

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross Country League 2021/2022 Season

Division One Report

Saturday 19 February 2022

Host Club: Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club

Venue: Newbold Comyn

The race was held in conjunction with the Midland Women's cross country League

Facilities

The venue has changing facilities, these were larger for the men than the women due to age of the building, clubs were advised of facilities in advance and most will be aware due to this being a frequent venue for division one. Six Porto loos were supplied and this seemed sufficient for both the men's and women's leagues given the additional facilities in the building. Hot drinks and snacks were provided for athletes and officials in the pavilion.

Car parking

The council has extended parking provision within the park since we last used this venue and the club advised of suitable places adjacent to the park which would not cause issues with local residents beforehand in the instructions. I saw no issues relating to parking on the day.

Registration

Ray Morgan was at the venue early and set up registration in the pavilion, he only erected the tent later to provide a suitable venue for his finish / results activities due the finish not being adjacent to the pavilion

Weather

Our run of good weather for division 1 fixtures came to an abrupt end, although it was dry for the race itself, we experienced a significant downpour on the morning which made for a very wet course inspection and very muddy course.

Course 1 x 1 x 3.5k + 1 x 3.2k + 1 x 3.3k lap

I met Richard the referee for the women's race and Jo the assistant referee at 11am to commence our course walk in the wet, we were joined by the clerk of the course from Leamington Nick Tawney and Mary Hodges from the women's league. The course yet again utilised the old golf course extensively, located in the south end of the park. From the start, the course heads south east along a fairway, before turning and heading north west few a fairway's heading towards the beacon. Along this section there are a few small ditches and a gradual climb. This turns into a steeper climb around the beacon before descending before turning south east again, nearly completing an anticlockwise loop. The course then crosses a path and exits the golf course onto the football fields. There were a number of paths crossing well covered with chippings. After navigating these it heads towards the ditch, I agreed this should be removed due to the volume of water and condition of banks. On the paths through the woods, tree roots were well marked even though these should be expected. On existing the woods there is a complex junction where runners heading to the finish and continuing split. Those who continue cross back onto the golf course to complete the main loop. Conditions made the course a lot slower than previous years as reflected in the leaders time.

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 in an adjacent field to the finish area, the start line and assembly line were well marked with white paint with the ends staked at taped and marked with banners as well as flags, the assembly line allowed the start team to line the athletes up for me to brief, before we walked the athletes forward and Dave Ashbourne (Leamington chair) started the race with a gun.

The finish funnel was well roped with an area either side for officials, the finish funnel was 45 metres which was ideal as we saw no backing up to the line. One of the funnel marshals did stand in front of the camera on a few occasions. Briefing the funnel marshals to no move forwards of the camera needs to be incorporated.

First Aid

There were four first aiders in attendance with two 4x4 vehicles, and whilst there were a few minor incident sin the women's race, there were no incidents they had to attend in the men's race 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. Co-ordinating our officials with the women's league before the day allowed Ray to ensure experienced officials were paired on the boards with less experienced.

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 34:22 with a much closer race than previously. Tomer Tarragano from University of Birmingham was a very close second only a second behind. There were 217 finishers with approximately 3 athletes pulling out as the race progressed. I unfortunately had to disqualify one competitor for not wearing a club vest.

I would like to thank Ray Morgan for yet another outstanding effort in getting the result out quickly and his support this season.

Chris Hitchman
Division One League Race Referee

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League

Referee's Report, Division2

Saturday 19 February 2022

Venue: Ipsley Meadows, Arrow Valley, Redditch

Host Club: Bromsgrove & Redditch AC

Venue & Facilities

The venue is an open area of grassland in the Arrow Valley with some wooded areas. There are no fixed facilities at the course apart from some car parking, though these are not sufficient for the numbers of competitors and spectators (clubs were warned of this in advance). There was a dedicated car park for League Officials and Course Marshals. Toilets were hired in and there was a catering van. A tent was provided for athlete and officials registration.

Prior Information

Clubs and League Officials were sent information on the course, directions, facilities, places for club tents and car parking.

Weather

It was cool and windy. After morning rain it was dry except for a light shower around the start of the race.

First Aid

Medevent provided two first aiders and a 4x4 vehicle. There was only one minor injury: a cut foot.

