

Kent Fitness League – Race Report 28/11/10

It was a cold, cold day for our second visit to the former coal heap that is now Fowlmead Country Park. The day dawned dry, crisp and bright, but the clouds soon gathered and by about 10 o'clock it was seriously snowing. So we had our first white cross country event of the winter – the juniors, if anything getting the worst of the conditions.

By the time the 250 or so seniors came to the start line, there was a couple of inches of snow lying and the choice of footwear proved to be a crucial factor in remaining vertical throughout the 5.2 miles of paths and wooded slopes. Snow had compacted by the second lap reducing traction and the steep ascents and descents proved highly challenging.

Winner of the first two races Gareth Evans set off boldly at the front of the field with Andrew Pickett in tow. Pickett was struggling in road shoes; after 10 minutes of running it was just Evans out on his own and the Larkfield man was never caught. 17 year old Laurie Probert (Maidstone Harriers) had a sensational run and was in touch with the leaders throughout and Clayton Barrett (Medway & Mstn) moved up through the field in the second half to secure the runner up spot, a minute behind Evans.

Behind them, a quartet of over 40's men battled it out. Steve Roberts (Paddock Wood) was the leading "master" with a kilometre to go when Andy Green (Dartford RR) made his move. Then in the last 400 metres Simon Hesketh (Larkfield) overtook the two of them to take the honours. Ray Pearce (Istead) was the leading 50 plus in 20th place while the evergreen Phil Wallace was first over 60 man in 33rd place.

In the ladies' race, Paddock Wood's Maria Heslop was successful for the second time this season with a winning margin of one minute over clubmate Laura Burton. Larkfield's Nicola Groom was in touch throughout the first half of the race but faded to 3rd place in the closing stages.

Barbara Wenman (Canterbury Harriers) was leading over 50 lady in 8th place, while Paddock Wood's Annie Ross was the first over 55.

In the team race, Larkfield were successful for the third race running and improved their lead at the top of the table to 4 points ahead of Dartford Roadrunners (once again with the largest number of runners and the most success in the raffle draw). Canterbury Harriers lie a further 2 points adrift.

Once again, thanks to everyone for making the potentially hazardous journey out to Deal for this race – which will no doubt stick in the memory for some time. And particular thanks for the members of Deal Tri (especially Tim and Clare Wiseman) for their efforts on the day.

Just a word on the juniors (which I tend to forget) – 19 finished the 2 mile circuit with 11 year old Caine Moir coming home the clear winner. Full junior results and league positions will be sent out shortly.

Next race is at Knole Park, Sevenoaks on Sunday 19th December.

Rob Bright