

Wimborne 10 Race Report

For some of the Dorset Road Race League clubs, the Wimborne 10 could be a season definer. For those needing a win to stay in the hunt for that coveted top spot in the division, it was do or die time.

A win at the Weymouth 10 had brought Egdon Heath Harriers to within touching distance of a Men's First Division title. One more victory out of the remaining two fixtures would be enough to get them over the line.

Poole AC needed to win both the last two fixtures to take the title. The Boscombe 10k probably favours Poole AC as it's closer to home for them. Therefore, the Wimborne 10 race was crucial and could effectively be the title decider.

Egdon Heath Harriers had Christopher Peck, Jonathan Churchill, Matt Underhill, Daniel Hull and Adam Davies in their side. The Poole AC team included Jamie Grose, Dom Willmore and Luke Terry. On paper, it had the makings of a fantastic grudge match.

The battle for supremacy between Bournemouth AC and Wimborne AC in the Men's Second Division had gone down to the wire.

Every time the south coasters hadn't been able to field a full-strength team, Wimborne had taken advantage. That saw the two neck and neck with five wins each going into the final two races. Realistically, the Bournemouth AC men needed to win both to take the league title so at the Wimborne 10, the pressure was on.

For the Bournemouth AC ladies, one more good result would probably be enough to see them through to gain promotion back to the topflight. They'd already won five races in the season so far. Ideally they would have wanted to get the job done at Wimborne though.

After finishing first and second at the Round the Lakes 10k and the New Forest 10, Abdinassier Mohamoud Elhmi and Joe Arundel were back in action again at Wimborne and that gave the Bournemouth AC men a huge advantage.

They were joined by Stu Nicholas who had taken 6th place in the New Forest 10 and had been putting in some very impressive performances of late. The yellow and blues also had Matt Brown and Adam Corbin in their lineup.

With it being a home race for them, Wimborne AC had brought a reasonably strong side to the table, with Mark Savage, Louis Verdi, Scott Blakeway and Damian Huntingford in situ.

As well as being an intriguing race from a Dorset League perspective, the Wimborne 10 had an added element of excitement, which was the £250 that was on the line for

anyone who could beat the course record. Hercules Wimbledon man Jonathan Cornish, who has now signed for Poole AC, set that course record of 50 minutes and 34 seconds at last year's event and he was back to try and do it again.

This time Somalian sensation Abdinassier Mohamoud Elhmi was going for it as well though and he was very confident about getting under 50 minutes. His two Hampshire Cross Country League winning performances had demonstrated the level he is operating at and with his 49:01 time in the New Forest 10, he'd already proved he is capable of a sub-50.

That was on a course that was virtually all off-road as well. Hence it was quite possible the Wimborne 10 course record would be sent tumbling for the second year running.

In keeping with tradition, the Wimborne 10 always starts with the town crier firing his guns to set the runners off with a bang. Never had it been more appropriate either than on this edition, as Abdi shot off like a bullet. It looked as if he was sprinting but he wasn't. That's just how fast he runs.

With the Wimborne 10 course, you run down the hill on the first mile and that's the same slope you have to come up on the last mile, making for a gruelling finish.

Going through the first 5k in a blistering 14:33, it was clear that Abdi was hunting for that course record, and he was thirsty for it.

He went on to reach 10k in 29:48. At this point, he was on course for something truly special. It was on the eighth mile that he started to feel a pain in his abdomen. From that point on he had to slow down. Not by a lot but by enough to make for a significant drop in pace.

The tension built as the clock ticked down before Abdi appeared on the horizon and hit the finishing straight. It was clear that he had enough time left to make it to the line well under the current course record time.

Going over the chip matt in 49:25, Abdi had bettered the course record by over the minute. That was despite the abdomen issue that perhaps might have cost him the best part of a minute. It was a truly special performance from Abdi and his average pace was 4:56 despite the drop in pace over those last three miles.

Even Jonathan Cornish, who is ranked 150 in the UK couldn't get anywhere near Abdi. He was quite close to his time from last year but just missed out in the end, going over the line in 50:41.

Joe Arundel registered an even faster time than he did at the New Forest 10, reaching the finish in 51:08 to take a terrific third place.

Jamie Grose was next the next man to arrive on the home straight. He'd been going from strength to strength and delivered another fine performance to finish in 51:58.

That was 1 minute 44 seconds quicker than his time from the New Forest 10 so another brilliant PB for him. His average pace was 5:11.

There was quite a gap after that before Christopher Peck arrived to take 5th place in 54:08. That was a seventh race of the season for him which confirmed him as individual men's champion for the second year running.

Dom Willmore was the next man over the line, getting round a time of 55:44. Even though Jonathan Cornish didn't count for the league, it was looking good for Poole AC with two scorers in the top six. They now only needed three more to complete their scoring team.

Getting round in 54:46, Stu Nicholas claimed 7th place and he was now occupying fourth place in the men's individual standings for the season so far.

A lot of the runners had their flow interrupted by a tractor with a combine harvester attached that was blocking the road for a while, forcing them onto the grass verge.

Luke McKenzie of Poole Runners was the next man in, crossing the line in 56:48 which put him in eighth place. Adam Colbert was Poole AC's third finisher, and he took ninth position in 56:53 which put him seven seconds ahead of Jonathan Churchill who was tenth. That was three finishers in from Poole AC and two from Egdon Heath Harriers.

Jez Bragg finished 11th in 57:17 and that was his sixth race of the season, meaning if he does the Boscombe 10k he could finish quite high up in the individual standings. He's currently in fifth place, just behind Stu. Stu also needs to do the Boscombe 10k to get to the magic seven.

