

'BIT OF A DAZE': JUNIOR POWERED TO FINE CLEAN SWEEP IN HOLLAND

Garner goes through the gears for amazing victory

CYCLING

by PAUL JONES

www.leicestermercury.co.uk/sport

There was precious little room left in Grace Garner's luggage as she returned from the Netherlands following a magnificent performance at the Omloop van Borsele junior three-day race.

The first-year junior, competing against more than 100 riders from around Europe, clinched the red jersey as general classification (overall) winner and, with it, the white jersey as the leading young rider.

The Countesthorpe College student also took the race's points competition to claim the orange jersey and completed a remarkable clean sweep by donning the top sprinter's purple jersey.

Garner, 16, began well with second place in the 13km time-trial. She was then 10th in a bunch sprint at the end of stage two to lie two seconds behind Holland's Jeanne Korevaar.

However, second place on the final stage, and the time bonuses picked up along the way, saw her climb to the top of the standings for the British Olympic Development Programme team.

"It hasn't sunk in yet. It's all a bit of a daze," said the RST RT sprinter.

"I don't normally do that well in the 'GC', I'm usually a stage winner. This time I didn't win a stage—but I won the 'GC'.

"I did a good time-trial and then in stage two we didn't gain



IN-FORM: Grace Garner completed a clean sweep at the Omloop van Borsele junior three-day race in the Netherlands

or lose anything, so I wasn't feeling panicky going into the final stage.

"I knew I could sprint better than the Dutch girl and knew what I had to do.

"When I got the time bonus after the first lap, she kept trying to get off the front but the girls in my team worked so hard chasing down any breaks. They controlled everything."

A memorable weekend for the family was rounded off when Grace's older sister, Lucy (Team Giant-Shimano), chalked up her third podium finish of the season at Dwars Door de Westhoek, in Belgium.

Garner's third-place underlined the progress she is making in the professional ranks—she is now ranked inside the world's top 50.

Matthew Bottrill banked his fifth win of the season when he was fastest in the Ogmere Valley Wheelers time-trial in Wales.

Road works cut the test from 25 to 22.5-miles, the Drag2Zero.com rider blazing around in 42min 20sec.

The only disappointment for Bottrill was the planned battle with multi-national champion

Michael Hutchinson did not take place, with Hutchinson a non-starter.

"It's pretty gutting to come all this way for the event to be shortened," said the Whitwick man.

"But I'm glad I made the effort. I can now gauge my fitness and start working towards my major goal of the British National championships."

Win for Potter in third run

ATHLETICS

DARREN POTTER chalked up his second win in the space of two weeks in the latest Braunstone parkrun.

The three-time runner, third in his debut a month ago, enjoyed a much larger winning margin than his last appearance when just four seconds separated him from his closest rival.

His 16min 39sec finish was more than a minute quicker than James Boyd, who took second place in 17.55.

Debutant Richard Latimer claimed the third podium place in a time of 18.02.

Fellow first-timer Martha Hanby took the crown in the women's race in 20.59 to complete a memorable debut.

Three-time winner Sarah Lee sealed the runner-up spot and her 15th top-three finish, crossing the line in 21.12, while Charlie Austin, second in her debut a week ago, ran home in 21.21 to seal third place.

Debutant Thomas Gostelow was the first home for the under-15s, and fourth overall, crossing the line in 18.14.

The event marked the 50th runs for Peter Kenny and Wigston Phoenix's Julie Thompson, who became the latest recruits of the exclusive 50 Club, the national group of runners who have completed a half-century or more parkruns.

The duo completed their landmark runs in 25.12 and 43.18 respectively.

Meanwhile, Braunstone regular Shaun Newbold enjoyed a rare away-day when he celebrated his 50th parkrun with a 22.18 finish at Darley Park.

The next Braunstone parkrun takes place on Saturday at 9am in front of the old stable block on Braunstone Park.

All parkruns are free to enter, but first-time runners must register online beforehand at:

www.parkrun.org.uk

Club victim of vandals and thieves Lions aim to shoot down stars

I HAD hoped this week to talk to about the Bydgoszcz Grand Prix and how Krzysztof Kasprzak, a good friend of Leicester Lions, blasted to glory in front of a partisan crowd.

And how most of that crowd, it would appear, preferred to watch the event on a large screen in a park rather than paying the extortionate ticket prices at the turnstiles.

But, unfortunately, yet again the life of the promotion team at Leicester Lions is being overshadowed by mindless vandalism and criminality.

At some point, someone may have been in your house, shed

THE DAVID HEMSLEY COLUMN

RAPID SOLICITORS LEICESTER LIONS PROMOTER

or garage and stolen or vandalised your goods.

At the weekend, it was the turn of Leicester's speedway stadium. Undeterred by locks, gates, fences and CCTV, a group of people systematically went around the stadium breaking every door, entering and ransacking every room, defacing property and stealing goods, food and machinery.

The exact value of the damage at this time is hard to estimate, but when the sport is promoted and provided for the people of Leicester and Leicestershire by volunteers, this type of thing is totally demoralising and can destroy the passion to deliver the sport back to the city.

Clearly, the people who do this type of thing have no moral standing.

On this occasion, the damage may be more psychological than of value, but the will to continue is so critical to deliver the sport.

Trail of destruction - Page 8

LEICESTER LIONS face a stern test tonight (7.30) when they race against King's Lynn Stars at the Norfolk Arena.

The hosts enter the Elite League meeting in confident mood having made a near-perfect start to the season and living up to the pre-season forecasts as a team to be feared.

Five wins from six have rocketed the Stars into second place in the table, just two points behind leaders Lakeside Hammers but with three matches in hand.

Rapid Solicitors-sponsored Leicester make two changes to the team which beat East-

SPEEDWAY

bourne at the weekend. Ryan Fisher replaces Patrick Hougaard and Sam Masters will cover for Peter Ljung.

"Patrick had an operation last week to fix his broken thumb sustained at Coventry and is likely to be missing for around six weeks," said Lions team manager Norrie Allan.

"Peter also injured his hand in a crash against Eastbourne. I have also switched the reserve pairing around with Max at six and Tom at seven."

At the Stars' helm is Grand Prix rider Niels-Kristian

Iversen, and he receives solid support from Kenneth Bjerre and Rory Schlein.

"King's Lynn went about their team building in a different way to Leicester," said Allan. "Whereas they have top-end strength, we went for a more even spread of scoring throughout the side.

"After our performance against Eastbourne, we will approach the match in a positive mood."

KING'S LYNN: 1 Niels-Kristian Iversen, 2 Nicklas Porsing, 3 Rory Schlein, 4 Robert Lambert, 5 Kenneth Bjerre, 6 Lewis Kerr, 7 Lewis Rose.

LEICESTER: 1 Jason Doyle, 2 Sam Masters, 3 Mads Korneliusen, 4 Simon Stead, 5 Ryan Fisher, 6 Tom Perry, 7 Max Clegg.