

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross Country League 2021/2022 Season Division One Report

Saturday 15 January 2022

Host Club: University of Birmingham athletics and XC

Venue: Warley Woods

Facilities

The venue has no changing facilities, but clubs were advised of this in advance and most will be aware due to this being a frequent venue for division one. Porto loos were supplied and this seemed sufficient for the men's league. A catering van was on site to provide hot drinks to competitors.

Car parking

The Park has a large perimeter which provides scope for car parking, competitors were advised still of the limited extent of this and requested to take steps to share vehicles where possible. Competitors were advised of the areas to avoid tensions with local residents. I saw no issues relating to parking on the day.

Registration

Ray Morgan was at the venue early and set up the tent for athlete registration for the race while the course was still being erected adjacent to the finish, ably assistant by Bridget.

Weather

The weather was kind to us with only a mild breeze and clear resulting in a not unpleasant temperature and good visibility compared to other divisions venues.

Course 1 x 1k + 3 x 2.7k laps

I arrived early around 2 hrs before the race while the course was still being set up and walked the course. The course starts at the base of bowl just off the tree line and goes away from the tree line towards the road entrance, turning right up the hill and entering the woods with a small anti clockwise loop, on exit of the woods the initial line passed over concrete stumps, which I asked to be amended. The course then followed the outline of the park clockwise back towards the tree line by the finish and then loops back on itself towards the road entrance again, parallel with the path, before looping back along the base on the bowl parallel with the finish and entering the woods. The course then climbed through the woods heading left as is snaked through. The surface was to be expected with tree roots being the only real hazard, with those which presented the most problem being marked. I asked for the course to be amended around a low tree and we ensured a man hole cover just before exit from the woods was marked. The course then descended down the hill before turning left and taking a line back up the hill to run parallel with the tree line before descending to the start.

Marshals

We discussed key areas for marshals as we walked the course and was assured marshals would cover these key points. There were no reports from athletes of any issues, so a job well done.

Start / Finish / Funnel

The start was adjacent to the finish area, Ray ensured the league flags were used to mark the start line, there was no assembly line, although we had sufficient start marshals to assemble the athletes a metre back from the line and to brief them.

I requested that the finish funnel be extended on arrival as it had only been roughly marked out at that point and the length proved valuable in the busy periods.

First Aid

There were three first aiders in attendance, and there were not incidents they had to attend to my knowledge. They turned up well ahead of the start and set up adjacent to the finish.

Officials

The designated non hosting clubs all provided their volunteers who all signed in before the 2pm deadline. All volunteers carried out their duties as requested and Ray was able to pair our more experienced officials with volunteers on each of the results boards.

All appointed officials turned up and carried out their usual roles as requested by myself on the day with no issues.

Race

The race was won by George Beardmore for Worcester AC in 28:47 with a much closer race than previously. Joe Hudson from University of Birmingham was second, with the University of Birmingham doing a superb job of packing there scoring 6 close together with 5 in the top 10 and all within the top 20. There were 287 finishers with approximately 10 athletes pulling out as the race progressed. I unfortunately had to disqualify one competitor for not wearing a league issued number. It is important that under UKA rule T5.9 and league rule 15.1 that competitors seek a number where they lose it from the divisional secretary, this is unfortunately the second season running that an athlete has had to be disqualified under this rule in division 1.

I would like to thank Ray Morgan and Bridget Urch for helping me get verified results so quickly, which I am sure all athletes appreciated.

Chris Hitchman
Division One League Race Referee

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League

Referee's Report, Division 2

Saturday 15 January 2022

Host Club: Spa Striders

Venue and facilities

The venue was the same as used by Spa Striders in previous seasons: the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park in south Warwickshire between Warwick and Banbury. Apart from some public toilets (additional toilets were hired in) and car parks, it is an open area of hillsides with no other facilities. The host club arranged for tents for registration and officials refreshments and there were mobile catering vans for athletes and spectators. The access roads are steep and narrow but fortunately were ice free, despite the overnight temperatures; the host club arranged a oneway system for arrivals and departures to reduce disruption. There was a separate designated car park for officials and marshals.

Prior Information

Clubs and League officials were sent well in advance a description and map of the course, directions and a map for travel to the venue, and advice on facilities and parking.

I was also sent a copy of the England Athletics Race Licence, which was displayed on the day, and a copy of the Risk Assessment.

Weather

It was cold but dry with little wind. On arrival at the venue in the morning for the course inspection it was quite misty but this dispersed by the time of the races.

First Aid

There were two qualified and equipped first aiders in attendance with a 4x4 vehicle and an ambulance to act as a treatment room if required. They arrived well in advance of the first race. Happily there were no serious injuries: one sprained ankle and a bruised hip from a fall.

The Course

The basic course was the same as in previous years, though with the steepest of the descents from previous years avoided and an addition to make up the required distances – about 5.8 miles for the men (a short lap followed by three large laps). There are several mostly short but steep and testing climbs across open hill sides. The surface is grassland which was soft or rough

in places but with no substantial areas of mud. One short crossing of a road each lap was covered by matting.