Jonathan Churchill was in the same boat as well, having done six races so far and he is currently sitting third in the individual standings. Already having done seven races, Dave Hicks of Poole AC is currently second in the individual table.

Luke Terry was Poole AC's fourth finisher at the Wimborne 10 when he reached the line in 57:27 and that put him in 12th place. All they needed now was one more man in to confirm what could turn out to be a very valuable victory.

Matt Brown of Bournemouth AC got round in 57:31 which put him in 13th place. Since they only needed four to score in the Second Division, Bournemouth AC had won the fixture before any other Second Division club runner had even finished.

That would set them up nicely to seal the win on the final day of the season in the Boscombe 10k, which is a bit like a home race for them as it starts and finishes at Kings Park.

Egdon Heath Harriers kept the race for top spot in the First Division alive when Matt Underhill and Oliver Edwards arrived to take 14th and 15th places in 58:07 and 58:09. They and Poole AC were both now on four finishers each.

Crossing the line in 58:34, Bournemouth AC man Adam Corbin came 16th before the fifth man over the line for Poole AC, Gareth Hale arrived. He took 17th place in a time of 58:40. That was a huge win for Poole AC and that probably swung things in their favour in the title race. They just needed one more big performance at Boscombe.

Managing to pull a PB of 59:13 out of the bag, Vicki Ingham won her seventh race of the season to seal the women's individual title for the second consecutive year. She'd once again proved to be head and shoulders above any of the other Dorset women. At the Wimborne 10, she finished 24th overall.

Coming second to Bournemouth AC in the Men's Second Division, Wimborne AC had Mark Savage who was 33rd in 59:32, Louis Verdi who was 38th in 1:00:01, Damian Huntingford who was 43rd in 1:00:56 and Scott Blakeway who was 48th in 1:01:29.

Julian Critchlow of Purbeck Runners was the first over 60 to reach the finish line and he posted a time of 1:00:53 which put him 42nd overall.

Isabel Davis of Purbeck Runners was 2nd female in 1:01:41 which put her in 51st place. If she does the Boscombe 10k that should secure the runner up spot for her in the women's individual standings.

Gill Pearson of Yeovil Town RRC was the next lady to finish in 1:02:31 and that put her in 55th place overall.

Helen O'Neile gave Poole Runners their second female finisher, crossing the line in 1:04:05 which put her in 65th place overall.

Completing the course in exactly 1 hour 5 minutes, Katie Gunn of Bournemouth AC was 5th female and 72nd overall.

Louise Fox of Dorchester RIOT was 6th female in 1:05:24, with Caroline Wilkins arriving 10 seconds later to take 79th place and 7th female. She was Poole Runners' third scorer.

Dawn Andrews of Poole AC was 8th female in 1:07:05 which put her 98th overall before Gemma Bragg arrived exactly a minute later to take 9th female spot.

She completed the scoring team of four for the already confirmed First Division champions Poole Runners who registered their eighth win of the season.

That was Gemma's seventh race of the season and she was third in the overall standings for the women's individual, just ahead of Hannah Martyn of Egdon Heath Harriers who was 10th female at Wimborne in 1:08:14.

Stephen Hogarth of Poole AC was the top man in the over 65 category, finishing in 1:07:19, with Graham Moyse of Poole Runners coming 2nd in 1:09:54.

Stephen needs to do the Boscombe 10k to reach the magic seven races for the season and that should see him win the 65 to 69 category for the league. If he doesn't run at Boscombe, either Nigel Haywood or Colin Bird will take the win that category.

The runners seemed to appreciate the fabulous array of cakes that were given out to them afterwards for free. That helped to create a nice atmosphere when they all gathered in the village green after the race and no one seemed to be in a rush to leave.

Making it to the line in 1:09:41, Sophie Read was 14th female and second scorer for Bournemouth AC.

Heather Khoshnevis won the female over 60 battle that she usually has with Debbie Lennon of Bournemouth AC. Finishing in 1:14:43, Heather was 26th out of the women in the race and 186th overall.

Debbie completed the course in 1:17:21 which put her 36th lady and 210th overall. She was Bournemouth AC's third scorer for the women's team though and that was enough to give them their sixth win of the season.

That meant they'd won the Second Division and confirmed their promotion back to the topflight for next season with one race to spare.

Picking up their seventh win of the season in the Men's Third Division, Dorset Doodlers' promotion to the Second Division had already been sealed.

The fight for top spot in the Ladies' Third Division is proving to be an interesting one. It was Westbourne who got the win at the Wimborne 10, with Bournemouth Joggers in 2nd and that meant Westbourne moved into pole position for that much coveted promotion place to the Second Division.

They were both on level points, so it was effectively winner takes all at the Boscombe 10k. The only problem was the Bournemouth Joggers were organising that race and they usually need all their members helping out, meaning there wouldn't be anyone left to run the race.

It was all teed up nicely for an exciting finale at the Boscombe 10k, with Egdon Heath Harriers and Poole AC in a fight to the death for the First Division title. It was the same in the Second Division, with Bournemouth AC and Wimborne AC both needing that final win that would seal their promotion.

There was also an interesting battle at the foot of the Ladies' Second Division, with Dorset Doodlers and Lytchett Manor Striders battling it out for survival on the final day. There was only one point between them going into it so that one could swing either way.

It had all the makings of another classic to bring what has been an enthralling Dorset Road Race League season to its conclusion.