

DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

MAY 5 RACE REPORT

Pepin Powers To May 5 Glory As Poole AC Tighten Grip On First Division

The fifth race of the Dorset Road Race League season saw the county's finest head to Canford Heath for one of the quickest and most popular fixtures on the calendar – the May 5.

Starting and finishing at Ashdown Athletics Stadium, home to both Poole AC and Poole Runners, the fast and twisting five-mile course has often produced some thrilling racing over the years and 2025 proved no exception.

With four races already completed, several of the league's major protagonists were back in action. Poole AC arrived boasting perhaps the two standout performers of the season so far in Tommy Corbin and Lewis Clarke, while Callum Wadlow, Brian Underwood and Luke Terry completed what looked an exceptionally strong line-up.

Bournemouth AC, however, had plenty of firepower of their own. Luke De-Benedictis, Matt Brown, Jake Mowat and James Hulbert were joined by Run Bournemouth 10k winner Jon Pepin, whose recent performances suggested he could be a major contender.

Elsewhere, North Dorset Village Marathon winner Chris Wood returned to league action, Lee Dempster pulled on the colours of Twemlow Track Club, Rich White represented Dorset Doodlers, while Wimborne AC's Mark Savage and men's standings leader Louis Verdi were also on the start line.

The women's race looked equally competitive. Poole Runners fielded a strong trio of Lizzy Allison, Vicki Ingham and Helen O'Neile, while Bournemouth AC countered with Emma Caplan, Kitty Cook and Kate Bowers. Reigning Dorset League champion Emma Mogridge was also in attendance, along with current women's standings leader Victoria Pye of Egdon Heath Harriers.

When the race got underway it was Pepin who immediately stamped his authority on proceedings.

The Bournemouth AC youngster wasted no time in taking the race by the scruff of the neck, quickly opening a gap on the rest of the field. Behind him, Corbin, Clarke and Wadlow formed the chasing group, but they were already finding themselves on the back foot.

As the miles ticked by, Pepin showed no sign of relenting.

The Under-20 star produced a superb front-running display to claim victory in 26:08, crossing the line nearly a minute clear of the field.

Corbin led the chase home in second with 26:54, while Clarke completed the podium in 27:06. Wadlow followed shortly afterwards in fourth place with 27:11.

Rich White produced another excellent performance for Dorset Doodlers, taking fifth overall and first veteran in 27:13, while Underwood ensured Poole AC had four athletes inside the top six when he finished sixth in 27:51.

Bournemouth AC's Casper Jakobsen was seventh in 27:59, with teammate Matt Brown close behind in eighth in 28:08.

Steve Kellaway claimed ninth place for Egdon Heath Harriers in 28:10, while unattached runner Philip Bridge and Littledown Harriers' Gergely Arvay followed in 28:11 and 28:12 respectively. Lee Dempster rounded out the leading dozen with a time of 28:17.

Luke Terry's run further down the field proved every bit as important for Poole AC. His finish completed the scoring team and secured a fourth Men's First Division victory from the opening five races of the season.

At this stage, Poole AC are beginning to look increasingly difficult to stop in the battle for the Men's First Division title.

Bournemouth AC were once again their nearest challengers. De-Benedictis, Harry Butcher and Jake Mowat finished 18th, 19th and 20th respectively to complete the yellow and blues' scoring team and secure second place on the day.

The women's race saw Lizzy Allison continue her impressive season.

The Poole Runners athlete was first female home in 29:26, placing 28th overall and comfortably taking maximum league points.

Clubmate Vicki Ingham finished second female in 31:12, while Bournemouth AC's Emma Caplan took third place and first in the FV45 category with 32:01.

Emma Mogridge was fourth female in 32:32 and Victoria Pye strengthened her grip on the women's individual standings by taking fifth in 32:47.

Helen O'Neile completed Poole Runners' scoring trio with 33:08, narrowly ahead of Bournemouth AC's Kitty Cook, who crossed the line just three seconds later.

Teresa Green and Elle Laird claimed eighth and ninth female positions, while Dawn Andrews rounded out the top ten women with a time of 33:37.

Kate Bowers' run of 33:58 completed Bournemouth AC's scoring team and helped them secure top spot in the Ladies Second Division.

Poole Runners claimed victory in the Ladies First Division ahead of Poole AC, while league leaders Egdon Heath Harriers had to settle for third on this occasion.

Among the age-category winners, Littledown Harriers' Mark Packer was first MV50 in 29:47, Julian Critchlow led the MV60 category with 30:15, while Purbeck Runners' Hamish Murray was the first athlete aged over 70 to finish, recording 34:04.

Littledown Harriers topped the Men's Second Division standings on the day ahead of Poole Runners, although the latter continue to lead the overall division standings after five races.

In the Ladies Second Division, Bournemouth AC comfortably finished ahead of Dorchester RIOT and Dorset Doodlers. The result leaves Bournemouth AC and Dorchester RIOT locked together at the top of the overall table.

The Men's Third Division produced one of the closest contests of the evening, with Purbeck Runners edging out Verwood Runners by the narrowest of margins. Purbeck now lead the division overall, while Dorchester RIOT and Verwood Runners remain level in second place.

Lytchett Manor Striders once again dominated the Ladies Third Division. Impressively, they remain the only club to have fielded a complete team at all five league races so far this season and, with three victories already recorded, they are emerging as strong contenders for divisional honours.

Attention now turns to the Purbeck 10k, the sixth race of the Dorset Road Race League season. Following its successful return to the calendar in recent years, the race has quickly re-established itself as one of the highlights of the league programme and another memorable evening of racing looks firmly on the cards.