

## Northern Athletic Cross Country Relays Report 4 October 2011



The second running of the Start Fitness and Balfour Beatty supported cross-country relays saw 32 teams line up in the senior 4x2-mile contest and it was Steve Hepples (Loftus and Whitby) who reached the first changeover curtesy of the fastest time of the day (10:00). Stockport (Garry Bristow) were in second place followed by Kingston upon Hull's Kristopher Lecher, James Bailey (Sale) and Leeds City, who had Chris Birchall on the opening leg. Stockport (Jack Morris) moved to the head of affairs by the second

changeover with Niall Brooks (Sale) moving into second place ahead of Border as James Douglas moved the Carlisle-based club up to third from sixth. Leeds City had Roscoe, the only member of the quartet who was in the team which won the six-stage road relay title in Warrington the previous week, who improved one place to fourth before passing on to Gordon Benson. The biggest mover on leg two was Simon Horsefield who moved East Cheshire up to 10th from 22nd with the stage's fastest time.

Loftus and Whitby, who were eventually disqualified for running Hepples as a second-claim athlete, moved out of the picture despite a decent run by veteran John Hunter. Benson, who was fastest in the under-17 contest 12 months previously, moved Leeds City into pole position for the first time with the penultimate stage's fastest time as Stockport (Dan James) slipped to second and Harry Earl consolidated Border's third place. In last year's event Leeds City - Roscoe was also in their team - took the title, finishing 15



seconds ahead of Stockport and they started off the final stage this time round 20 seconds clear of their main rivals. However, things were to pan out much closer as Stockport's Andrew Nixon set about cutting into the deficit of Leeds' final athlete Martin Gosling. Nixon was the fastest on the course but the gap, albeit down to just five seconds at the finish, was just too much to make up. Border's Kevin Bell consolidated third place for the Cumbrian's, running just one second slower than Nixon.

*Photo The winning Leeds City AC men with Amy Turner of event sponsors Balfour Beattie Utility Solutions Limited*

### Women

The women's three-stage contest over the same two-mile circuit, saw Durham City's Rosie Smith produce the run of the day on the first leg to record 11:13 which was to prove 40 seconds quicker than any of her rivals. Smith, who won the bronze medal in the

Northern Athletics Cross-Country Championships in Sunderland in January, was 41 seconds clear of Holmfirth's Katie Walshaw at the changeover with Leeds City's Alex Gosling a further six seconds adrift in third place. Leeds City moved into the lead on stage two thanks to Claire Duck's effort as Helen Berry kept Holmfirth in second place ahead of Channah Patton of Hallamshire - who swept the board 12 months ago - as Durham City (Katherine O'Mahony) slipped back to fifth.

Current Northern Cross-Country champion, Susan Partridge, was given the task of running the glory leg and though easing back into competitive mode after a seasonal break, and she extended Leeds City's advantage to bring the team home nearly two minutes clear of

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Holmfirth (Claire Leaver) with Kim Simpson bringing Durham City back into the picture to claim the bronze awards. *Photo Rosie Smith of Durham fastest time of the day*

### Under 17 Men

Hallamshire's Tom Baines led at the end of the first stage of the under-17 men's 3x2.3k event but his fastest overall time of the day meant little as he was the team's only representative. Sale, who won the road relay championship the previous week, were left in the lead at the changeover after Ryan Moore's first leg effort and the Manchester outfit was never headed after that. East Cheshire (Chris Middleton) were in third place followed by Halifax (Bradley Traviss) and Adam Oxley, of last year's champions, Kingston upon Hull. Alex Burchill extended Sale's advantage on leg two over East Cheshire (Joe Steward) and Jerome Castelow, of Halifax. Chris McGahan brought Sale home for a comfortable victory as Halifax (Max Wharton) moved into silver medal position ahead of East Cheshire (Callum Dinsdale).

### Under 17 Women

The under-17 women's contest, also 3x2.3k, was won by Hallamshire who were lying in fourth place at the first changeover. Carlisle Aspatria's Abbie Hetherington stamped her authority on proceedings by producing the fastest time of the day on the first leg to come home eight seconds ahead of Jessica Lonsdale (Kingston upon Hull). Vale Royal (Tessa McCormick) were in third place as Fiona Bell, who was fastest in last year's event, handing over in fourth place for Hallamshire. Hallamshire moved through to pole position on leg two thanks to Hannah Fletcher's efforts with Vale Royal (Jade Evans) in second place with Kingston upon Hull (Katie Michaels) in third as Carlisle Aspatria (Emma Dutton) slipped back to eighth. Natalie Hackett, with the joint second fastest time of the day, extended Hallamshire's advantage at the line with Vale Royal (Amelia Pettit), who were third last year, consolidating second place this time round.

