

BCCC paddlers at Gent Marathon. How did they fare?

Five junior members of the club represented the BCU at the Gent marathon on Saturday.

They had an eventful journey when the canoe trailer broke on the way and so missed a practice run on Friday. Nonetheless they fared well and their times for the 18Km course were as follows:

Junior men

Jason Dyer 11th	1hr 38:50
James Taylor 14th	1hr 41:20
Nick Boreham 15th	1hr 43:11

Junior Ladies

Isobel Smith 1st	1hr 41:52
Naomi Smith 2nd	1hr 42:02

The report below is from James Smythe who lead the trip

Development Talent Shines at Gent Marathon 2010

Wednesday, 31 March 2010 10:09



(photo: Ollie Harding)

The BCU junior marathon development team travelled to Gent in Belgium last weekend, to race in the annual Blaarmersen marathon.

The 25 athletes invited are all prospective GB team members in coming years, aged from 14 up to 17. Despite many being able to race in the shorter U16 race, all of them raced up as U18s for the event, over the full 18km course. The competition was tough, including competitors from Belgium and Holland who are making an impact internationally in both sprint and marathon.

The race itself covered a lap of the regatta course, with two loops around the canals which run through Gent, and four portages along the way. A good start is critical, and Albert Hicks of Norwich CC got his race off well by making the front group along with two Belgian internationals. Not far behind, Nico Kirschstein-Smith of Reading CC and Tom Deacon of Addlestone CC were chasing hard.

In the ladies race, the BCU trio of Isobel and Naomi Smith of Basingstoke CC, and Emma Hawthorn of Worcester CC ended their first lap of the regatta course on the tail of Sandra Brandjes of Holland. The

Smith twins set themselves the task of chasing down the Dutch senior international after the first portage, and came to within a couple of boat lengths on the back canals before a collision saw Isobel fall in. Thanks to swift work from a rescue boat, Isobel was back in quickly and able to catch up Emma and work together in pursuit.

Meanwhile in the boys race, Albert and the two Belgian athletes had built up a healthy lead. Nico and Tom were working well together to catch up, before Nico was targeted from a bridge by some local stone-throwing youths and fell in. Coming into the last portage, Albert managed to drop one of the Belgian paddlers and was having a real go at trying to beat the other, but Joeri Weckx already has a junior world sprint final to his name and wasn't going to be beaten in the final sprint. So Albert claimed an excellent second place, ahead of Piet Broeckx of Belgium in third, Tom Deacon on 4th and Toon Driesen of Belgium in 5th.

Isobel Smith clearly had a point to prove after her swim and managed to catch her sister on the final lap, passing her to finish second in the race, but first junior. Naomi finished seconds later as second junior, followed by Wey KC's Hazel Childerstone in third and Rachael Pinnock of Bishops Stortford in fourth. Emma Hawthorn had also taken a swim on the last lap, so had dropped back to fifth.

We'll link to the official results just as soon as the organisers can post them.

The fact that the paddlers were able to race at all is particularly down to the efforts of Ollie Harding and Dyson Pendle who were driving the minibuses. En route to the course from the channel tunnel, the trailer being towed by Ollie's minibus suffered a major mechanical failure, and had to be recovered to a garage around 100km away from the race. Ollie and Dyson drove on to Gent, borrowed a trailer from the local club, and went back to recover the boats, not arriving at the course until late on Friday night. The paddlers were all pleased to have found their boats in a usable condition and were able to race, but we had to leave the boats in Gent and return without them on Saturday night. They were eventually recovered the following week by Ollie and Dave Enoch, who had to make a trip over to Gent to pick them up.

Kerry Duff of Norwich also enjoyed her first experience as a team staff member and succeeded in the difficult job of keeping the youngest of our paddlers in control of their pre-race nerves.

Ollie Harding's photos from the event are published on [Flickr](#)

James Smythe, BCU Marathon Committee



James; Naomi; Nick; Jason and Isobel