

The Fast and Furious Ford 5k and Funrun

The now annual Ford 5k and Funrun took place on Friday 05th July with total numbers well over double from the 2018 event. With registration completed at St Patrick's Park, Newcastle runners made their way to the start line on the Burrendale Hotel, Country Club and Spa side of Sunnyholme Caravan Park. The race started promptly at 7.33pm with race director Eamon McCrickard providing some final words of advice.

Frank Leads the Way

Given the flat nature of the course many predicted a fast and furious start and spectators were not left disappointed with Newcastle AC and Bryansford GAC stalwart Frank Cunningham leading the 156 participants over the first mile in lightning speed. The race then settled down with the leading pack making their way along the full length of Newcastle Main Street. It was fantastic to see great support offered from many of the towns bars, cafes and restaurants to all the runners and with the race passing The Avoca Hotel and Spa overall winner David O'Flaherty (Newcastle AC) started to make his move. The route then moved along Bryansford Road to the Chatterbox nursery roundabout before turning onto Bryansford Avenue leading to the final stretch back to St Patrick's Park.

O'Flaherty takes top spot

As the participants entered St Patrick's Park they had to maneuver a lap of the pitch to finish moving from the tarmac roads to the grass field. This did not present any difficulties with David O'Flaherty (Newcastle AC) crossing the finish line in a very impressive 16.07. Taking the other two male podium positions were Christopher Devin (Newry City Runners) finishing in 16.15 and Gordon Graham (East Down AC) finishing in 16.29. Given the fast start and the flat terrain it was no surprise to see four other runners sub 17minutes namely Wesley McDowell (Dromore AC), Daniel Molloy (Newcastle AC), Andrew Hicks (Dromore AC) and the veteran Connaire McVeigh (Newcastle AC).

Graham shows her class

Local lady Laura Graham (Mourne Runners) took top spot in the ladies race with a fantastic 17.00min finish and finishing eighth overall. Second female and 19th overall was Catherine O'Connor (East Down AC) in 18.14 and third and 27th overall was Mari Troeng (Newcastle AC) in 19.05. A special mention in the female race must go to 8 year old Maisie McVeigh (Murlough AC) who took the U-16 female category finishing 90th overall in a PB time of 23.51.

Thanks to all those who made it all happen

Race director Eamon McCrickard and Brayansford GAC would like to offer their thanks in the first instance to Newcastle AC for their great assistance on the night but also on the promotion, pre-registration and organising the finish. Darragh McCrickard as always preformed his race tasks without any fuss and ensured the results were issued before many had sat down for pre-race refreshments. Shimna Wheelers also deserve a special mention with a number of their members assisting by stewarding all runners around the course on their bikes. The PSNI also ensured the race ran smoothly and resourced the race in great numbers to ensure the roads were kept clear for all runners to safely maneuver around the course. Bryansford GAC members, Dessie O'Neill (Pizza Umami), Jack O'Hare, The Burrendale Hotel, Country Club and Spa, McCready's Shoe Shop, McKeevers Chemist, Sokol Gymnastics, Lick Ice cream, Deli Lites and Spar (Newcastle) all contributed in some shape or form and deserve a special thanks for their contributions.

Save the date

Given the success of this year's event race organisers have already confirmed that the 2020 Ford 5k and funrun will take place on Friday 3rd of July 2020. Further race details will be announced closer to the time and it is hoped that numbers will increase from 2019 with many seeing the flat course as an ideal setting for the all-important PB time. Frank Cunningham (Newcastle AC) has already confirmed his services for 2020 stating he will have no problem leading it out so long as he makes it onto the promotional billboards.



And they are off



David O'Flaherty (Newcastle AC)



Laura Graham (Mourne Runners)



Maisie McVeigh (Murlough AC)