City of Sheffield (Eve Pound) moved the local club into a medal position for the first time to finish third and hold off the fast-finishing Charlotte Kennedy of Carlisle and Aspatria.

### Under 15 Boys

Warrington, who finished runners-up behind Trafford in the road relays, retained the under-15 3x2k boys title but it was a close-run thing after a fortuitous move into the lead on the final leg. Vale Royal led at the first changeover thanks to Elliott Bowker's third fastest overall time. Pendle (Darius Boardman) were in second place with Warrington (Daniel Evans), third. Vale Royal (Tim Morris) continued at the head of affairs on stage two with Liam Burthem moving Warrington into second place ahead of East Cheshire (Robert McCarthy). However, Vale Royal didn't have a third runner which left Matthew Wigelsworth out in front for Warrington and though he ran one of the fastest times of the day he was being closed down all the time by City of York's Josh Schofield and Preston's Patrick Dever. In the end Wigelsworth held on to win by 11 seconds with Schofield, who had set off in sixth place, moving through to second as Dever produced the fastest time of the day to bring Preston into bronze position after taking over in eighth place.

### Under 15 Girls

Vale Royal went one better over the 3x2k course than last year when they lifted the under-15 girls championship to add to the title they won in Warrington the previous week. They were in front from leg when when Jessica Parsons brought the team home 11 seconds clear of Rotherham (Charlotte Dodds) with Liverpool in third place. Amy Hinchly consolidated Vale Royal's position on leg two with Karley Jarrett moving Stockport up to second from eighth and Harriot Knowles-Jones moving Warrington from 12th to third. Katie Gerrard brought Vale Royal home to a comfortable 50-seconds success with Elizabeth Brackenridge-Jones finishing second for Stockport and Elizabeth Smith third for Warrington. As she did in 2010,

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Bronwen Owen produced the days fastest time but, after taking over in 12th place asking to get amongst the medals was a huge task though she did manage to move through to fourth place.

### Under 13 Boys

Vale Royal also came out on top in the under-13 boys 3x1.8k contest. City of Sheffield (Alfie Manthorpe) led the field on the first stage with the day's fastest time to finish ahead of East Cheshire (George Lewis) and Kingston upon Hull (Baldvin Magnusson). Things all changed on leg two with Preston (Andrew Moffat) moving into the lead ahead of Kingston upon Hull's Connor Bingham and Vale Royal's Robert Weir. Josh Hinchly moved Vale Royal into the lead on the final leg, bringing them home 10 seconds clear of Leeds City's Dominic Peterson who had moved through from sixth. Preston (Ethan Darr) finished another five seconds adrift in third place.

### Under 13 Girls

The under-13 girls event produced the same medal winning teams as at Warrington but in a different order. Liverpool, who finished in third place seven days earlier, came out on top this time round pushing gold medallists, Hallamshire into second place with Holmfirth, runners-up last week, having to be content with the bronze medals. The Merseysiders were ahead from the gun with Anna Rowe posting the day's fastest time to hand over in first place ahead of East Cheshire (Lily McGuinness) and Hallamshire's Imani Wilson. Emily Gray continued to cut out a lone furrow at the head of affairs for Liverpool on leg two as Mary McCarthy moved Hallamshire into second place ahead of of Holmfirth's Erica Byram. The positions stayed the same on the final leg with Molly A Thompson extending Liverpool's lead to 14 seconds over Hallamshire at the finish with Holmfirth a further 23 seconds back in third spot.

### Under 11s

In the non-championship under-11 events of 3x1.5k, Wakefield won the boys relay finishing ahead of Stockport and Rotherham with Stockport's Fabio Corsi the fastest while the girls victors were Manchester who finished clear of Rotherham and Halifax. Manchester duo Eleanor Kenny (5:21) and Megan Taylor (5:24) were the quickest. While not what you would normally get when you turn up for a cross-country event, no wellies required, the Sheffield Running Club did an excellent job and should be congratulated on providing an excellent day's sport for competitors and spectators alike!



*Leeds City AC claimed the Women's title to go alongside the Men's title*

*Report Bill McGuirk*

*Photos Eileen Ingham & [David Hewitson](#)*