Fantasy XC League 2017/18 – Race 3 Blog

I must start this blog with an apology. Apparently my reference to Italian tanks offended a number of people. First of all Brian Buckwell who protested that his team weren’t going backwards that quickly; and he is old enough to remember accurately the true speed of an Italian tank. Then the French guy who argued that French tanks go at least as quickly as Italian tanks in reverse; a fact which I overlooked and I am sorry. The Belgium guy who protested that it was not a fair comparison, as they have no tanks at all. And finally a really dull bloke from Luxembourg who informed me that under EU rules all tanks must have equivalent reverse speeds and that it would cost me 100bn Euros if I wanted to set my own speeds. To all of you I am sorry, it was a joke, but now in the cold light of day I realise that it was highly inappropriate and I have resigned as a spokesman on humour for the Monster Raving Loony party.

But that is not important! This is the time of year when FL races come thick and fast; not least the first “Major” of the XC season – the National XC Relays at Mansfield. This is a traditionally high points scorer for athletes who take part due to the large fields and therefore team managers who convinced their athletes to run have found themselves leaping up the standings.

Top points scorer with 443 was C Olley with the second fastest leg of the day (all first legs have 7s added to account for being slightly shorter). Experienced managers will remember that Chris was the highest point scorer last season and it looks ominous already for the all but 8 teams that have selected him. But strange things happen in FXC League……..

Bede PK, Lucy Kingston and JT continue to maintain their 100% record from last season with Lucy and JT still to miss a race over the whole history of FL! The 100% list for this season has fallen to 24, one down on this time last year. The aim this year is to beat the 15/16 record of 7. The number of athletes registering a finish in FXC rises to 163, far higher than the same stage last year. I wonder if 250 for the season is possible.

Best average for the day, for the second race on the bounce, was T McLain- U13B, with 126 points per million as he smashes his way through the 100 barrier and qualifies for Bullseye Club private dining. He is joined by D Brown (SM) making his FL debut this year with 120.5ppm and in total 11 athletes now make up the Bullseye Club (12 this time last year). New inductees are J Puxty (U20M), F Currie (U15G), B Murphy (SM) (who, rightly as it turns out, complained to me about his price), R Driscoll (SM), J Bryant(SM) and A Ganguli (U13B).

Best performance in a new age group goes to J Puxty with 6th fastest time in the U20M race. Step up in Class prize for the day I would probably go for F Currie with 44ppm from the U15G race and O Breed with 10th fastest time in U13G race. Other Mentions in Despatches: probably the entire SM squad who I think, to a man, stepped up their performance level.

Now to the main action – the teams. It is perhaps surprising, given the depth of knowledge in the XC section of the club that the highest score in the A team category (6 athletes; one athlete from each age group) this week was Iain Presnell’s Sprint Finishers comprising O Breed, F Croll, D Schofield, J Puxty, R Driscoll and M Heslop with 883 points. In the B team category (6 athletes from any age group) the best score of the day was 1098 from Adam Roeder’s (principally an 800m runner) Anything Goes Team 1 of J Goodge, J Puxty, A Kinloch, R Driscoll, J Bryant and C J-A. The best Player Manager was Fraser Gordon, with the team that started the day at the bottom of the table – A Beautiful Place to put on the Pace, which also includes T Gray, T Emm, V Milana, I Harding and C Olley and a score of 720. And finally the best Bargain Team with 360 was another of A Roeder’s teams comprising A Roeder, R Driscoll, L Reeves, L Slack, C Lee and R De Munck. At the other end of the table there were a number of teams on “nil” points principally managed by Masters athletes – make of that what you will. A group Saga cruise with on deck jogging and a captain’s hat for you all to enjoy.

And to add to the excitement there is another change at the top with JT’s Sloggers taking over the top spot from Richard Tosh’s Millionaires who have gone into reverse faster than an MP’s hand on a journalist’s knee.

Finally, the third nomination for the season defining, Terrible Team Names prize is Olly Dunn’s “43C” – I think it’s a rap artist, but I’m not sure.