

DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

North Dorset Village Marathon Race Report

For those who do manage to put a team together for it, the North Dorset Village Marathon can present a great opportunity for clubs to take some points off the board and start moving up the table.

Some of the athletes would have marathon fitness already in the bank if they were doing one of the big Spring marathons and others who didn't manage to get into one of the majors may have had the North Dorset Village Marathon as their target race.

Either way, the field was strong and brimming with talent, as it usually is. Poole AC had won two out of the three races so far in the Men's First Division, putting them just ahead of defending champions Egdon Heath Harriers.

The reds clearly saw the North Dorset Village Marathon as one they could get a win in and they brought a formidable looking line up to the table. Fresh, or perhaps not so fresh, from their London Marathon escapades, Christopher Peck, Charlie Williams and Matt Underhill were all game for another 26.2 miles.

Looking to crown a remarkable comeback from his bladder cancer diagnosis, Bruce Campbell was on the start line. And not only that, he was also toying with the idea of going for a sub three hour time, which would be an amazing achievement.

Poole Runners had won all three races in the Ladies' First Division thus far and they had Vicki Ingham in their side. She was 58th placed female at London, finishing in 2 hours 50 minutes and of course recorded that tremendous sub 2:45 at Valencia in December.

They also had Sarah Swift who also ran the London Marathon but ran the entire route in reverse beforehand, making it a 52.8 mile run in total!! If only someone had told her there was a bag drop system!!

After also running the London Marathon two weeks prior, Alex Door was ready for another one and was spearheading the Egdon Heath Harriers attack and they looked to peg back some points on the runaway leaders.

Despite all the Dorset based talent on display it was an outsider who snatched victory, with Johnny Suttle getting to the line first in 2:37:52. He'd finished 2nd at the Blackmore Vale Half Marathon earlier in the year so would have been pleased to go one better on this occasion.

After his sensational 2:39 time at London, Charlie Williams still had enough in the tank to put in an equally brilliant, if not even better performance to clock a time of 2:42:44.

Of course, the NDVM route is so much tougher, with plenty of hills to negotiate throughout the route, coming close to 1000ft of elevation.

That was enough to give Charlie 2nd place and secure minimum scoring points since Johnny Suttle didn't count for the league.

Poole AC supervet John Bassinder finished 4th in the NDVM last year and went one better this time round,

making it round in 2:46:31 to take 3rd place. Despite being 57 years of age, John shows no signs of letting up and still possesses tremendous strength.

Somewhat less experienced, at 20 years of age, Toby Ward, of Hinckley Running Club, took 4th place in 2:50:51, although he wasn't a scorer in the Dorset League.

Edward Crawley of Twemlow Track Club was next man over the line, recording a time of 2:51:01. He was followed by Robert Welman of Egdon Heath Harriers who got round in 2:51:12.

There were no league points at stake for Reece Ingram of City of Salisbury but he produced a superb run anyway to complete the course in 2:52:07.

David Jones then gave Twemlow Track Club their second finisher when he reached the line in 2:52:19 to take 8th place and for the league, that made him 5th scorer.

It was turning into a brilliant day for Twemlow when Steven Rigby arrived to take 11th place in 2:55:18. The two runners ahead of him weren't representing Dorset League clubs so he was 6th scorer.

Just as it was beginning to look like it could be Twemlow's day, Bruce Campbell and his accomplices arrived on the scene to thwart them in their tracks. He'd had Chris Peck and Graham Sherwin running with him for the first 30k.

Chris decided to push on a bit after that and he ended up making it to the finish in 2:56:04. Graham stayed with Bruce and although he was suffering a fair bit for the last eight miles, Bruce toughed it out and very nearly made it round for a sub three.

In the end, he and Graham went over the line in 3 hours 50 seconds, which put them in 14th and 15th positions. In terms of league points, Chris, Graham and Bruce were 7th, 8th and 9th scorers which completed the five for Egdon Heath Harriers.

That secured their second win of the season and lifted them to the top of the Men's First Division table.

