

Blackmore Vale Half Marathon Race Report

After the Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon had whet the appetite for another season of fast and ferocious Dorset Road League racing, the season continued with the Blackmore Vale Half Marathon on the agenda.

Based at Bishops Caundle, the Blackmore Vale Half Marathon features a notoriously challenging course with some brutal, energy sapping inclines. The hill leading up the finish makes it one of the toughest endings of any race in the area.

After failing to win at the Broadstone Quarter, the Egdon Heath Harriers men were determined not to let that happen again. They brought the cavalry out and it transpired that Bruce Campbell had told all their top men that they'd be needed for the scoring team of five which resulted in a squad with plenty of strength in depth.

Last year's men's individual champion Christopher Peck was on the start line, as was Charlie Williams and they were likely to be contending for top honours. Twemlow Track Club also had a strong side out, with Chris Wood, Jez Bragg and Richard Swindlehurst in the mix. Brian Underwood and Dave Hicks were also there from Poole AC and were likely to up near the front.

After topping the First Division standings at the Broadstone Quarter, Poole Runners brought a very strong outfit to the table, with Vicki Ingham, Molly Rasch and Gemma Bragg all in the mix.

Tom Hole of Ealing, Southall & Middlesex dug deep to get round in an amazing time of 1:11:14. That was enough to give him the race win ahead of Johnny Suttle Bristol & West who finished 2nd in 1:13:02. Since neither of them were running for Dorset League clubs, it was the places behind them that were all important.

Charlie Williams had a brilliant run to finish ahead of his Egdon Heath Harriers teammate Christopher Peck and they were 3rd and 4th, taking minimum points for the league. Charlie's time was 1:14:53 and Christopher arrived shortly after in 1:15:06 which made him first vet.

Brian Underwood's came in to secure 5th place, registering a time of 1:15:16. The next man over the line was Chris Wood who arrived in 1:16:41.

The Blackmore Vale Half Marathon was also designated as the County Championship race for the distance. That decision was made after the entry form had been posted online though so there was no box to tick for athlete's to specify whether they were eligible and wanted to be included in it.

The race organisers then had to email everyone who had entered to ask that question but many in the race either didn't see the email or didn't receive it. Or their response wasn't processed. That worked in Chris Wood's favour as he was the highest placed of those who had entered the County Championship.

Dave Hicks finished 7th and was first over 50, clocking a time of 1:18:24. Jez Bragg got round in 1:19:17 which put him in 8th place.

Bournemouth AC man Ryan Pegoraro claimed 9th place clocking a time of 1:19:47 and Richard Swindlehurst took 10th position in 1:20:28. He was Twemlow Track Club's third man in and was 1st in the 55 to 59 category for the league.

Corey Stone finished in 1:20:34 which put him in 11th position and he was third man in for Egdon Heath Harriers. He was 1st in the 21 to 24 category for the league.

Jonny Cooper finished 13th in 1:21:09 meaning Egdon Heath Harriers only needed one more man to complete their scoring team of five.

Poole Runners had a strong group that were running together and they were Joe Godden, Mark Peddle and David Penwarden. They finished 15th, 16th and 17th and that put them up to four runners in after Dave Tindall had finished 12th in 1:20:44.

Wimborne AC look likely to be Bournemouth AC's main challengers in the Second Division and Mark Savage was their top scorer, finishing 18th in 1:22:40. Rich Brawn arrived eight seconds later to give Bournemouth AC their 2nd finisher. He came 21st.

Charlie Lawson sealed the First Division win for Egdon Heath Harriers though, taking 22nd place in a time of 1:22:57.

Vicki Ingham finished as first female, clocking a time of 1:23:05, putting her in 23th place overall. Molly Rasch wasn't far behind, completing the course in 1:23:47 which put her in 28th place.

Steve Claxton rounded off the scoring team for the Poole Runners men, reaching the line in 1:23:26 which put him in 26th place. That was enough to earn Poole Runners 2nd place in the men's First Division.

Emma Caplan of Bournemouth AC was 3rd lady over the line and 39th overall in a time of 1:26:23. That also netted her the prize for 1st female over 45.

After they'd each had their first three runners in, it was very tight between Wimborne and Bournemouth AC, with Wimborne ahead by a couple of places.

Weirdly, the fourth scorers for each club were running together as Barry Dolman of BAC was actually pacing Stacey Dickinson of WAC to what they hoped would be his first ever sub 90.

Getting his pacing duties just right, Barry crossed the line with Stacey in a time of 1:29:35 which put them 56th and 57th.

What Barry didn't realise at the time though was that he was effectively handing Wimborne AC first place in the second division.

Even though Barry was put ahead of Stacey in the results, it was only by one place so that meant

Wimborne AC won the fixture by just one placing. Had Barry not paced Stacey round, he may not have finished in the time and position he did.

That put Bournemouth AC and Wimborne AC on level pegging for the season so far with one first and one second place each.

Gemma Bragg was 4th female, crossing the line in 1:31:49 which put her 67th overall and 1st in the 40-44 category for the league.

That meant Poole Runners only needed one more woman in to wrap up their second win of the season. They got it when Sarah Swift arrived in 1:41:05 putting her in 135th place overall. She was 13th in terms of league placings.

Dorchester RIOT took 2nd place at Blackmore Vale, with Littledown Harriers finishing 3rd. Lytchett Manor Striders took advantage of Bournemouth AC's failure to field three runners, picking up the Second Division win very comfortably. Dorset Doodlers were 2nd and Purbeck Runners took 3rd.

In the men's Third Division it was Dorset Doodlers who picked up the win at Blackmore Vale, with Dorchester RIOT 2nd and Royal Manor of Portland 3rd. In the ladies' Third Division, Gillingham Trotters were the only club to field a team of three so they took first place.

Dorset Doodlers and Dorchester RIOT are now tied for top spot in the men's Third Division with one 1st and one 2nd place each, with Royal Manor of Portland 3rd. Gillingham Trotters are firmly in command in the ladies' Third Division with two wins out of two.

There wasn't much of a breather for the clubs before it was time to go again in the Lytchett 10 and with some big names lining up for that one, it looked like another classic could well be on the cards.