To check the additions to the course from previous years I, together with the Referee for the women's race, Richard Carney, carried out an inspection of them in mid-December accompanied by Chris McKeown, the Spa Striders Captain, and some other members of the host club in case we had to advise on changes that would have been difficult to make on the day. We advised that one section through trees was best avoided as the course in that section was narrowed by the trees and there were low branches and protruding tree roots; an alternative in this area was agreed. In the event nearer the day Spa Striders on inspecting the course found that the wet weather in late December and early January had made the remaining section through the trees too muddy concealing tree roots, so a further diversion was made into more open areas.

On the morning I and the Women's League's Referee and Assistant Referee together with Chris McKeown and other members of the host club walked the course after it had been marked out. The course was well marked with stakes and tape with a good number of Marshals, though, in view of the misty conditions, we asked for some additional stakes and for some of the Marshals to be re-positioned to ensure that runners would be in no doubt of the direction of the course had the poor visibility persisted. In fact the mist lifted before the first race. Other than that, only a small number of minor changes had to be made to the marking and a few rabbit holes flattened; Spa Striders had done a good job on a tough course in difficult conditions.

The start line and an assembly line in its rear were marked, though it had to be widened to some extent to cope with the number of athletes. Similarly the finish line was also marked and the funnel was of adequate length. An area for the officials to work was taped off.

Officials

All League and club-nominated officials attended in good time and carried out their duties. I used the Assistant Referee from the women's event, Andrew Maiden, as my Chief Judge and several other officials from the Women's League offered their services.

The League President, Noel Mckakly, and the League Secretary, Carolyn Franks, were also present and I used Noel's experience to be the Starter.

The Race

The race proceeded smoothly and I had no protests or disqualifications to deal with. It was won by some margin by Ian Allen (Spa Striders) from Dylan Gillett (Telford AC) and Chris Perrin (Cannock & Stafford AC). There were 237 finishers (and a few that failed to finish on this testing

course), continuing the slightly upward trend from the previous two races. The final competitor finished in 78.39, 15 minutes after the penultimate finisher.

In the team result the winner was Royal Sutton Coldfield from Kenilworth and Stratford, giving an overall position in the promotion slots as Kenilworth from RSC and Halesowen. There were several changes of fortune in the club positions but in the relegation slots Bournville remain at the foot of the table, then for the other two slots it is close between four clubs: it will make for an interesting last match. The full results are on the web site.

The results process went smoothly with the two pairs of Judge/Recorders agreeing on positions completely (well done to them!) and with the computer listing. Again there was a slight delay in publishing the results as the download from the watch failed and thus the times had to be entered by hand. Nevertheless, the results were on the web site by late evening.

Rob Mulgrue

Referee

16/1/22

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross Country League

Droitwich High School Droitwich 15-01-2022

Host Club Droitwich Athletics Club

Referee's Report

Pre-Event

The host club provided detailed travel instructions together with car parking arrangements and course maps/details, well in advance of the meeting. Car parking for the officials was at the school and for the competitors at the sports centre on the other side of the road. Both about 300m from the start finish area.

This was also the venue for the Midland Women's Cross Country League

On arrival

I arrived at approx. 10.40, met with Martin Smith (host club) and Anne Kelshall (assistant referee Women's League).

Weather conditions, overnight frost had made the ground firm, there was no wind.

The course

It was 2 laps of the sports field followed by 3 large laps finish back in the sports field. The course was a mix of shortish grass where overtaking was possible and a wooded area which was mostly single track and included a challenging hill. There was a tarmacked bridge to cross which had been covered with matting.

Course inspection

While walking the course several tree roots were marked with white paint, a note was made of an area with over hanging branches, they were later removed.

The "marking out" could have been improved with extra posts on some of the corners (if they had been available). Finish funnel was of an adequate length, but there was no exclusion zone for the protection of the officials, their duties were hindered to a small extent by spectators and team managers.

Course Marshalls

The host club provided a large number of marshals all issued with high vis vests.

Race HQ

This was at the High School in the gymnasium, changing rooms and toilet facilities were also there.

There was a hot food vendor close to the start and finish area and vouchers were given to the officials.

First aid

Was provided by R. S. First Aid. Their base was close to the finish area, which included a tent/marque, a 4 wheeled vehicle. All first aiders were in smart uniforms.

There were 3 instances reported during the meeting, all falls with minor abrasions.

Officials

I asked Graham Allen to be the Officials Secretary.

Noel Butler was the Chief Judge for the meeting

Apart from one club all officials reported on time.

Only 5 clubs had contacted the referee/division secretary in advance with details of their helpers/officials prior to Wednesday evening.

Carolyn Franks sent an email to the clubs who had not forwarded names of their helpers/officials. Two clubs did respond as a result.

All clubs did provide a helper/official on the day.

The "Team Briefing" at 2 o'clock, nearly half of the officials were officiating for the Women's League as well, this resulted in reduced numbers at the briefing. They all reported for duty prior to the athletes finishing.

While the race was in progress I had several offers of help to officiate from various club members who were spectating.

The race

The front of the race was dominated by Weston Tempo with 7 in the first 10 finishers.

No issues were reported about club vests or head phones.

The first 3 finishers:

Dom James 34.05 Weston Tempo

Dan Owen 35.46 Weston Tempo

Charlie Jones 36.36 Weston Tempo

Last finisher 70.32

266 runners finished; this was the largest number this season.

Weston Tempo are favourites for promotion, but there are 4 teams in with a chance to fill the other 2 promotion places.

Glen Lock

Referee