

DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE

Broadstone Quarter Marathon Race Report

Even the dismal and drab conditions couldn't cast a dark cloud over the excitement of a new Dorset Road Race League season beginning with The Junction Broadstone Quarter Marathon. As ever, the event provided clubs with a first opportunity to get one over on their rivals and show that they have the strength to be challenging for top billing in their respective divisions.

The field for the 2025 Broadstone Quarter was a strong one, with the top clubs eager to get off to a good start. Men's champions Poole AC had Jamie Grose, Thomas Corbin, Dom Willmore, Luke Terry and Fred Harris.

Last season's runners up Egdon Heath Harriers will be looking to get back to winning ways this year and they brought a very strong side to the equation as well. Christopher Peck, Charlie Williams, Jonathan Churchill, Matt Underhill and Jamie Barrington were representing for them.

Rob Arkell and Lewis Clarke were in the mix as well for Poole Runners and Chris Wood, Jez Bragg and Harry Lauste were there for Twemlow Track Club.

On their return to the topflight following promotion from the Second Division, Bournemouth AC had Rob McTaggart and Josh Cole in their side for the season opener.

Last year's women's individual champion Vicki Ingham was competing, as was Molly Rasch who used to run for Poole Runners, and Dorset Doodlers before that. She lives up in Scotland now though and represents Highland Hill as first claim.

Anna Philps of Purbeck Runners was competing as well, as were Gemma Bragg of Poole Runners and Vicky Rutter of Westbourne. They finished third and fourth in the women's individual standings last season. Egdon Heath Harriers had Hannah Martyn and Teresa Green in their lineup.

The course for the Broadstone Quarter starts off with a downhill section before a left turn goes into a small inset section. That contains a hill but then after getting out of the inset section it's onto the big triangle for two laps. When you get to the bottom of the triangle, you then have the long steep climb up the infamous Gravel Hill.

Gravel Hill is a slope that has scarred many a runner on a wet and windy New Year's Day. Once you get to the top of Gravel Hill though it's then downhill all the way along the top and back down the other side of the triangle, so you do get some respite before tackling Gravel Hill for the second time.

The first mile was effectively downhill for half, then uphill for half. The lead group was comprised of Christopher Peck, Charlie Williams, Dom Willmore, Rob McTaggart and an unattached runner by the name of Harry Tongue.

To begin with, it was Harry Tongue who was driving the pace as they went through the first mile in 5:14.

They upped it even further for the second mile, which is mostly downhill before embarking on the first climb up Gravel Hill. That went on for whole of the third mile, making for a gruelling section.

In last year's race, Bournemouth AC members took the first four places, with Joe Arundel winning in a course record time, just ahead of teammate Ollie James who was also inside the previous course record.

Two-time previous winner Jacek Cieluszecki was third, with Rob McTaggart taking fourth. Tag was still very much a contender in the 2025 edition and he'd also won the race on a couple of occasions, back in 2013 and 2011.

Once they reached the top of Gravel Hill it was downhill for the next mile and a half before it was time to head up Gravel Hill for the second time. The lead group had been whittled down to two and it was Tag and the unknown under 20 junior, Harry Tongue.

With only two left to battle it out, Harry Tongue must have been licking his lips at the prospect of getting the win. Tag had other ideas though and was intending to play it smart. After making their way up Gravel Hill for the second time, it was then onto the last kilometre, which was downhill.

Having sat back up till that point, Tag decided to make his move with 400m remaining. Managing to outkick Harry, he made it the line in 34:58 which was enough to see him claim victory. That meant Harry had to settle for the runner up spot on this occasion, going over the line in 35:01.

It was a really strong run from Tag as there weren't that many times in previous years that anyone had got under 35 minutes.

Last season's men's individual champions Christopher Peck took third place in 35:10, with his Egdon Heath Harriers teammate Charlie Williams taking fourth in 35:22.

After that came three Poole AC runners, with Fred Harris finishing 5th in 35:30, Thomas Corbin coming 6th, one second later and Dom Willmore taking 7th a further six seconds back.

Lewis Clarke finished 8th in 36:22 before the remaining members of the Egdon Heath Harriers train came steaming through. Jonathon Churchill was 9th in 37:20, Matt Underhill came 10th in 37:24 and Jamie Barrington was 11th in the same time.

