

Northern Athletics 10k Championships 27 December 2011

The race started promptly at 10:30am on the traffic-free roads, getting off to a fast start. Going through the first 1k, there was a strong group of 20 athletes and by the 2k mark, the leading contenders Stevenson, Mellor, Brownlee, Ford, Finch and Abu-Rezeq were already making their intentions known.



At 3k the leading group, which also included Hurst, Wiles and Deakin, was down to 15. At the 5k mark, the athletes were temporarily out of sight, and by the time they reappeared the pattern had completely changed, with Mellor, Stevenson and Brownlee going clear by 15 metres as gaps started to open up behind them.

By 8k, it was left to Mellor and Brownlee to fight it out, with the World Champion triathlete shadowing every move the Merseysider made.

Going into the last kilometre, Stevenson was working hard to pull back, whilst Brownlee began to struggle and with 800m to go, the strong pace eventually told as Mellor (runner-up in 2009) pulled away to win in 29.10. Stevenson chased Brownlee all the way to the line to finish 3rd overall in 29.17, but 2nd in the NA Championships. Andy Wiles was 5th overall, but filled the NA bronze medal position in 29.46, after holding off World Cross Country representative Derek Hawkins.

In the women's race, the first NA lady was always the popular Salford Harrier, Tessa Walker, became the 2011 NA 10K road champion, in a time of 35.51. Close on her heels throughout the race was Liverpool Harrier, Maria Barrett, who finished just 6 seconds behind Tessa, but was fiercely holding off the fast finishing Stockport Harrier, Sarah Lomas, who finished in 35.59. These 3 were almost a minute clear of Rachel

Thompson of Horwich.

Medals again presented by the ever popular NA President, Bill McGuirk.

Results:

Men:

- 1st: Johnny Mellor, Liverpool Harriers 29.10
- 2nd: Ricky Stevenson, New Marske Harriers 29.17
- 3rd: Andrew Wiles, New Marske Harriers 29.46

1st Team: Altrincham & District 25 points

2nd Team: New Marske Harriers 26points

3rd Team: Sale Harriers 40 points

Women:

1st: Tessa Walker, Salford Harriers 35.51

2nd: Maria Barrett, Liverpool Harriers 35.57

3rd: Sarah Lomas, Stockport Harriers 35.59

1st Team: Blackburn Harriers 43 points

2nd Team: Wesham Road Runners 75 points

3rd Team: Preston Harriers 79 points

Report Ken Smith

Photos Eileen Ingham

Top photo Johnny Mellor