

DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

Broadstone Quarter Marathon 2026 - Race Report

It never seems that long to wait until the new season of the Dorset Road Race League starts up. A couple of Christmas parties, one turkey dinner and the annual wearing of a questionable jumper and it's time to do it all over again. And with the Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon taking place on New Year's Day, it's straight into competition mode, no messing about.

Although it's a challenging course, including two trips up the gruelling Gravel Hill, the Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon proved a popular attraction for the Dorset based athletes, as it does every year, and a full capacity field was in situ.

Wimborne AC began life in the Men's First Division after gaining promotion from the second tier and Poole Runners had dropped down to the Second Division after losing a dramatic relegation battle with Bournemouth AC in the final fixture of the 2025 season.

Lytchett Manor Striders joined Poole Runners in the Second Division after sealing promotion from the Division Three. Purbeck Runners replaced them in the Third Division following their relegation from Division Two.

The Wimborne AC ladies also started their campaign in the top division after gaining promotion from Division Two. The Bournemouth AC ladies were relegated and would now be competing in the second tier.

Verwood Runners were promoted to the Ladies Second Division after narrowly edging out Lytchett Manor Striders for top spot in the Third Division and Westbourne were now a Division Three team after their relegation from the second tier.

There had been some interesting movers and shakers over the short pre-season, with the man who finished third in the Dorset League individual standings, Lewis Clarke, making the switch from Poole Runners to Poole AC. That would massively help strengthen an already formidable looking outfit for the defending champions.

They had also recruited Luke McKenzie from Poole Runners as well and he'll also provide added strength in depth. Egdon Heath Harriers had signed the man who got narrowly edged out by Bournemouth AC's Rob McTaggart in last year's Broadstone Quarter Marathon, Harry Tongue.

Rob McTaggart returned to vie for back-to-back wins and he was joined by Broadstone Quarter Marathon course record holder Joe Arundel, who won the race in 2024 in a scintillating time of 34:18.

Bournemouth AC also had Under 20 sensation Jon Pepin in their ranks after he transferred from Southampton AC last season. He was the winner of the Run Bournemouth Supersonic 10k in October, after recording a superb sub-32-minute time.

Poole AC had a really strong side out for the Broadstone Quarter Marathon, including 2025 Dorset League men's individual runner up Thomas Corbin and the man who finished 2nd to Jamie Grose at the Round the Lakes 10k in September and 3rd in the Run Bournemouth Half Marathon, Etienne Tillon.

They also had Under 20 superstar Charlie Collins who won all four of the Wessex Cross Country League fixtures, including the Dorset County Championships. Those races included seniors as well as Under 20's and he wiped the floor with everyone.

The begin with, it was a lead group of three, made up of Charlie Collins, Joe Arundel and Harry Tongue.

After about 4k, it was Charlie Collins though who was looking the strongest and he began to push the pace. Harry Tongue was hanging on in there though and wasn't willing to surrender just yet.

They'd been running at around 5:05 pace for most of the miles and 5:30 for the two when they were heading up Gravel Hill. Then, as they reached the descent on the last half mile, they were going at 4:28 pace.

With about 100m to go, Harry made his move and managed to outkick Charlie. Reaching the line in an incredible time of 33:56, Harry took the win, with Charlie coming in three seconds later in 33:59. Harry had basically done to Charlie what Tag had done to him last year.

It was the first time any athlete had gone under 34 minutes at the Broadstone Quarter Marathon as well, so a new course record had been claimed. They'd gone through 10k in 32:17 and come away with an average pace of 5:10 in a 6.58-mile race with 475ft of elevation.

That meant Joe Arundel had to settle for 3rd place this time round and he went over the line in 34:26. That was only eight seconds outside his previous course record time though so it was still a good run.

Jon Pepin then arrived four seconds later to make it two Bournemouth AC men in the top four. His average pace for the run was 5:15.

A trio of Poole AC runners took the next three places, with Tommy Corbin taking 5th in 34:33, Etienne Tillon 6th in 35:53 and Lewis Clarke 7th in 35:10.

Finishing only 17 seconds outside of his winning time from last year, Rob McTaggart took 8th position in 35:15. That was still a time that would have won the race in quite a few previous years.

The fact it was only good enough for 8th on this occasion underlined the strength of competition in the Dorset League races these days. The standard just seems to keep getting higher as the athletes push each other onto faster times.

With Poole AC having four finishers and Bournemouth AC having three, it seemed like it would be a straight shootout between the two for top spot in the Men's First Division.

Dom Willmore arrived in 9th place though to seal it for the defending champions, going over the line in 35:49.

Rob Arkell of Poole Runners completed the top ten in 36:35, before Bournemouth AC pair Luke De-Benedictis and Stu Nicholas arrived in 11th and 12th positions. Luke clocked a time of 36:43 and Stu crossed the line in 37:03.

In theory that should have been second place sealed for Bournemouth AC with five men already in. However, Joe Arundel wasn't wearing his club vest which meant he was omitted from the league scoring. That left them needing one more man in to confirm that runner up spot.

They got it when Stu Bowers arrived in 68th place, registering a time of 42:16. That made him 60th scorer for the league.

Dawn Andrews of Poole AC was first female in a time of 42:36, with Elizabeth Dyson of Haldon Trail Runners taking 2nd in 43:34. She wasn't a scorer for the league though which meant more points to be hoovered up by the others.

Egdon Heath Harriers topped the standings in the first division and they had three runners in the top six. Victoria Barnett came 3rd in exactly 44 minutes, Teresa Green was 5th in 44:52 and Hannah Jardine was 6th in 45:23.

Vicky Rutter of Littledown Harriers was 4th female 44:04 and it was Littledown Harriers who took 2nd place in the Ladies First Division, with defending champions Poole Runners only finishing 3rd.

With Kate Bowers finishing 7th in 45:27, Helen Beddoe 16th in 47:24 and Sophie Read 17th in 47:30, Bournemouth AC topped the standings in the Ladies Second Division ahead of Dorchester RIOT and Purbeck Runners.

In the Men's Second Division, it was Poole Runners who took top spot, with Littledown Harriers in 2nd and Lytchett Manor Striders 3rd.

It was close in the Men's Third Division between three teams and it was Dorchester RIOT who edged it, ahead of Purbeck Runners and Verwood Runners.

Lytchett Manor Striders were much stronger than the other teams in the Ladies Third Division and won it convincingly, with Weymouth St Pauls Harriers taking 2nd, Royal Manor of Portland 3rd and Bournemouth Joggers 4th.

The next fixture in the Dorset Road Race League schedule will be the Blackmore Vale Half Marathon on 1st February, followed by the Lytchett 10 the weekend after.

After those first three races, a quarter of the season will be gone so the league tables will be starting to shape up and the front runners will no doubt be coming to the forefront.

If the Broadstone Quarter Marathon is anything to go by, it should be a highly competitive season across the board and the standard of racing will be extremely high.