

December 2010

Leeds Cross Country Relays 2010 - Report

So there we were, five hard bastards who were ready to run our hearts out, and leave no stone unturned in our quest to win the Leeds Cross Country Relays. Myself, Kerrie, Tom, George and Will. Not quite enough for even one full men's team, and with 10 spare seats on the minibus, we looked at all the positives and off we popped. The journey itself was nice and speedy, we even flew past a siren-ringing light-flashing fire engine at one point.

Once there, the mission to find our past member Neil Shuttleworth began. Without him, two people would've had to double up on legs, not ideal. When it came to entering the teams we put his name down in our 'University of Manchester' team and kept quiet about the fact that he was more than 40 years older than most of us. Anyway we found our man just 5 minutes before the start of the race much to our relief – we were walking round asking any old men who had beards at one stage. I opened proceedings on leg 1 and got away to a good start, didn't quite hold the pace in the final stages but it was enough, and we weren't in last. Next up was George who put in a solid performance and picked up a place on his run. Around this stage we heard news that Manuel Da Silva was just coming off the motorway and fancied a leg, team sorted! So Will was up next and ran well despite being on a tough leg. We did however nearly jump up 20-odd places when Will accidentally went the wrong way and almost skipped out a large chunk of the course; we did manage to shout loud enough for him to correct the mistake though! Tom then took over and possibly lost some of his mojo as he had ditched the rocky outfit, but nonetheless he ripped up the course with helpful motivational phrases screamed at him along the way. Manuel ran under the name Lozza Lusc and skipped over the mud to post a very respectable time, giving Neil a good opportunity to do some damage on the last leg. We all cheered Mr Shuttleworth on although we had a bit of mare when UCLAN did us in the last few hundred metres.

Certainly a highlight of the trip was after the race when Neil raced up to the guy who beat him demanding to know his "real name" and exclaiming that his "real name" was Laurie with a huge grin on his face (there had been quite a lot of shuffling and swapping of names & numbers) - it was definitely a 'had to be there' moment but for those who witnessed it, it was well worth it!! Anyway, the results were produced before we even made it back to the clubhouse, and very impressive as it was, I think it just goes to show how inferior and poorly attended the Leeds relays are compared to Manchester's own... Because our results team of Gooch and Holden could surely not be bettered.

We took it easier on the speed bumps when leaving (Tom managed to get some serious air on the way in) and we pulled up in St. Michael's road, incidentally the name of the road I've grown up on my whole life. Copious amounts of chicken were consumed in KFC which was a very welcome change following the endless amount of (free) fruit pots we had stored in the bus. Once we had refuelled and could eat no more, we left the establishment only to be immediately surrounded by fancy dress people. It was like in Ferris Bueller or something, we seemed to accidentally slip seamlessly into the middle of a parade. With Batmans and Pulp Fiction characters all around us we were in danger of looking like a right bunch of idiots, but dressed in muddy shorts and other running gear I think we funnily enough got away with it. Next up, we stopped for photos outside our Kez's shop, something she's kept very quiet from us all. (See picture below).

December 2010

The journey back was a bit livelier with more singing and race analysis keeping us in high spirits. For all those who attend Leeds Relays next year, it must be noted that there is an 'Alehouse' pub not too far from the racecourse. That is all for the year, hope everyone has a smashing Christmas.



December 2010

