

DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

Round the Rock 10k Race Report

'Twas a blustery old morning on Isle of Portland when over 270 foolhardy Dorset based runners descended onto the small outpost for a 10k race like no other. It was a welcome return to the Dorset Road Race League schedule for Round the Rock, with the event being staged for the first time since 2019.

Some Dorset clubs find it difficult to get teams together for the Portland races, since it can be a tricky location to get to. That's not the case for Egdon Heath Harriers though and they have dominated the Portland fixtures over recent years.

They had a strong side out again which included Matt Underhill who finished 3rd in the last league race, the Purbeck 10k, before going on to take 2nd in the Giants Head Marathon the morning after.

He was joined in the race by Jonathon Churchill, Giles Heaman, Adam Davies and Corey Stone.

Currently challenging at the top of the men's individual standings, Dave Hicks of Poole AC had the chance to improve his position with Chris Wood of Twemlow Track Club not running. He didn't have many teammates around him who were likely to put Poole AC in contention for a high placing for the fixture.

After finishing 1st female at the Purbeck 10k, Hayley Martin of Poole AC was in the hunt again at Round the Rock. After finishing as 2nd lady in the Coombe Keynes 10k, Isobel Davis of Purbeck Runners was also in the mix, as was Hannah Martyn of Egdon Heath Harriers. There weren't really any clubs with a standout set of the three runners who could finish near the top though.

The course consists of one small loop before heading down toward the south of the island. Then it's back up again in the second half of the race. The first half of the race is actually pretty fast with a long downhill stretch. The second half is a bit of a war of attrition though as you head back up.

To begin with, it was former National Para Duathlon Champion Joe Allen who was leading the way. Joe is from Bridport and was born without a right hand but it hasn't stopped him producing all kinds of remarkable athletic achievements.

Bournemouth AC man Stu Nicholas was in the chase pack along with Corey Stone, Matt Underhill, Dave Hicks and unattached runner Ben Davis.

Dave Hicks caught and overtook Joe Allen in the end and sealed a magnificent victory, in a time of 35:11. Dave is going from strength to strength at the moment and to be leading the way in the individual standings as an M50 is truly remarkable.

Arriving 39 seconds later, Joe Allen crossed the line to claim 2nd place and he was eight seconds ahead of Stu Nicholas who took 3rd in 35:58.

Matt Underhill took 4th place in 36:16 which put him 10 seconds ahead of Joe Godden of Poole Runners who came 5th. He was also 1st M40, ahead of Giles Heaman who reached the line in 36:53.

Jonathon Churchill followed in shortly after in 37:05 and Adam Davies completed the course in 37:14 to take 8th place. That was four scorers in the first eight positions for Egdon Heath Harriers, marking another dominant display for them.

They only needed one more man to complete their scoring team and seal top position for the fixture. They got it when Corey Stone arrived in 37:40 to take 12th place.

With Bournemouth AC not fielding a team of four there was an opportunity for Wimborne AC to take advantage and pick up another win in the Men's Second Division. They had Mark Savage taking 11th place in 37:33 and Louis Verdi finishing 14th in 37:51.

Purbeck Runners super vet Julian Critchlow was 1st M60 in a time of 38:34 which put him in 19th place. Isobel Davis gave Purbeck Runners some more joy when she crossed the line as 1st female in 38:41. That put her in 21st place overall.

Hayley Martin took the 2nd female spot in 39:10 and she was also 1st F40 and came 29th overall. Hannah Martyn was quite a long way back in 72nd place but she was 3rd female, getting round in 43:20.

Teresa Green of Egdon Heath Harriers was 6th female in 45:25 but because they didn't have anyone else finishing that high up, Egdon only managed 3rd place in the Women's First Division. With Gen Crisford taking 8th female spot in 46:21 and Lesley Moore coming 13th lady in 47:47, Poole AC got the win.

Egdon were miles ahead of everyone else in the Men's First Division and it was Littledown Harriers who got 2nd place for the race, with Poole Runners in 3rd. With four wins for the season so far, Egdon had cemented their position at the top of the standings, with Poole AC going off the boil a bit in those last two races.

Poole Runners still lead the way in the Ladies First Division despite only finishing 4th at Round the Rock. That win kept Poole AC in 2nd place ahead of Egdon Heath Harriers.

Recording a convincing win in the Men's Second Division, Wimborne AC took pole position in the race for promotion with four wins for the season so far and three 2nd places. Bournemouth AC have three wins and two 2nd places.

Despite a no-show at Round the Rock, the Bournemouth AC ladies still top the standings in the Second Division ahead of Purbeck Runners and Wimborne AC who got the win at Round the Rock.

In the Men's Third Division, Dorset Doodlers picked up the win at Round the Rock and that was their third win of the season. Dorchester RIOT still top the standings in that division though for the season so far.

Weymouth St Pauls Harriers got the win in the Ladies Third Division at Round the Rock and that was their first victory of the season. It didn't move them up the standings though and they're still 5th, with Bournemouth Joggers leading the way ahead of Westbourne and Gillingham Trotters.

That's seven races for the Dorset Road League season done so far and it's shaping up well so far and still all to play for. Next up its the Sturminster Newton Half Marathon and that promises to be a scintillating summer sizzler.

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