

# **DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE**

## **RACE REPORT FOR RACE ONE**

### **Broadstone Quarter Marathon**

*Thanks to Richard Brawn for writing*

Whilst it was great to see the return of many of the old favourite Dorset road races in 2021 and to see mass starts back on the agenda and the thrill of competition return, it still felt like there was something missing. With individual honours up for grabs and local pride at stake, there was still plenty of high quality racing to be enjoyed but it just wasn't quite the same. And what was missing, was of course the competitive nature inspired by a league format.

It's all very well running for yourself and wanting to finish as high up as you can, but when you're doing it for a club, in a meaningful league scenario, it adds a different dimension to it. Knowing that every point matters and every place gained can make a difference gives the runners that extra bit of motivation. A reason to push that little bit harder.

It had been effectively two years since a full Dorset Road Race League season had been played out. It was Bournemouth AC's men team who last won the league title, back in 2019, with Poole Runners crowned ladies' champions. Ever since then the Covid-19 pandemic had disrupted and destroyed any chance of having mass participation events take place in any kind of regular, organised format.

For 2022 though, the Dorset Road Race League was back on the agenda, beginning with its usual opener, the Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon on New Year's Day.

Defending men's champions Bournemouth AC were without Jacek Cieluszecki, the man who won the Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon in both 2018 and 2019 and was a very close second in 2020. Because the course contains a couple of tough, long inclines, it suits Jacek well and he is usually able to show his supremacy.

With him out of the equation of 2022 though, it was going to provide someone else with an opportunity to shine. Unfortunately for Bournemouth AC they weren't really able to get any of their big guns out for it so it looked unlikely they would be contesting for the top male placings. For their ladies team though, it was a different story.

Bolstered by the useful addition of Caitlin Peers, who was first female in the Boscombe 10k in November, they had a real fighting chance of coming out on top. Helen O'Neile had also been roped into a formidable line up that also included Emma Caplan and Tamzin Petersen.

In the men's first division, Egdon Heath Harriers look likely to be Bournemouth AC's main rivals. They'd managed to assemble a pretty good squad for the Broadstone Quarter, including Matt Papa, Martyn Bell and Bruce Campbell. Of course Twemlow Track Club also have a lot of talent in their ranks but they still haven't had the opportunity to get out of the second division since it's been so long since a league campaign has been completed.

It was actually Poole Runners second claimer James Share who picked up the race win. He looked a Christlike figure as he floated effortlessly round the course at a faster pace than anyone has for years. In fact, his time of 34:54 eclipsed the 35:01 that Jacek Cieluszecki recorded in 2018. The course has changed slightly since then though.

Unfortunately for Poole Runners though, James's first claim club is Guildford & Godalming so he couldn't actually score any league points for them. The next man to arrive at the finish line was Egdon Heath speedster Matt Papa and he recorded a time of 36:06 to seal the runner up spot. Then it was Lewis Clarke of Lonely Goat who took third in 36:14.

It didn't matter to Egdon Heath Harriers though that James finished ahead of Matt because since James wasn't competing in the league as such, Matt still secured minimum points.

Steven Yates of Twemlow Track Club finished in 4th place, getting round in 36:43, just ahead of Dave Seddon of Candy Racing who crossed the line a second later to seal 5th place. That meant Steven took first place in the Male 40-49 category.

Four seconds after that, Egdon Heath Harriers had their second man over the line and that was Jamie Barrington who is in the Junior Male 16-20 category. With two men in the top six it was looking very promising from an EHH perspective.

Thomas Corbin took 7th place in a time of 37:04 before former BAC man Jez Bragg came over the line to take 8th place in a superb time of 37:16. He was the second Twemlow man to get to the finish.

Andy Leggott of Lonely Goat was next to reach the line, registering a time of 37:28, with Luke Terry of Poole AC sneaking into the top ten just after with a time of 37:28.

Having been out injured for a long time, Lee Dempster hasn't quite recaptured the form that saw him crowned the men's league champion back in 2019 and he had to settle for 11th place on this occasion finishing in 38:11. He was Twemlow Track Club's third man in.

Christopher Wright of Dorset Doodlers took 12th place in 38:27, before Poole Runners got their first official points on the board with Dion Garner taking 13th place in 39:03.

Neil Catchlove of Lordshill Road Runners took 14th place ahead of Robert Doubleday who was Poole AC's second scorer, coming in in 39:14.

Rich Brawn had been first BAC man for the majority of the race until Steve Ross came floating past him at the bottom of the hill on the second lap. Then Sam Jackson caught Rich up as well and they made their way to the top of the together.

Steve was running well though and finishing really strongly and he managed to overtake several other runners on his way to a superb 16th place finish. His time was 39:17.

Steve tends to start races quite conservatively and then gradually crank up the pace as the race progresses. One reason for that is that he doesn't even own a Garmin or any form of running watch. He never really has any idea of what pace he's going at and just tends to run on feel. It may be an unconventional method but it's clearly working for him and he appears to be progressing a lot.

Egdon Heath Harriers had their third man in when Martyn Bell crossed the line in 18th place ahead of Joe Godden of Poole Runners who was 19th in 39:36.

Rich Brawn had been just behind Scott Parfitt of Lytchett Manor Striders the whole entire race and that was how it stayed, with Scott taking 20th place in the standings in a time of 39:39.

Sam Jackson went past Rich on the final corner before they turned and headed towards the finish. Rich had just enough in the tank though to get back ahead of Sam, just before they crossed the line - not that it mattered much in terms of the league.

Rich finished in 21st place with a time of 39:41 and Sam was 22nd in 39:42. That meant BAC now had three athletes having finished. Sam also now occupied top spot in the 45-49 age group for the Dorset Road Race League.

