

Chris claims Elite Gold! CONGRATULATIONS!

For the first time for 25 years, a Deesider has won an Elite Gold! Not even born when Jean Ramsden won the last of her three British titles and 37 years after the one and only male Deesider won the British in 1975 (Tony Thornley at Strines), Chris won a decisive though latterly a close Sprint Gold at York University last Saturday. Commenting to Dave Schorah at the start that any one of the 18 qualifiers from the morning's heats could win this race, Chris was the one who hit the right note. Starting seventh last, he was announced as 6 then 30 seconds clear at the intermediate radio controls, then came strongly through the spectator control with 4 to go. None of the later starters were announced as being faster, as Chris came through the last control and down the run-in. Despite the commentary, with Oli Johnson and Hector Haines to come, it wasn't over and indeed, Oli came in only 6 seconds down with Hector another 6 behind that! In the lead from the second control, Chris had a trauma free run till the fourth and third last controls when losing 6 seconds to Hector's times at each. Fortune smiled on him though as Oli lost 8 seconds here (phew!!) and Hector was too far behind to catch him. So a new name on the 11 year old trophy and in the Deeside Hall of Fame (where's that?). Mike sort of missed his son's prizegiving as he was out running in his final at the time but, bizarrely, heard the announcement as he came through the very close by spectator control but showing admirable constraint, didn't even look up but changed his route choice decision (for the better), so something rubbed off.

Great run also by Dave to finish 5th, except for being one of many who lost time at one particular route choice, his splits show how fast he is moving and, with his fine result at last year's JK sprint, he will be pretty confident for this year's JK sprint in a fortnight.

With the 18's and 20's also running the Men's Open class here, there was a strong Deeside presence with Matthew Vokes, Tom and Mike Beasant, Chris Owens, Olly Williams and Ciaran Allen all running in the B final – how times change! Olly best in 24th, 3rd M18 finisher.

Two other medals this year – Hannah Hateley – Gold in W12 and Mike Smithard, losing his title from last year by 14 seconds to Steve Whitehead for Silver. Other DEE qualifiers for the A finals – Sara Campbell 6th in W45, Jane Campbell 8th in W55 and I believe Jon Whatisname from Delamere was also there and rumoured to have scraped into some final or other, probably because he lived on the map when he was younger (or under 40 anyway).

So how did the Champion celebrate? You've guessed it, pizza and coke (carbs and sugar), every boy's dream at Castleford's very own snowdome. Then off to bed (as the previous night) on a Travelodge sofa.

So to the Middle Distance (or for older people, the Slightly Shorter Than Normal) Champs on the flatlands of Strensall Common. Whilst flat, it wasn't by any means featureless but there were a few 'holes in the ground' and it wasn't always easy to re-locate if displaced. Having trained on our very own flatland of Little Budworth Common, Chris' hopes were high but a couple of 20 second misses, and his podium chances were gone, to finish 7th but Dave had another great run to just miss out on 3rd place so hopefully another confidence booster for the races to come. Some medals though – congrats to Hannah Hateley again for another Gold, Dan Weaver for a Bronze, only 16 seconds down, Bob Verity and Pat Spoonley also for Bronze medals. Best of the rest, Sara Campbell 6th W45 and Ciaran, Olly and Chris 5th, 6th and 8th in M18E.