

Runners are set for mob handed match

Perth to take on Kinross in highlight of year trail race



On the move The Green Team



Done and dusted Competitors run for a cuppa after the event



Racing PRR's Stephanie Johnston

STAFF REPORTER

A highlight of the Perthshire running calendar is the annual showdown between its two largest running clubs: this is the Mob Match between Perth Road Runners and Kinross Road Runners.

First held in 2022 – the race has alternative hosts each year – this trail race provokes fierce rivalry and club pride, drawing out many runners to compete, bedecked in club colours and war paint.

There is no limit to how many runners may race for each side. The previous two fixtures were won by KRR; their rivals were set on home revenge this year.

Separate matches are held for men and ladies. 68 men and 53 ladies lined up to race the six wet, rolling miles over the beautiful Murthly Estate.

A number of technical and testing features – most notably the Chute, Corniche and Ramp in the last mile – awaited the runners before a final (and annoyingly long) dash along the arrow-straight estate drive.

Finished runners, still fighting for breath, gathered at the finish line to spur home their green (PRR) or yellow-vested (KRR) team mates.

That support reflects a race format which sees later-placed runners exert the same impact on the final team result as the first athletes home.

The last finishers crossed the line in fading daylight and teeming rain.

Competitors, marshals and organisers all then descended on Murthly Village hall for tea and the much-awaited results.

In the men's race, Perth took the first six places. Club warhorse Michael McConnell led for much of the race, only being passed by newcomer and winner Rory McGuire climbing the Ramp for home. Under-20 winner Struan Gatherer took a fine third place.



Last push PRR's Aurelie Thompson enters the final turn

In the age categories, Perth's Kev Riddell and Jimmy Fotheringham were first M40 and M60 respectively while Kinross's Matt Newton was first M50.

Individual honours were more evenly shared in the ladies' race. KRR's Stephanie Johnson (winner) and Caroline Jones (second and first F40) impressively distanced their rivals, with PRR's Paige Brown and Liz Johnston (first F50) taking third and fourth.

Lucy Ward and Christine Myerscough were first U20 and F60 home, while Alison Houston demonstrated the inclusive appeal of the Mob Match as first F70.

Reversing the story of 2022 and 2023, Perth RR emerged victorious in both team contests.

The men won 634-881

(a lower score wins) while their ladies triumphed more impressively still – by dint of their 'green wall' in the middle of the field – 370 to 677. These were emphatic victories for the Perth club. The Peter Rabbit trophy will now see his smart jacket painted PRR green until the race returns to Kinross-shire in 2025.

Huge thanks are due to the Murthly Estate, Murthly Village hall, Alisons Kitchen and the many marshals and organisers who made the event possible.

Perth Road Runners welcomes experienced runners and newcomers alike, meeting on Tuesday evenings at Bells Sports Centre, and on alternate Weds/Thurs evenings for track and hill training. Full details can be found at www.perthroadrunners.co.uk