They'd overtaken Bruce Campbell when heading up the final hill and he followed in to take 23rd place in 39:43. That was enough to give him first prize in the Male 50-59 category and he was Egdon Heath Harriers' fourth scorer.

Then Poole AC got their third man in when Julyan Praasma crossed the line in 24th place, recording a time of 39:58. Matt Bosanquet of Lytchett Manor Striders was 25th and first in 50-54 category for the league, finishing in 40:02.

Completing the five man scoring team for Egdon Heath Harriers, Matt Faramus crossed the line in 31st place in a time of 40:46 and that was enough to seal top spot in the men's first division for them.

Bournemouth AC man Alex Goulding was feeling a bit under the weather and that resulted in a very below par performance from him getting round in a time of 40:46 to take 32nd place. In 2020 he ran it in 39:09 and his fastest time in the race was 38:19 so he was considerably down on that. He was still fourth scorer for Bournemouth AC though so it was still worthwhile him taking part from that perspective.

Despite not doing a lot of running lately, BAC woman Helen O'Neile had been battling it out for the first female spot with Joanna Wright but in the end it was Joanna who had come out on top, finishing in a time of 40:48. That put her in 33rd place overall.

Helen reached the finish in a time of 41:10 which put her in 37th place overall. Joanna wasn't running for a club in the Dorset Road Race League though so that meant Helen had sealed minimum points for BAC, so that was an excellent result for her.

It wasn't long before another BAC lady, Emma Caplan, arrived to finish as third female. She crossed the line in 42nd place which also put her top of tree in the Female 35-49 category. As far as the Dorset Road Race League was concerned though, she was effectively second, so for the purposes of that it was a BAC one-two.

At one point Emma almost pulled out of the race due to an injury concern but she decided to go for it in the end and it certainly paid off. Abigail Jones of Poole AC was the next female to come in and she crossed the line in 42:32, putting her in 50th place overall.

Bournemouth AC's scoring team was complete when Caitlin Peers arrived at the finish in a time of 43:10. Caitlin works as a nurse and had been on a nightshift so she'd had no sleep at all before heading to the race! It was a truly monumental effort from her and she'd finished 8th fastest female on the day and 5th in terms of the Dorset Road Race League. That gave BAC an emphatic win in the ladies' first division for the fixture.

It had been a number of years since the BAC ladies team had been in serious contention for the league title so they were pleased to be taking position at the top of the pile again and will be hoping that they'll have enough to stay there throughout the course of the season.

Matt Du Cros was 5th man in for the BAC men's team, getting to the line in a time of 42:48 which put him in 56th place. Considering they had a weakened team, it hadn't actually turned out too badly for BAC and they'd finished 2nd to Egdon Heath Harriers in the men's first division for the race.

Paul Wilding of Lytchett Manor Striders took first place in the Male 60-69 category with a very impressive time of 42:35. Archie Campbell of Egdon Heath Harriers was first in the 15-17 category for the league, clocking a time of 48:15.

Giving the host club Poole Runners something to cheer about, Joanna Westhead was top of the standings in the Female 50-59 category, finishing in a time of 48:37. That put her in 132nd place in the overall standings and 20th in the ladies' listings for the league.

Of course, it was another category win for Heather Khoshnevis of Bournemouth AC who bossed the Female 60-69 division, finishing in a time of 49:09. That put her in 137th overall and 21st lady in the Dorset Road Race League.

Then, coming in just three seconds later, it was her BAC teammate Debbie Lennon who crossed the line in 139th place. That meant in a Female 50-59 category she'd taken third place but more importantly, she was in the lead in the 55-59 category for the Dorset Road Race League.

Taking first place in the 65-69 category for the league, John Cook of Egdon Heath Harriers crossed the line in 145th place, recording a time of 49:34.

Harriet Townhill of Wimborne AC was first in the 18-20 category of the Dorset Road Race League, crossing the line in 53:12, and Linda Ashmore of Egdon Heath Harriers was first female over 70, registering a time of 56:45.

Picking up the win in the Male 70+ category, Bournemouth AC's Ian Graham completed the course in 55:47, which put him in 223rd place overall. He was 98th in the road race league standings for the men and was of course now leading the 75-79 category in the league.

Finishing 4th in the Female 60-69 category, BAC woman Helen Ambrosen got round in a time of 57:15 which put her 248th overall. In Dorset Road Race League terms though she was first in the 65-69 category and 42nd lady on the league listings.

So, once all the results were totted up it was Egdon Heath Harriers who led the way in the Men's First Division, followed by Bournemouth AC in second, Poole Runners and third and Poole AC in fourth. In the Second Division it was Twemlow Track Club in top spot, with the other new club, Dorchester RIOT, in second.

In the Ladies' First Division, it was a great start for Bournemouth AC who were top of the pile ahead of Lytchett Manor Striders and Egdon Heath Harriers. Last year's champions Poole Runners were down in 6th but they did have most their members helping out rather than competing. In the Ladies's Second Division it was Bournemouth Joggers who led the way with Westbourne in second and Dorchester RIOT in third.

The next fixture on the road race league calendar is the Blackmore Vale Half Marathon on February 6th and that will be followed by the Lytchett 10 the week after. After getting a first taste of the action, the clubs will no doubt be keen to get some good squads together and continue their charges for Dorset Road Race League glory. One thing is certain and that is that with 11 fixtures still to be contested, there will be some exciting grudge matches ahead over the course of the season.

**Current Age Standings** <http://drll.co.uk/results/>

**Fixtures** <http://drll.co.uk/fixtures/>