That sealed the First Division win for Egdon Heath Harriers in this opening fixture. Five men out of the top ten league scorers was an impressive start for them.

Rob Arkell finished 12th in 37:35 before Adam Colbert and Gareth Hale arrived to complete the scoring team for Poole AC. Adam's time was 37:30 and Gareth's was 38:20. That meant the reigning league champions had taken second place for this first fixture.

Poole AC actually had more high standard runners than they actually needed as Luke Terry finished 16th in 38:27 and Jamie Grose was 17th in 38:20. Jez Bragg was 18th in 38:32 and he was first man in for Twemlow Track Club.

Josh Cole was second scorer for the Bournemouth AC men and he finished 24th in 39:18. Vicki Ingham picked up from where she left off last season and was first female in 39:44. She came 29th overall.

Julian Critchlow was first over 60, clocking a time of 41:02. He's in the 65 to 69 category now for the Dorset League, so that could spell bad luck for Stephen Hogarth, who won that group last season, and anyone else who's in it!

It was just like old times when Molly Rasch arrived to take the second female spot in 41:09 and that put her 46th overall. Poole Runners were third in the Men's First Division for the Broadstone Quarter fixture with Twemlow Track Club taking 4th.

Anna Philps was third female in 42:13 which put her 59th overall and she was second scorer for the league, since Molly Rasch doesn't count any more.

Emma Mogridge from Molly's former club Dorset Doodlers did score points for them though and she was fourth female in 42:55.

Wimborne AC will be favourites for promotion in the Men's Second Division this season after coming so close last year and they topped the standings for this first race.

Littledown Harriers may be their main challengers after their relegation from the First Division and they took second place at Broadstone, with Westbourne RC in third.

Gemma Bragg was fourth female in 44:39 and she came 93rd overall and was first in the 40 to 44 division.

Teresa Green was 5th female in 45:46 which put her 111th in the overall standings and Vicky Rutter was 6th female and 115th overall in 45:54.

Hannah Martyn was 7th female in 46:28 which put her 119th overall and Jenny Walker-Leach of Poole Runners was first over 50 lady to complete the course. She clocked a time of 46:52 which put her 126th in the overall standings.

Karen Perrett of Weymouth St Pauls Harriers was 9th female and first in the 55 to 59 category with her time of 47:04.

Hamish Murray of Purbeck Runners won the 70 to 74 category last season and he was first over 70 finisher at Broadstone as well, registering a time of 47:36, which put him 137th in the overall standings.

Tracey Harrold of Egdon Heath Harriers was first over 60 lady, getting round in 48:36 which put her 161st overall.

After winning the 60 to 64 category in the league last season, Heather Khoshnevis is now in the 65 to 69 age group and she topped the standings for that category, finishing in a time of 50:13. That made her 20th lady and 189th overall.

Caroline Horder of Bournemouth Joggers was first over 70 woman and she crossed the line in 59:46 which put her 312th overall and 53rd lady.

Ken Parradine was the first man in over 80, finishing in a time of 1:03:50 which put him 355th overall.

Richard Orme of Egdon Heath Harriers was first in the 75 to 79 category in a time of 1:05:53 which put him 372nd overall.

Reigning ladies league champions Poole Runners topped the standings in the First Division after the first fixture but it was a close call between them and Egdon Heath Harriers who were second.

Dorchester RIOT topped the standings in the Women's Second Division ahead of Purbeck Runners and Wimborne AC.

Newly anointed Third Division side Verwood Runners got the win on their debut ahead of Royal Manor of Portland and Bournemouth Joggers.

Lytchett Manor Striders won the fixture in the Men's Third Division, with Dorchester RIOT in second place.

The next league fixture will be the Lytchett 10 on February 9th. The lumpy Lytchett loop has played host to some tremendous battles in the past and this year looks set to be another enthralling contest.

Last year's race was won by Bournemouth AC man Rob Spencer, with Christopher Peck taking second and Jamie Grose third.

Poole AC got the win in the Men's First Division with Bournemouth AC recording the best score in the Second Division. They will both be hoping they can come out on top in this season's encounter and will look to prevent Egdon Heath Harriers making it two out of two.