

Oxleas Woods – 21st February 2011

It was a great day out for the mudlarks – particularly for those who feel the urge to come back from a run caked in a least an inch of mud on the legs ! The Oxleas Woods course lived up to its reputation as our toughest venue as the combined effects of recent rain prior to our final meeting left at least half of the course coated in liquid goo.

Abdi Madar guesting for Thanet Roadrunners made light work of the conditions and led the 260 strong field from start to finish. Andrew Pickett looked capable of picking him off in the early stages, but faded on the second lap and was passed by Anthony Jackson who is still improving as a distance runner and finished second overall.

The battle for the individual championship went down to the final fixture with Clayton Barrett and Gareth Evans both still in contention. On this occasion, Barrett finished the stronger with the noisiest finish of the day in third place, almost a minute and 2 places clear of Evans. However (and this may be controversial) our decision to score the championship on the best 4 completed races rather than the best 5 of 6 has robbed Barrett of the championship by just 3 hundredths of one percent. Gareth Evans, with the benefit of 3 straight wins at the start of the season, is therefore crowned the men's champion for the first time.

On a day best suited to younger legs, David Hall was the leading over 40 in 8th place; Ray Pearce was the best over 50 in 26th and Phil Wallace led the over 60's home in 36th.

Two leading ladies fought it out for victory with Maria Heslop overcoming the challenge from Annabelle Stearns towards the end. Gravesend Roadrunners showed what strength they have in the ladies' section nowadays by finishing three amongst the top five. However, Maria was so far ahead in the individual championship that she was unable to be caught.

In the team race, Larkfield registered their 4th combined win of the season and hence take the championship by a margin of 4 points over Dartford Roadrunners. The ladies' team race saw a second consecutive triumph for Gravesend Roadrunners, but it was the Dartford club which held on to their unassailable lead to take the championship by 11 points over Canterbury and Paddock Wood.

My thanks to Plumstead Road Runners for their efforts putting on a great race in difficult conditions. and also to Dave Lindsey and his time for recording the times at the finish. Full championship positions will be published later this week.

And so we come to the end of another season – somewhat foreshortened by the intervention of Snow in December and January so we have one race less to count. Thanks to everyone for their support once again and hope you will continue to do so in future years.

One final event to come – our end of season relay will take place at Avery Hill Park, New Eltham on 20th March followed by presentations (Senior and Junior) and a free buffet. The relay teams comprise 4 men + 1 lady and each runs a leg around the park of 2 miles. You can enter as many teams as you wish and make up unofficial teams if required – further details will follow in due course.

Rob Bright