**Northern Athletics Combined Autumn Relay 2023**

**Location** Birkenhead Park Wirral

**Date** Sunday 24th September 2023.

Birkenhead Park is a superb location for road relays. Wide, good condition, tarmac paths, with plenty of choice to arrange distances around this flat park. The weather was also favourable with a constant threat of rain, which fortunately never materialised.

**Under 13 Boys:** Two of last year’s podium teams were again on the podium with just Wirral slipping down to 5th position. The lead changed hands on each of the 3 stages but it was Liverpool’s Lucas Guyett on the last leg who produced the fastest leg of the day, 11.05, to overtake both Warrington and Preston and win the gold medal.

Results

1. Liverpool Harriers 33.58 2) Warrington A.C. 34.18
2. Preston Harriers 34.49

**Under 13 Girls**: Only Birtley from last year event managed a podium position dropping from Gold to Bronze. It was Rotherham, Haley Bacon, who were judged to be first across the line at the end of the first leg, but given the same time as Birtley’s Nell Graham.

After that it was Warriors Pentathlon who took control of the race as first Evie Beddow hit the front on the 2nd leg with the 2nd fastest time of 11.11, and then Isobel Beddow ran 1 second faster on the final leg as Warriers won from Sale, with Birtley third.

Results

1. Warriors Pentathlon 34.40 2) Sale Harriers 35.42
2. Birtley A.C 36.08

**Under 15 Boys:** Fastest time of the day, and only athlete to break 10 minutes was Salford’s Evan Grime, 9.52 as he moved his team up14 placesinto 4th place but they fell away after that, finishing 15th.

It was left to their near neighbours Trafford to hit the front on leg 2 a position they retained through to the finish, with Southport & Waterloo 2nd and Rotherham 3rd

Results 1) Trafford A.C. 31.01 2) Southport Waterloo A.C 31.41

1. Rotherham Harriers 31.47

**Under 15 Girls**: Last year’s bronze medal winners Liverpool Harriers turned those medals gold this year, with 5 team in the event. They had 2 out of the top 4 fastest times and only Wakefield on leg 1 got in front of them. Lincoln Wellington pushed them hard on the final leg with Ellarose Whitworth producing the only sub 11 minutes time, 10.50

Results 1) Liverpool Harriers 33.50. 2) Lincoln Wellington 34.05

1. Sale Harriers 34.17

**Under 17 Men**: Three different club headed each stage of the race but it was the blue vests of Blackburn Harriers, under the watchful eye of George Davies, that were at the front at the finish, with Daniel Smith recording the 2nd fastest time 11.44.

Leg 1 had Rotherham at the front with Jonson Hughes’s fastest time of the day 11.36, then City of York on leg 2 before Blackburn Harriers overtook them to win by just 3 seconds, with Morpeth passing Wirral for 3rd place.

Results 1) Blackburn Harriers 36.09 2) City of York 36.12

1. Morpeth Harriers 36.32

**Under 17 Women**: The major surprise of the day with the first 4 team to finish on leg 2 all being disqualified for going the wrong way on the course. Leg 1 had the black vest of Rotherham Harriers at the front with the fastest time of the day from Isobella Waugh 13.21 closely followed by the 4 disqualified clubs, Salford A & B, Warrington and Derby.

The disqualifications resulted in a last leg where Rotherham maintaining their lead and went on to win the gold medal, Warriors Pentathlon moved past Vale Royal for Silver

Results 1) Rotherham Harriers 41.54 2) Warriors Pentathlon 44.39

1. Vale Royal 45.14.

**Senior Women**: It was the same 3 clubs on the podium as in 2022just a different order, with Leeds City regaining their crown from Salford who finished 3rd with Vale Royal 2nd, Hallamshire 4th, Rotherham 5th, Liverpool 6th.

Hallamshire were the first club back on the first leg with Lauren Hayes producing the fastest time of the day 16.13, Warriors Pentathlon 2nd and Leeds 3rd. However it was on leg 2 that the Leeds machine took over. Eleanor Curran, the slowest of the Leeds City quartet, moved two places to the front and that was the competition over for the day. The Leeds team had 3 of the top 7 fastest times for another superb winning performance. Salford held 2nd place for legs 2 and 3 but Vale Royal’s Holly Weedall, 16.41 and 4th fastest, who overtook Salford’s Samantha Mason to give Vale Royal 2nd place by 29 seconds.

Results 1) Leeds City A.C 1.07.32 2) Vale Royal 1.09.14

1. Salford Harriers & A.C. 1.09.43

**Senior Men**: Championship holderLeeds City usually play the long game at Championship relays and Sunday was no different, with their 2 fastest legs being on leg 4 and 6.

The early leaders were City of York for the first 2 legs, Blackburn doing well in 2nd place after the 1st leg. Leeds slowly moved up being 4 th on that 2nd leg. Leg 2 also saw Warrington A.C hit their highest position with Brandon Quinton moving them up 3 places to 4th with 14.52 and 3rd fastest time of the leg.

Leg 3 saw an inspired run by Liverpool Harrier Jonny Mellor, 14.01, to move those famous yellow vests up 5 places to 1st. Mellor was however not the fastest time on leg 3. That belongs to Rory Leonard, who moved Morpeth up an astonishing 11 places, to 3rd with the only sub 14 minute time of the day, 13.55. Leeds of course were not far behind in 4th, and ready to strike after the fireworks of the third stage.

Stage 4 was when it happened and Leeds City hit the front as Richard Allen moved them up 3 places to top spot, Liverpool 2nd Morpeth 3rd and City of York 4th.

Leeds with Graham Rush on 5th leg and then Linton Taylor on the glory leg were never going to relinquish their championship crown, winning by 1 min 27 seconds from Liverpool Harriers with Hallamshire pushing out Morpeth from 3rd spot on the last leg Vale Royal 5th and Salford 6th.

Results 1) Leeds City 1.28.15 2) Liverpool Harriers 1.29.42

3) Hallamshire Harriers 1.30.05

It was good to see the championship return of Tom Lancashire for Bolton, as he finished 18thon the 1st leg.

Just as the Leeds City machine continues its winning ways, the stunning individual performances of both Rory Leonard and Jonny Mellor, were highlights of the 6 stage event.

The top clubs have now got their invitations to the ERRA Road relay on October 7th in Sutton Park.

Leeds men have finished 2nd behind Aldershot in the last two ERRA 6 stage championships, last year by just 5 seconds, with Leeds women finished 5th in last year’’’s 4 stage ERRA Championship.