

North West Youth 3 Day  
13-15 June 2008  
Round of the British Cycling Youth Circuit Race Series  
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The cream of young British cycling talent gathered in the North West of England over the weekend of 13-15 June to take part in the North West Youth 3-Day. Promoted by Ribble Valley Juniors with support from Southport CC and Liverpool Mercury, the event also saw the presence of a large contingent from Ireland. The main notable absentees were some riders from the South East Talent Team who's mini-bus unfortunately broke down en-route and despite a valiant effort by their coaches, couldn't get to the event in time.



With excellent sponsorship from UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire), Science in Sport, Graffiti Removal North and Paul Hewitt Cycles, a prize fund approaching £2,000 meant there was plenty of incentive for those taking the start.

The racing took place over three days at three separate venues. Friday evening saw a short opening prologue around the well tended Victoria Park in Southport (home of the famous Southport Flower Show). Saturday's events were held at the excellent and much used cycle track at Preston Sports Arena, provided by key event sponsor, UCLAN. Sunday saw the final positions decided at the relatively new cycle track at Litherland Sports Park on the outskirts of Liverpool – this venue being a product of British Cycling's initiative to develop cycling facilities around the country.

The opening time-trial of approximately 1.5 km was run-off in mainly bright but breezy conditions, and with 186 starters across the different age categories being set off in a little over 2 hours it was a busy scene at the start - finish area.

The twists and turns that would be seen throughout the under 8 category racing started early when the first rider to cross the line failed his gear check and unfortunately had to be relegated to last place. This left the way open for Kieran Morris of Mid Shropshire Wheelers to take the stage win, closely followed by Kim Baptista (Eastlands Velo) and Solomon Kerfoot-Robson (Rhos-on-Sea CC).

The under 10's event saw a tie on time, with a review of the fractions of a second on the time-keepers watch seeing the win going to Owen Dudley of Team Scottish Provident ahead of Leighton Sharman (Liverpool Century). Fractions of a second also saw the difference between Matthew Walls (Eastlands Velo) in third and Matthew Draper (Team Scottish Provident) in 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Under 12 event was more straight forward with the long trip from Ireland being made worthwhile for Augustas Bouzius of the Kanturk Cycling Team taking a narrow win from race favourite Charlie Tanfield (Cleveland Wheelers). Third place went to Christian Braybrooke from Eastlands Velo.

In the under 14 girls event, a not unsurprising win went to Lucy Garner from Leicester RC, followed home by Jess Anderson (Sportscity Velo) and Elinor Barker (Lifeforce Cervelo), while the under 16 girls win was taken by Hannah Barnes of Palmer Park Velo with just one second separating Gabriella Shaw (Team Chevin Cycles) in second from Hannah Manley (Lifeforce Cervelo) in third.

In the under 14 boys event the scene was set for the weekend with a powerful ride from Jonathan Dibben of i-team.cc who's finishing time was only 2 seconds slower than the under 16 winners time. Also putting in excellent rides were Harry Tanfield (Cleveland Wheelers) in second and Jacob Ragan (Eastlands Velo) in third.

With just four seconds covering the first 12 under 16 boys finishers, the weekend's excellent close racing in this category came as no surprise. As with the under 10's result, a revisit to the time-keeper's watch was required to split the promoting club's Lewis Balycki and Wyre Forest RCC's Josh Papworth, with the close decision going in favour of Balycki. With four riders tying on time but one second behind him, including his twin brother Adam, Simon Yates (Sportscity Velo) just held on to third.



Barring one very brief shower, Saturday's events were run off in dry bright conditions, but with a stiff, cool wind blowing. The first event to be run was a combined race for the under 8 and under 10 categories where the next mishap in the under 8 event occurred. A tangle of wheels and pedals on the start line saw three riders left on the ground as the group set off, including the overnight holder of third place Solomon Kerfoot-Robson, who never recovered the time lost to his main rivals, coming home in fourth place behind new race leader Kim Baptista, Kieran Morris and Benjamin Moody (Hetton Hawks). Toby Tanfield (the rider penalised the previous evening for problems with his gearing) made up some lost ground to finish fifth.

