

Sandy 10 mile race – 25th March 2007

Wardle flies to new Sandy 10 course record

In a stunning piece of solo running, David Wardle from Hitchin, who belongs to the London Irish club, stormed to an emphatic victory in last Sunday's record breaking Sandy 10 mile road race. Wardle literally flew round the course to set a new mark of 50min 29secs, a full one and a half minutes inside the old record set in 2001. Wardle used the race as part of his final preparation for the London Marathon where his target is 2hours 18mins.

In a high calibre field where 18 runners broke the 60 minute barrier, club mates Michael Aldridge and Phil Melling from Wootton Road Runners filled the second and third places in 54m 24s and 55m 50s respectively. This helped Wotton claim the Men's Team trophy.

Not to be outdone, the ladies also contributed to a thrilling race with the first three ladies finishing within 47 seconds of each other. First home was Katherine Philp from Garden City Runners in a superb time of 64m 04s. She was closely followed by club mate Lizzie Clifford in 64m 23s, with Deborah Steer from St Albans Striders not far behind in third place. Backed up by Suzy Fitt in 4th spot, Garden City Runners easily claimed the Ladies Team trophy.

A record 432 runners completed the race in near ideal conditions, with only a strong head-breeze hampering the runners as they headed out towards Everton in the first 5 miles. But with the breeze at their backs in the 2nd half of the race, most runners posted negative splits on their return to the finish at Sandy Sports Centre. There they were greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Sandy, David and Rosemary Gale, who presented every finisher with a commemorative Tee-Shirt and Cereal Bar supplied by **Jordans**. Many thanks to David and Rosemary for also starting the race and staying behind for the presentation ceremony. All the prize winners received a fine trophy and sports vouchers generously donated by sports goods manufacturer **Brooks Running**.

Biggleswade AC runners to perform well included Debs Bryant who claimed the 3rd Lady V35 trophy in a time of 68m 40s, and Stephen Penny who stormed home in 63m 41s in 40th place overall. Alistair Burt MP, a member of Biggleswade AC, finished in a very creditable 84m 53s, which means that he is well on track to post a good time in the London Marathon in three weeks time. Alistair was not the only one using the race as part of their preparation for the London Marathon. Many of the runners were using the race as their last outing before the Marathon on the 22nd April, and they found the course and event organisation to their liking. Other local runners who ran well included Simon Fawcett (Beds Harriers) from Biggleswade who set a new personal best of 58m 54s to finish in 16th place.

In the veteran's categories, Kevin Russell of EVAC was a comfortable winner of the Male Vet 40 trophy in a superb 56m 26s, two minutes ahead of Dave Randall from Cheltenham & County Harriers, and Alun Sainsbury of Dacorum & Tring AC. Phil Redden of Riverside Runners claimed the Male Vet 50 prize in 61m 40s, and Bob Wells of Bedford Harriers just held off Stuart Mann of Herts Phoenix AC to claim the Male Vet 60 prize.

Liz Wallis of St Albans Striders was only 6 seconds clear of Veronica Singleton from Bedford Harriers to win the Lady Vet 45 trophy, and local runner Ann Story, who lives in Gamlingay, held off Riverside club mate Norma Leckie to win the Lady Vet 55 prize.

Proving that you are never too old to run, evergreen “PJ” Hough of Stopsley Striders and Val Stringer of Ware Joggers won the Male Vet 70 and Lady Vet 65 trophies respectively. Bedford Harriers won the Erlensee Cup, presented to the club who enter most runners, and the Harriers won this easily with 73 entries, although the 44 runners from Riverside Runners may point to more competition in future years.

The race was also being used for the very first time as the Beds AAA County Championship 10 mile road race, and many runners from all over Bedfordshire contested the county titles. Debs Bryant’s superb run gained her third placed lady in the county.

Sandy Sports Centre awarded one month’s free membership of their new Gym (or workout classes) to the first LOCAL male and female runners with an address within the SG19 postcode. Thirty six local runners contested these prizes, and the winners were Debs Bryant and Clive Adams, both from Potton.

In the Race HQ at Sandy Sports Centre volunteers from **Keech Cottage Children’s Hospice** presented a display of the wonderful work performed by this charitable organisation. Biggleswade AC will soon be announcing a substantial donation to this worthy cause from the surplus funds from this year’s event. Also in the Race HQ many of the runners made use of the superb service offered by a group of Sports Therapists from Luton University, who were able to provide a relaxing massage for tired limbs after the race. And many runners used the Sports Centre 400 metre all-weather track to warm up for the big race.

The 2 Mile Fun Run attracted 35 runners of all ages, etc

With over 50 course marshals, plus officials working at the race HQ, Biggleswade AC can be justifiably proud of another well organised and successful event. Dozens of messages of thanks have already been received from runners who appreciated the slick organisation and friendly encouraging marshals.

If you feel the urge to come along to the club, but feel that you are not “up to the required standard” don’t hold back. We accommodate runners and joggers of all standards, and you will be warmly welcomed at Sandy Sports Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting at 7pm. Contact Nigel Bush (01767 682251), Stuart Galloway (01767 223942) or Gav Elliott (01767 640422) for more information, or see our website at www.biggleswadeac.org.uk