

The Northern Athletics Inaugural 10K Championship



The Ribble Valley 10K was selected on a warm summer's day, somewhat in contrast to the snow-filled and unusable car park at the start. Blackburn Harriers had pulled out all the stops to ensure this road race (held on closed roads) went ahead whilst other races in the area, including cross country events, were being cancelled.

With the championship entries closing a week beforehand, Tom Lancashire's late entry could not be included, but there was still a class field entered for it in both the men's and women's fields.

Tom Lancashire led the open race from start to finish, setting a blistering pace, which pulled the top eight finishers into a sub 30 minutes time. Ben Fish from host club Blackburn won the NA championship event, but only by 1 second, from the fast finishing Liverpool Harrier, Jonny Mellor, with Altrincham's Matt Barnes a whole 5 seconds behind in third place! These 3 were quickly followed by Luke Cragg, Dave Norman and Andi Jones.

The first 3 men's teams were:

- 1st: Blackburn Harriers
- 2nd: Salford Harriers
- 3rd: Liverpool Harriers

In the women's race last year's winner, Helen Clitheroe, was amongst the pre-race favourites along with Katie Ingram, Victoria Wilkinson and Rebecca Robinson. Unlike the men, Helen was a full 58 seconds clear of second placed Katie Ingram, whilst 3rd placed Victoria Wilkinson was a further minute behind second place. Ladies' team results were:

- 1st: Blackburn Harriers



Despite the weather, the organisation was superb producing a classic 10K road race, particularly in the men's field. An indicator of the fast times on this undulating course was that the top 50 athletes were inside 32.41, with 100th position having the time of 36.08!



Report Ken Smith

Photos Elileen Ingham

Winning Blackburn Men's Team at Ribble Valley 10k 2009 with Northern Athletics Preident John Driscoll



Winning Blackburn Ladies Team at Ribble Valley 10k 2009 with John Driscoll