The under 10 event saw a close finish with the main contenders from the time trial all finishing strongly. Owen



Dudley retained the race lead by making it two wins out of two just edging Thoman Mein (Hetton Hawks) and Leighton Sharman into second and third spots.

In the under 12 event, over night leader Augustas Bouzius seemed to less suited to bunched racing and was soon to lose contact with the group leaving the door open for a new race leader. Despite several attempts early on to split the race, including a big early effort from Sam Turton of Ribble Valley Juniors, a sizeable group was left to contest the finish on the final lap. Second placed rider overnight, Charlie Tanfield took full opportunity of Bouzius' difficulties and took the win ahead of a trio of Manx riders from Team Scottish Provident. Second went to Matthew Davies and third to Matthew Bostock.



Due to a relatively small number of entries, the under 14 and 16 girls events were run together, and perhaps because of a combination of the small field and the gusty wind the

two races stayed as one bunch for much of the race despite several attempts to break it up. At the finish, first over the line was the under 14 race leader Lucy Garner closely followed by the under 16 leader



Hannah Barnes. Second and third in the under 14's went to Jess Anderson and Amy Roberts (Lifeforce Cervelo), with the same positions going to Hannah Manley and Sophie Gore (Sportscity Velo) in the under 16's.



Both the under 14 and under 16 boys events saw some very fast and aggressive riding meaning both race winners had to work hard to get their win. In the under 14 race the fast pace saw many riders loose contact and around a

third of the field were lapped on the one mile circuit, with several others just escaping the same fate are the leaders bore down on them at the finish. At the bell there was still a sizeable group in contention, but attacks were starting to cause small gaps to open, and coming into the finish overnight leader Jonathan Dibben had

pulled clear of the field to take his second stage win. A few bike lengths back was Daniel Maslin (Hillingden Slipstreamers) who just held out for second place by a tyre's width from a fast finishing, demon sprinter Chris Latham (Sportscity Velo).





The under 16 event saw an even bigger proportion of the 50+ field in difficulty with over half of the field being lapped. The final few laps saw repeated attacks

from many in the field, with the decisive move coming from Sam Harrison. Over night leader and second placed rider (Lewis Balycki and Josh Papworth) were prominent amongst the chasers, both paying for their efforts with Balycki finishing in eighth place and Papworth being caught and dropped by the remnants of the bunch to finish about a minute behind the leader – but impressive racing from a rider with another year to go in this age group. On the line, Harrison (Cwmcarn Paragon) held off Simon Yates and Matthew Bailey (Halesowen A&CC) to win the stage and take the overall race lead.



Day 3 at the Litherland Sports Park venue saw the weather conditions worsen, with rain threatening, and several of the races run off in the wet.

The third day of incident occurred in the under 8 category when overnight leader Kim Baptista was involved in an accident in the wet and windy conditions, losing a lap in the process. The short race distance for this age category meant there was no possibility of a lap out being allowed, and Baptista dropped out of contention for the overall. The stage was won by Kieran Morris, taking the overall race win in the process. Second on the stage and the overall went to Benjamin Moody, and while Solomon Kerfoot-Robson made up for the previous days problems with third on the stage, but Kim Baptista had managed to recover enough time after her spill to edge him out of third overall. Some consolation for Baptista losing the race lead was gained from claiming the first under 8 girl and best local rider prizes.





In the under 10 race, Owen Dudley just failed to make it three wins out of three, but did enough to secure the overall race lead in finishing third in the bunch sprint at the end of the race. The stage was won by Matthew Draper who maintained his fourth spot overall from the opening stage. Second on the stage, giving him second overall, was Leighton Sharman and finishing in fourth on the stage was enough to give Thomas Mein third overall.

