

Northern Athletics 6 Stage Road Relay 26 September 2011

This year, for the 2nd time in 5 years the Northern Athletics Autumn Road Relays were held at Birchwood Warrington, and again attracted a large number of entries. The attraction of Birchwood is simple, flat course, traffic free in parts, on a quiet industrial estate, and just over a mile from the M62. The course remained in the same location, but had been much improved from last time, with the held given by MEPC to close roads for the duration of the event.

The senior men race was always going to be interesting after Derby A.C last year broke the three times winning streak of Leeds City. Throw in the upsurge of Morpeth, 12 stage winners earlier this year, and the proximity of Liverpool and Manchester and the always strong North East contingent and the race was always going to be close. The 2 lap, 6k course is compact with good visibility of the race around the scenic lake, and the change over area.

Only one team of the 116 who entered did not start, and there were 93 complete teams that finished. The fastest leg of the day was produced on leg 2 by Liverpool Harrier Johnny Mellor, 17.18 minutes, almost equalled by James Wilkinson for Leeds City on the final glory leg, when he clocked 17.19 seconds to win and restore Leeds City as Northern Athletics 6 stage road relay champions.

The times of each team are a clear indication to how well they finished. Leeds City had 4 sub 18 minutes legs, 1 sub 19, and only one 19 min plus leg. The second team Morpeth, had only 3 sub 18 minute legs, 2 sub 19, and 1 leg 19 minutes plus., and 3rd team Derby A.C. produced 2 sub 18 minute legs, and 4 sub 19 minutes. Consistent fast running by any standard, and with just 9 seconds between first and second place. In 4th place were Liverpool Harriers, followed 12 seconds later by Salford who were almost 4 minutes ahead of 6th place Gateshead.

The strength of the top clubs becomes apparent when you see the positions of their B teams. Liverpool Harriers B were 9th followed by Salford B in 10th and Leeds City B 16th . Leeds City C team finished 35th, whilst the Andy Jones less Salford finished 5 complete teams.

However it is not just about the top team, what do the new clubs think about the event? One new club was Tyne Bridge Harriers, and they brought down 2 teams to the event and thought it was a great experience. Accrington Road Runners, at their first championship road relay said how there was a terrific atmosphere which they had never experienced before, and totally enjoyed.

The top 25 A teams will be invited to the National 6 stage road relay, as well as the 3 qualifying B teams of Leeds City, Salford, and Liverpool..

RESULTS.

- 1) Leeds City 1 48.39
- 2) Morpeth 1.48.48
- 3) Derby A.C. 1 49.45

[Full Results](#)

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Leeds City AC
2012 Northern
Athletics 6
Stage
Champions

*Report Ken
Smith*

Photo Eileen Ingham

Photos from the Championship may be found on

[Darkstarphotos](#) and [HSphotos](#)