However, the 4x4, had it been needed to deal with an injury out on the course, would not have been able to gain access as the local Council found that it was unable to unlock the gate and there was no other practical way of driving a vehicle onto the course. Fortunately it was not needed and one of the first aiders was stationed at a point out on the course and the other at the finish, as usual. This is an issue that will need to be resolved with the Council if this course is to be used in future.

The Course

Most of the three-lap course (about 5.9 miles) is grassland plus a path through a wooded area. It is mainly flat with some gentle slopes. Since the course had not been used before for a

League race, Dave Pettifer, the Referee for the Women's League, and I carried out a preliminary inspection in late January with Len Quartly, the Chairman of Bromsgrove & Redditch AC and Clerk of the Course. Only very minor points needed attention and no major changes to the route were necessary. We did advise on moving the area designated for club tents so that they were nearer the start than originally proposed.

I had a 'phone conversation with Len Quartly on the Thursday night before to make contingency plans should Storm "Eunice" have brought down trees but in the event there was no blocking of the original route.

Together with Mary Williams of the Women's League and Daniel Connolly, the men's League Divisional Secretary, we inspected again on the morning of the races. At that stage the course had been marked with stakes, tape and direction arrows. Tree roots had been marked with paint (though the morning rain had washed some of it off) and a few low-hanging branches cut back. We made some minor adjustments to the tape to ensure a better running line or to avoid hazards and we added a few additional stakes and arrows where necessary. We checked the positions of Course Marshals and asked for a few of them to be moved to points that had potential hazards or where there might have been doubt as to the direction of the course.

The finish had been marked with tape to the League's specification and a finishing line laid down. Large banners marked both the finish and the start. An assembly line at the start was indicated with tape. The host club had done a good job.

After a wet week and heavy rain in the morning, the ground was turned into a very muddy quagmire in several places: a truly British cross-country course!

Officials

All League-appointed officials attended and all clubs, bar one, provided their officials; all performed well. Bournville did not nominate an official in advance nor did one report to me on the day, so under League Rule C6.2 I authorised that 200 points be added to that club's score.

Once again some officials from the women's race offered to help, including Yasmine Al-Daftary who, to provide her with experience of the role, I used as my Chief Judge and Mary Williams volunteered to fill the gap as a Funnel Steward in view of Bournville's absence. Rita Brownlie of the Women's League and the host club acted as Starter.

The Race

The race started on time and proceeded smoothly with no disqualifications or protests. One competitor finished without a number but as there was evidence that he had started with one, I used my discretion under League Rule C15.3 to not disqualify and to place him in the results.

The clear winner was Ian Allen (Spa Striders), who thus won three of the races and therefore won the individual best of three award for the season. Second in the race and joint winner of second in the best of three was Chris Perrin (Cannock & Stafford), tying for overall second with Oliver Harradence (Royal Sutton Coldfield). The best of 4 races was also a tie between Chris and Oliver. The Junior award went to Jack Cole (Telford AC). Total finishers were 221, about the same as in the other races this season and comparable to totals in 2019/20. The final runner came in at 73.24 with three runners breaking the hour.

In the team result on the day Royal Sutton Coldfield AC won followed by Kenilworth Runners and Halesowen A&CC. Overall Kenilworth were first and they together with RSC and Halesowen in that order were promoted. Relegated were Stratford AC, Dudley & Stourbridge H and Bournville H.

The results processing went smoothly and quickly. There was only one minor discrepancy between the results shown on the A and B boards and this was easily resolved using the video evidence. The full results were available for the awards to be handed out after the race and were published on the League web site early that evening, though once again the times had to be entered by hand and thus were only available later that evening.

Summary of Main Points over the Season

- The season went well and it was good to be back after the hiatus caused by the CoVid pandemic. All the races proceeded smoothly, for which I must thank the clubs (particularly the host clubs: City of Stoke, Stratford, Spa Striders and Bromsgrove & Redditch), officials and, of course, the athletes.
- The only major difficulty in producing the results was the inaccuracies of the chip results in the first combined race (see below). Otherwise the results were declared quickly and without difficulty, though the problems encountered by the Divisional Secretary in downloading the times to the computer programme caused him much unneeded work and a slight delay in publishing results on the day.
- For Division 2 the Divisional Secretary and I had decided during the 2019/20 season that the disc system for producing results was no longer necessary given that the League now had video cameras to resolve any discrepancies between the Judges' results sheets. This worked well and no problems were encountered.
- I was able to cover all the required officials duties with some help from officials from the Midland Women's League, whose races were held earlier in the day at the same venues. Apart from in the final fixture (see above), all clubs provided their nominated officials.