In the under 12 event, a bunch of around a dozen contested the sprint for the finish where the time bonuses would be key in determining the overall result. Charlie Tanfield took the win comfortable in the knowledge that finishing in the lead group would see him take the overall win. The remaining podium places could have gone to any one of five riders depending on the order over the line, and by taking second and third on the stage, Christian Braybrooke and Matthew Davies secured those positions in the overall standings.



The under 14 and 16 girls once again raced together, and with no improvement in the weather from the previous day, there seemed little opportunity for breaking away. This didn't prevent under 14 rider Zoe Armstrong (Ribble Valley Juniors), with nothing to lose after dropping some time to a mechanical problem in the opening time trial, spending several laps off

the front of the bunch, but eventually being reeled in before the finish. At the finish in the under 14 event, Lucy Garner sealed the overall victory with her third stage win, followed home by Amy Roberts and Jess Anderson in a reverse of their eventual overall positions. In the under 16 event Hannah Barnes also took her third stage win to secure the top spot overall, with second on the stage translating to second overall for Gabriella Shaw. Third on the stage was Penny Rowson (Team Chance), but Hannah Manley had done in enough in fifth to claim third spot on general classification.



Due to the limitations of the smaller Litherland circuit, the large fields for the under 14 and under 16 boys could not be safely accommodated, so there were two races in each category with the field split at an appropriate point on the general classification following stage 2. Although there were no BC or series points on offer for the 'B' races, and the races only deciding places low down in the overall standings, pride and prize money were at stake. As such both races saw some good attacking racing. First over the line in the under 14 'B' race was Ben Matthews but he became the second casualty of the gear checker, being relegated to last of the finishers for being over-g geared. This race went to Sean McConville (Cycling Munster) with Joshua Moody (Hetton Hawks) in second and Geraint Manley (Maindy Flyers) claiming the last of the cash prizes for third.

The under 16 'B' race saw a bunch sprint led from far out and impressively won by Jack Penrice (Sportscity Velo) with Matthew Waters (Ribble Valley Juniors) not able to get more than level with his rear wheel to claim second and Mike Gregg (Liverpool Century) holding off the rest of the bunch for third.

In the under 14 race for the major placings overall, Jonathan Dibben lost out on a hat trick of wins to Harry Tanfield, but by this point had dominated the overall standings such that going into the final stage, Dibben knew he did not need any of the time bonuses on offer for the first six finishers so long as he finished in the leading group. However, Dibben didn't leave anything to chance and keenly fought the finish, just losing out to Tanfield. Third place in the sprint went to Jacob Ragan, repeating his placing in the opening stage. Behind Dibben in the overall were Tanfield in second and Daniel Maslin in third.



The race for top honours in the under 16 race was not so clear cut. With just two seconds separating Sam Harrison and Simon Yates time bonuses would be crucial. In another fast race seeing riders being lapped the battle for top honours came down to a 15-up bunch sprint. On the long run in to the finish, both Harrison and Yates appeared to be too far down the bunch to take the win, but such was the effort they were both putting in to take the overall, by the line they had taken the top two spots. For a moment it looked as though Yates might steal the win from Harrison and claim the overall, but Harrison proved too strong and in the last few metres before the line Yates eased off and conceded victory. Behind these two Matthew Bailey maintained his consistent stage finishes to finish third on the stage and third overall.



Finally, reports that the race organiser had lost his sanity during the event later turned out to be unfounded and he was heard to express his gratitude to everyone who had helped to organise and run the event, but mostly to the commissaries, judges and time-keepers who worked virtually without a break for the duration of each days racing.



Also a special mention must go to British Cycling's Matt Winston who provided excellent commentary for the event, with an ability to pick out riders in a bunch that is second to none, and even finding time to provide commentary for a football match taking place along side stage 2! If I was Hugh Porter or Mike Smith I'd be worried for my job!