was having a brilliant season and his performances had contributed massively to his club's success thus far.

Barry Miller of Poole AC took 10th place, getting round in 1:00:50 before Adam Davies gave Egdon Heath Harriers their third scorer. He secured 11th place in a time of 1:00:59.

Steve Cook scooped the first M50 prize with a very strong run which saw him coming in in 12th position. His time was 1:01:14. Then following closely after to seal the 1st M60 spot, Julian Critchlow claimed 13th place. The Purbeck Runners maestro recorded a magnificent time of 1:01:26 and enhanced his mahogany tan even further in the process.

Putting in another scintillating display, Vicki Ingham finished as 1st female, completing the course in 1:01:37. That was good enough to see her finish in 14th place in the overall standings. It was her third win in four league races thus far and she'd finished 2nd in the other one.

Matt Faramus was Egdon Heath Harriers 4th scorer for the day and he came in in 18th place in a time of 1:02:17. That was just enough to edge him in front of Sam Jackson who took 19th place in 1:02:25.

He was Bournemouth AC's third scorer and crucially for him, he'd finished just in front of Simon Arthur who was the main challenger for his lead in the 45-49 category. That meant that from Sam's perspective it was very much mission accomplished and he'd managed the hills and the hot weather extremely well.

Getting to line in 1:02:46, Simon Arthur had completed the scoring team of five for Egdon Heath Harriers and that meant they had done enough to be confirmed as Dorset Road Race League champions for 2022. It was a remarkable achievement from them and thoroughly deserved, given the consistency of their displays throughout the season.

After forgetting to change into his racing shoes, Rich Brawn was really struggling to reach his usual levels. He was caught by Dorset Doddlers lady Molly Rasch on the final hill and they had a great battle as they worked their way to the top.

Once at the top of the hill, it was a fast finish from there and Rich was just able to edge in front of Molly before entering the field and manoeuvring round the finish.

With a time of 1:03:06, Rich finished in 22nd place, giving Bournemouth AC their fourth scorer of the day, before Molly came over the line shortly after to seal the 2nd female spot and 23rd overall in the same time.

Molly currently leads the standings in the women's individual table for season so far with three wins and three 2nd places. Having only done four of the races thus far, Vicki would need to do all three of the remaining races to wrestle the number one spot from Molly's grasp.

Bruce Campbell finished as 3rd M50 and 24th overall in a time of 1:03:37 before his Egdon Heath Harriers teammate Graham Sherwin arrived in 25th place, registering a time of 1:04:49. They had both certainly played their role for the title winning team with several point scoring performances over the season.

Egdon Heath Harriers lady Georgina Povall finished as 3rd female, crossing the line in 1:06:59, which put her in 29th place overall. She was currently end in the standings behind Molly in the women's individual for the season so far.

After Ben Foyle pulled out, Corey Stone of Weymouth St Pauls Harriers was first under 21 male to reach the finish. He recorded a time of 1:07:18. Strengthening his position at the top of the 60-64 standings, Stephen Hogarth finished as 2nd M60 and 33rd overall in a time of 1:07:21.

Hannah Martyn was the 2nd scorer in for Egdon Heath Harriers, getting over the line in 1:08:32 which made her 4th female and put her 39th in the overall standings.

Jenny Walker-Leach ran well to finish as 5th female and 1st in the F40 category, getting round in a time of 1:09:53. That put her in 45th place overall. Jasmine Evans of Dorchester RIOT was 6th female, completing the course in 1:11:18.

She finished just ahead of Luke Jackson, who rounded off the scoring team for Bournemouth AC, clocking a time of 1:11:23. That was enough to put him in 53rd place overall and secure 2nd place for the BAC men.

It wasn't the result they wanted or the one they needed to keep the title race alive but simply had to doth their caps to Egdon Heath Harriers in the end. They had been the better side over the course of the season and had finished up as emphatic winners, with three races to spare.

Round off the scoring team for Egdon Heather Harriers, Alex Door finished as 7th female and 63rd overall in 1:13:05. That sealed the race win for Egdon Heath Harriers in the ladies' first division and brought them to within touching distance of the league title. One more win out of the remaining three races will seal it for them.

Taking top honours in the F50 category, Debbie Lennon was the first lady in for Bournemouth AC. She reached the line in 1:15:56 which put her in 76th place overall and made her 8th fastest female.

That extended Debbie's lead in the 55-59 category for the season so far and one more race should seal top spot for her.

Picking up an age category win in the F60 category, Heather Khoshnevis was the next Bournemouth AC lady over the line, registering a time of 1:20:38. That put her in 93rd place overall.

With a commanding lead in the 60-64 category for the season so far and already having eight races on the board, Heather has effectively sealed the win for her age group already. No doubt she will continue on to complete the other races though when there are more age category prizes up for grabs.

Arriving at the finish 20 seconds later, Tamzin Petersen was 19th placed female in a time of 1:20:58, which put her 94th overall. That completed the scoring team for BAC and saw them finish 4th for the fixture, behind Egdon Heath Harriers, Lytchett Manor Striders who were 2nd and Poole Runners who were 3rd.

Making it an F60 top three for BAC, Helen Ambrosen crossed the line in 1:32:12 to finish as 34th female and 133rd overall. It was Helen's seventh race of the season she already has enough in the bag to give her the win in the 65-69 category and she is well out in front in the standings for that. Zodwa Chasokela of Purbeck Runners is her only real challenger but she is some way behind on points thus far.

Royal Manor of Portland made the most of their home turf advantage to win the fixture in the men's second division, with neither Twemlow Track Club nor Wimborne AC fielding a scoring team of five.

Dorchester RIOT picked up the win in the ladies' second division, leaving them virtually home and dry in the title race there and virtual certainties to feature in the first division next season.

It's a long wait until the next Dorset Road Race League fixture and that will be the Hoburne 5-mile race on 25th September.

That will be an opportunity for the Egdon Heath Harriers ladies to seal the first division title and put the cherry on the cake to a marvellous season for the club.

Even though the title race is done and dusted, there will still be bragging rights to be contested between the Egdon Heath Harriers and Bournemouth AC men so it should still be an intriguing last few encounters.