- In the light of my comments on first aid cover in my 2019/20 report, I am pleased to note that this season the enhanced cover was satisfactory.
- **Points for Consideration by the League**
 - The Results Secretary for the first race (Ray Morgan) and I have written a separate report for the Executive on the problems we found in the chip results for the first race. We overcame these, though not without a great deal of time spent by the Chief Judge (Richard Carney) Ray and myself in scrutinising in detail and rigorously the results sheets and the video recording. It was not a robust way of settling the results, though I think in the end they were accurate and no club objected when provisional results were published. It also meant that the results were not available until a few days after the race. If the AGM decides to continue with a combined race so that chip timing is a practical necessity, then the Executive will have to ensure that a better system and back-up is in place.
 - I have shown on my match reports the finishing time of the last competitor and the time this was after the penultimate runner. I am aware of discussions amongst officials of whether the League Rules should be amended to impose a cut-off time. This issue has been debated several times in the Executive and at AGMs; there are pros and cons. I am not making a recommendation but in view of this issue being discussed informally several times by officials in Division 2, I raise it here in case anyone wishes to discuss it again.

Farewell

This is my last report as a League Referee; age is catching up with me! Over the four years as a Referee and the previous seven years as a Technical Official for the League I have always found the clubs, other officials and athletes easy to work with and I thank them for helping make my job easier. I hope to remain as a Technical Official but in a lesser capacity.

Cross-country remains a competitive but friendly sport and long may it continue in that way.

Rob Mulgrue

Referee

22/2/22

Birmingham & District Invitation Cross Country League

Walsall Arboretum 19-02-2022

Host Clubs West Bromwich Harriers and Sneyd Striders

Referee's Report for Division 3

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 competitors was about 300m from the start, car parking for the officials only a short walk to the start.

This was the same venue as for the WMYACCL held on the 16th January.

I was invited to walk the course on Sunday 13th February with Dave Long of West Brom Harriers, the original course was one small lap followed by 2 large laps. Due to the after affects of the recent storms several sections of the large lap were unsuitable for racing on for various reasons. Dave Long planned a new course which I walked on Tuesday 15th February.

The course

Was 1 small lap of the sports field followed by 3 large laps with the finish being close to the start. The course was short grass with a few paths to cross. Total distance 9.6k

Course inspection on race day

The course was well marked out with stakes and tape. A small change had to be made due a large expanse of water that had appeared since the previous inspection on the Tuesday. Conditions underfoot would be described at best as being soft.

Flags were at each end of the start line; the start line was marked with paint.

The finish funnel was of adequate length with an exclusion area around it allowing the officials to work/move freely, also I was able to assess that the officials were in position prior to the race finishing.

Course Marshalls

The host club provided a large number of marshals.

Registration and Race HQ

Was a gazebo, positioned in the team tent area.

Facilities

There were no changing rooms at the venue, toilet facilities were porta loos, which were in the “tent city” area.

Weather

During the morning it was either raining or wintery showers (those marking out the course went home to get into dry clothes). During the race it was dry with the wind strength increasing.

First aid

First aid was in attendance with 3 personnel, there was an offroad vehicle, the vehicle was based near the finish, 2 personnel were based by the vehicle the other person was out on the course. There was one reported injury, a knee problem

Officials

All helpers/officials signed in on the day.

At the “Team Briefing”, alterations to the allocated duties were made to maximise their strengths.

The race

The front of the race was dominated by Weston Tempo with 6 in the first 9 finishers.

The first 3 finishers:

Ian Radford	33.54	Black Pear
David Brewis	33.54	Sphinx
Marcus England	33.57	Weston Tempo
Last finisher	61.09	

213 runners finished

Promoted teams

Western Tempo, Black Pear Joggers and Severn AC were promoted.

Issues raised

An issue was raised regarding the collection of the disc envelopes.

On the league web site regarding “league info” for team managers, and “guide for none host club’s jobs”.

Team managers should position themselves in the proximity of the exit end of the finish funnel, and an official would collect the envelopes from them in this area.

On this occasion some envelopes were collected from the finish area, and some from the team tent area.

Glen Lock

Referee