

BMAF OPEN MASTERS CROSS-COUNTRY RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS Long Eaton Derbyshire, 29 October 2022

Report and pictures by Martin Duff

Women's races

There were fears that the overnight rain would render the Long Eaton 3km lap a mud-bath just as it was in 2019, but the mild weather ensured that all was well and the going was perfect.

Indeed, the temperature went right up to 21 degrees C during the afternoon as the balmy Autumn weather returned. Hosts Long Eaton Running Club again did the BMAF proud and the organisers now plan to get more clubs to participate in the event but an unfortunate clash with Surrey Masters championships made life difficult for some teams to make the easy trip to Long Eaton.



The first race away was the women's and they took the over-65 men with them but came out on top themselves as Charnwood dominated with Jane Potter giving them a lead over Cheshire Dragons' Louisa Thompson on the first stage of their three laps. She said: "I didn't lead all the way as I've had a bit of a niggle." Her 11:30 wound up fourth quickest W35 time before Emily Smith's 11:32 increased Charnwood's lead up to over a minute mid-race.

Then it was the turn of the in-form Gemma Steel and the 36-year-old doubled the advantage after posting after a course record 10:19, before doing an impressive training session around the local cricket pitch. She said: “it was a race record and the quickest I’ve gone for a while, as I only ran 10:36 last time.” Steel added that the run had given her confidence for the English senior relays at Mansfield a week later.”

Charnwood’s team time was also an age group record.



Cheshire Dragon’s Joanna Marsden was well down but her 11:21 was the second-best effort of the race.

Last year Cheshire Dragons had won the W35 title but, moved up to annex the W45 top slot after leading their age group from the gun. They led off with 57-year-old Sara Avery, the 2021 top ranker over 5km and she gave them a few metres lead over Sale’s Anne Chinoy. It was then Emma Crow’s turn and she extended the lead before Carol Parsons more than doubled the winning margin. A front run 11:19 was comfortably the fastest W45 time of the afternoon for the former Scottish Schools champion, when she ran under her maiden name of Carol Kettraino.” Parsons also paid credit to their oldest team member, Avery, on the first leg.

Bristol & West who were top W45 squad last year, also moved up with a gun to tape victory in the W55 class, winning by nearly two minutes. Sarah Everitt ran 12:13 on the first lap, a time that stood up as the best of the age group. Rosie Mushens and Clare Jolliffe then completed the job.

Only three clubs contested the W65 class as Hogweed Trotters came from behind with their mid-race runner Lesley Harding fastest overall with 15:25. They had W75 Caroline Lavis, who is second UK ranked over 10km, in their team. Nevertheless, her 16:20 was second best W65 in the race.

As in the men’s events, there were actually no over 75 teams in the race, although Oxford City promise a men’s squad for next year.

Men's races



The men's M65 ran with the women and their first stage saw David Gill pass Warrington's age group record holder Stan Owen within sight of the finish. He said: "I won the Leeds Abbey Dash (M65) with 39:00, last week."

Peter Mountain then took Bristol & West ahead mid race, before David Bedwell produced the fastest M65 lap of 12:19 and victory by more than two minutes. The multi-British Masters middle-distance champion revelled in the conditions and said: "cross-country isn't my usual thing, but it's flat and firm and perfect for lovely training," The second-best M65 time went to many-time champions Oxford City's Brian Green but his club were out of the medals despite his mid-race effort.

The three youngest men's age groups were in the second event away but it was good that they waited for the competition of the women's prize-giving before their off.

Tipton retained the M35 race title over five stages but were only third on their opening circuit as their Tom Holden was headed by Leeds' John Beattie and hosts Long Eaton's Ryan Haw on stage 1. Beattie's 9:39, was second best of the afternoon and he said: "I ran from the front, but he was always there." This was talking about Haw, whose 9:42 was fourth best of the day. Then it was Long Eaton who flattered as Darlington Magalela took his club ahead, but Tipton's Robert Meredith closed right up with 9:53. The holders were then to take the lead on the middle leg as Martin Williams did the business for Tipton, despite Salford closing thanks to Karl Darcy, whose 9:30 was the best of the afternoon. "He said: "I didn't realise that I had run so quickly." Ben Gamble extended the Tipton

lead before Joe Smith made sure with a third best 9:41, on the final stage and victory was theirs by nearly a minute.

One trouble with multiple age groups running together is that the older runners tend to get lost among the younger teams. Maybe different colour backgrounds on their numbers might help.

Gareth Raven was narrowly first home on the opening stage of the M45 contest, with 10:16, as Leeds were right there before Dulwich Runners' Thomas South went through to the lead with 10:24. They were one of the few Surrey-qualified clubs to make the trip. Leeds then went ahead mid-race through Mike Burrett's 10:04 that was to then stay as the best M45 time of the day. Buzz Shephard then returned Dulwich Runners to the lead before handing over to Andy Bond, who has been selected for the England team for the soon up Masters International. The 49-year-old then doubled the Dulwich lead after 10:13 split that was the group second quickest. Later at the prize giving Shephard was given the fastest lap medal until he questioned his time and a correction was made.

Finishing before the younger ag groups, the M55's efforts over just four stages, were largely un-noticed but Leicester Coritanians retained their title after Gordon Lee had given them a narrow first stage lead with 10:44. Warrington's Steve Watmough was just three seconds slower, on the stage and their times were overall second and third best. Leicester dropped back as Brighton's Phoenix club went ahead after two legs, thanks to Shane Snow's 11:36. The Highgate first claimer has always also been a member of Brighton Triathlon club but here was first claim for Brighton Phoenix. Gareth Deacon took Leicester back into a 50-metre lead on the penultimate leg before Phil Makepiece front ran 10:41, the fastest leg of the M55 age group. He was complementary about his teammates and said: "they put me in a good position."