

South-West Inter Counties 10k Championships – Race Report

It fell to Bournemouth AC supremo Rich Nelson to prepare the Dorset artillery for the South-West Inter Counties Team 10k Championships, and he managed to assemble a formidable outfit. In fact, he got just about the best men's team he could have possibly recruited. The top three in the Upton Summer Series; Rob McTaggart, Thomas Corbin and Lewis Clarke were all called up along with the Dorset Road Race League individual champion Christopher Peck, who currently leads the way in the standings this season as well. They also had Charlie Williams who is currently third in the Dorset Road Race League standings behind Lewis Clarke.

The women's team was pretty strong as well, with Vicki Ingham spearheading their lineup. She's won all four of the Dorset League races she's entered this season, cementing her position as the fastest road runner in the county. Caitlin Peers has been on fire recently, getting her 10k PB down to 37:35 and her parkrun PB down to 17:32.

Hannah Martyn of Egdon Heath Harriers was also in the lineup and she's currently fourth in the Dorset Road Race League standings this season so came with decent pedigree. They also had Lauren Baker-Little of Poole Runners who finished 3rd female in the Upton Summer Series and Vicky Rutter of Westbourne who was 4th.

The race was staged at Langley Burrell in Chippenham and it also doubled up as the Wiltshire Country Championships, so there was an added importance for their athletes. That included former Bournemouth AC man Harry Smith who now runs for City of Salisbury. He is usually a major contender to win any race of that sort of distance that he takes part in.

With an elevation gain of just 14 metres, the Langley Burrell course is thought to be one of the fastest 10k route in the UK, hence they call it the 'Lightening Bolt'. It's a looped course with trees on either side throughout most of it making it sheltered from the wind.

With a 10k PB of 31:25, Tag had the potential to go extremely fast on this course and could well have been up there challenging. He went through the first mile in 5:09 and the second in 5:08. He then followed that up with a 5:12 and a 5:15. Unfortunately he began to suffer over the last 2km, going down from 4th to 8th place.

He hadn't really had time for his normal morning routine which meant he ended with a bad stomach and that was far from ideal. He wasn't really feeling fresh either after a couple of hard training sessions during the week.

His time of 32:23 put him in 8th place overall and, although he felt disappointed, most runners would have been delighted with a time like that. His average pace for the run was 5:14.

It was like the Upton Summer Series all over again, with Thomas Corbin and Tag going battling it out, except on this occasion they were both representing the same team. Thomas managed to sustain his pace really well throughout the run and ended up just pipping Tag to the post for 7th place. His finishing time was 32:20 which was a big PB for him. His splits were extremely consistent and his average pace for the run was 5:11.

Managing a 51 second PB, Lewis Clarke was next over the line for Dorset, recording a time of 32:38. That put him in 12th position but because a couple of the runners weren't in the South-West Inter Counties competition, Dorset had had three men in the top 10.

No one was a match for Harry Smith though and he ran out a comfortable winner, blasting out a 30:37. He only went over 5 minutes per mile for one of his splits and that was 5:01. The rest were well under, giving him an incredible average pace of 4:55.

The next two athletes over the line were representing Cornwall. They were Josh Benford who's under 23 and Jacob Sanders. Josh clocked a time of 31:14 and Jacob got round in 32:06. James McKibbin and Ollie Thorogood were 4th and 5th and they were both running for Devon. They both finished a second ahead of Thomas Corbin.

Christopher Peck was 2nd vet to come in and he reached the finish line in 33:24 which put him 16th. Charlie Williams rounded off the Dorset scoring team of five, clocking a time of 34:23 which put him in 26th place. That was enough to see the Dorset men finish as 2nd placed team behind a Cornwall team who had just edged it.

In the women's race it was Anna Harrold of Cornwall who came out on top after an incredible battle with Kate Reed of Bristol and West. Anna got over the line in 34:46.3 and Kate's time was 34:46.9, so it couldn't have been much closer. They were 32nd and 33rd overall.

Vicki Ingham was the next woman over the line, taking 45th place in 35:53 and Caitlin Peers arrived soon after to take 52nd place in 36:15. She'd obliterated her 10k PB by 1 minute 19 seconds.

It was an outstanding performance from Caitlin and emphasized the tremendous progression she's been making recently with her running. Rebecca Ezra-Ham of Cornwall was the next lady in, clocking a time of 36:22. Then it was Sammy Antell of Devon in 36:27 and Naomi Flanagan, also of Devon getting round in 36:43.

Cornwall were the first team to get five runners in so they took the women's Inter Counties title ahead of Devon who were the next team to get their five over the line. It was then between Dorset and Wiltshire for 3rd place. Hannah Martyn crossed the line in 40:29, which put her 125th place overall and she was 24th female.

Nine seconds later, Lauren Baker-Little arrived to take 127th place and 25th female in 40:38. Kiersty Rose completed the scoring team for Wiltshire, getting over the line in 41:31. Then Vicky Rutter emerged to round off the scoring team for Dorset, completing the course in 42:51. That put her in 156th place overall and she was 35th female. It turned out the Dorset dames had done enough to secure 3rd place in the end though which was a good result for them.