Jason Robbins in 21st place and Paul Chapman in 24th completed the scoring team for Twemlow Track Club and that was enough to give them 2nd place for the fixture.

Vicki Ingham finished as 1st female in a time of 2:56:57 which put her in 13th place overall.

Finding it tough going so soon after her London Marathon exploits, Alex Door had enough in reserve to take the 2nd female spot. She completed the course in 3:18:54 which put her 32nd overall.

Having made the switch to Poole AC, Dawn Andrews came in as 3rd lady in 3:20:04 which put her 35th overall.

Lauren Baker-Little then arrived to give Poole Runners their second scorer. She was 4th female in 3:21:36.

Eleanor Rollett of Dorchester RIOT was 5th lady in 3:31:04, with Heather Khoshnevis of Littledown Harriers taking 6th female spot in 3:35:17. She was also 1st over woman over 60.

Victoria Barnett and Josie Wait were the next two women to reach the finish, registering times of 3:36:25 and 3:38:47 respectively. That meant Egdon had now had three ladies and only need one more to complete their scoring quartet.

Sarah Swift got round in 3:55:55 to finish as 11th female scorer meaning Poole Runners also now only needed one more woman in.

They got it, in the form of Esther Downes who sealed their fourth win of the season. She completed the course in 4:02:35, making her 13th female scorer.

77 year old Linda Ashmore completed the scoring team for Egdon Heath Harriers, crossing the line in 4:33:31, making her 18th scorer for the league. That sealed 2nd place for the reds with Littledown Harriers the only other club to field a scoring team of four.

Littledown Harriers also finished as 3rd men's team, with Poole AC only managing 4th in the end.

In the Men's Second Division, it was only Wimborne AC and Westbourne who fielded scoring teams and Wimborne got the win. That was their second win of the season which is the same as Bournemouth AC have at the top of the table.

No team in the Men's Third Division had four scorers but Dorchester RIOT and Weymouth St Pauls finished level on points with their top three. It's tight at the top in that division between Dorchester RIOT and Dorset Doodlers with both having two wins each so far.

Only Purbeck Runners had a scoring team in the Ladies' Second Division meaning they picked up the win. They are currently 2nd behind Bournemouth AC in that division after the first four races.

Westbourne were the only team in the Ladies Third Division to have a runner, with Vicky Rutter in action for them. Her appearance was enough to hand them the race win. That put them into 2nd place behind Gillingham Trotters.

Charlie Williams tops the standings in the men's individual table with his two top scoring performances, one at NDVM and the other at Blackmore Vale. Chris Peck was 2nd with his two 2nd scorer positions.

Brian Underwood of Poole AC is currently 3rd on the same points in Chris Wood of Twemlow Track Club. Dave Hicks of Poole AC and Jez Bragg of Twemlow are 5th and 6th on the same points as each other.

With three wins out of three, Vicki Ingham tops the standings in the ladies individual table. With a 1st and a 2nd place, Isabel Davis of Purbeck Runners is currently 2nd.

Mollie Rasch of Poole Runners is 3rd with two 2nd places and Emma Caplan of Bournemouth AC is 4th with two 3rd scorer finishes.

Dawn Andrews of Poole AC is 5th at the moment, with Gemma Bragg of Poole Runners in 6th.

There was some top quality racing in this year's edition of the North Dorset Village Marathon but it will perhaps be remembered most for that outstanding performance from Bruce Campbell. To be able to overcome what he

has and work his way back to fitness the way he has is remarkable.

A year ago he didn't even think he'd ever be able to run again. Now he's running a very tough, hilly marathon in three hours. That can certainly serve as an inspiration to anyone who finds themselves in that same situation. You can come back from it - and you can come back strong - as Bruce has.

The next league fixture is the May 5 which offers a fairly fast five mile route around the Canford Heath area of Poole, starting and finishing at Ashdown Athletics Track.

That will likely see all the teams back with full strength, scoring sides, and it will be interesting to see which clubs come out on top in that encounter and which ones will slip down the table as the competition hots up.