

2023/24 Runner of the Year Male Nominations

Chris Benjamin

Chris is one of our runners who is dedicated to joining club runs and really loves giving and receiving positive support. I have never seen such an encouraging, enthusiastic and caring marshal and passing him in a race gives everyone a massive boost! Over the last 19 months he has shown incredible determination to keep training for the ultra he so dearly wanted to complete. Injury prevented this twice and forced him to pull out of the second attempt in February. But he quickly battled back in March to take part in one and he completed the beautiful 33 mile course at Chalfont St Peter and finished in 3rd place. He truly is an inspiration to all of us and shown us that you should never stop chasing your goal because one day you will cross the Rubicon. Well done Chris!

Ross Greening

Ross is another runner who has been very focussed on this training this year and is regularly in the fast club run group on Wednesday evening with much younger runners. He was a regular at this year's handicap races and is currently leading his age category in the club road race series and in 6th place overall for all ages! He is regularly 1st in his age category at parkrun too! He has been knocking out some superb race times this year. Over 10k he has delivered 45 minute times on 4 separate occasions with 45:19 at Bourton, 45:28 at Berkeley, 45:57 at Cirencester (which was very warm) and 45:32 at Gloucester (which was also warm). He also completed the Cleeve Cloud Cuckoo in 45:19 and completed the challenging Dymock Half in 1:43.51. Well done Ross!

Elliot Jordan

Elliot regularly attends club run and his running has been getting even stronger this year after many great performances last year. He put in 2 fabulous runs in the last 2 handicap races finishing 5th and following that with 3rd the next time. He was also the first almost home at the Pershore Plum 10k in 42.23. His finishing positions were improving throughout the cross country season finishing with a superb 44.03 at Pittville. He is a regular parkrunner and is now consistently running under 21 mins and finished in 3rd place at Evesham on 2 occasions this year. He is also a regular parkrun volunteer as a pacer and marshal. He ran a fabulous Linda Franks in 32:45, a PB by over 4 minutes, and completed the Torrevieja Half Marathon in Spain in a fantastic time of 1:32. Well done Elliot!

Nick Lewis

Nick is a very strong runner and always knocks out very impressive times whenever he races and particularly relishes the off road mud and hills. As usual he had an excellent cross country season taking place in all 4 races in the Gloucester league culminating in a time of 41.26 at a very challenging Pittville course and finishing 5th overall in his age category. He always does well at parkrun and last year had top 3 finishes 5 times. More recently he was the first Almost home at the magnificently muddy and hilly Eastnor 7 and finished in 5th place in 49:46. He recently ran the Wokingham half in an excellent 1:27.21. And then in March he improved from a 10th place finish last year to finishing 1st overall at the off road Cleevevold 14 mile race in 1:40.48. Well done Nick!

Dave Nelson

Dave is a fabulous LiRF and when potential club members try us out and they have Dave I always say to them that he will look after you really well! He is very encouraging and supportive, will always be asking how runners are in his group and will keep them company at the back if required. Dave is also a member of the Cheltenham junior parkrun core team having volunteered at parkruns 105 times in 11 different locations. He is also an extraordinary parkrun tourist having done 228 parkruns in 113 different locations in 12 different countries!! And when he's not travelling the world to do parkrun or watch the Scotland national football team Dave does find some time for races having this year enjoyed amongst others the Bourton Mile, Dick Whittington 5k, Linda Franks 5 mile, Bourton 10k and Bristol Half. Yes sir, Dave can boogie!! Well done Dave!

Matt Proome

Matt is certainly one of our members who likes to take on the big running challenges! This year Matt's running has been all about training for one huge race with a few training races along the way. He started the year representing the club at the Cotswold Farm Park Cross Country race in 45:26 and coming 11th at Bryanston parkrun in 22:29 in South Africa. He then completed the Manchester marathon in April in 3:48.43 which he followed up in May with the Marlborough Downs 33 mile multi-terrain challenge conquering 2,862 feet of ascent in 7:08.54. This was his last long training run before the very challenging Comrades ultramarathon in South Africa in June where Matt finished the 55.3 miles and 3,666 feet of ascent in a simply incredible time of 9:52.40. Well done Matt!

Johnny Rea

Johnny is a club runner who was steadily improving over last year and then suddenly at the end of the year he started improving massively as was evidenced by his parkrun times when he posted a PB time of 20.41 at the last parkrun of the year at Cheltenham. And then in mid January he improved that by an astonishing 86 secs to 19.15 comfortably becoming a sub 20 min 5k runner!! Wow!! This was followed by a very impressive time at Linda Frank 5 mile of 31.48 which has earned him a top 100 UK ranking for the MV35 age category. And he has since followed this with a sub 40 mins 10k at Bourton in 39.37 and an amazing 2:37.00 over 20 miles at Berkeley last weekend. Well done Johnny!

Josh Rimell

Josh is a runner who has improved dramatically in recent months. It all started with his first marathon which he trained hard for and finished comfortably inside his five hour target at London in 4:54.48. Since then, off the back of that marathon training, he finished 2nd overall in the club handicap series, is currently leading the senior male age category in our road race series and has achieved PBs across shorter distances. He is a regular parkrunner and has been constantly improving his parkrun PB and most recently at the end of July set a new PB of 20:52 at Cheltenham. Back in May he set a magnificent three minute PB at the challenging Dymock half marathon in 1:49.04. In June Josh then slashed his 10k PB by almost three minutes to 45:39 at the Gloucester 10k. Well done Josh!

Dave Rogers

Dave is a long standing member of the club who goes about some amazing running achievements in a very quiet and unassuming way. Dave is no stranger to long distance events but this year has completed 2 events involving all day and all night tests of endurance. Firstly, Dave took on the brutal GB Ultra Beacons Way 100km which included over 11,500 feet of climbing through the Brecon Beacons. Dave battled through the most awful weather conditions of storms, wind & biblical rain and finished at around 6am in the morning in an amazing 19 hours. Secondly, Dave took on the Cotswold Way Ultra Race, running all 104 miles. Whilst the weather was kinder to Dave the event is just as tough with over 13,000 feet of climbing. Out of a field of 75, Dave finished 9th in a brilliant 25 hours. Well done Dave!

Ben Stone

Ben is one of the club's speedier runners and this year has run a parkrun in 19.48 at Gloucester North, a 10k in 40.10 at Bourton and ran his first marathon in an excellent 3:34.31 at London. However, his focus this year has been fundraising and supporting others by running in memory of Marty Ward, Ben's best friend who suddenly passed away last year. Ben raised several thousand pounds with his London charity place for RSPCA showing great determination to get to the start line as he had planned to run it with Marty. And he ran the Cheltenham half with over 30 others helping raise over £20,000 so far for Sue Ryder, a charity Marty supported. Ben has shown that it's not always about PBs, it's also about supporting friends and family and taking care of your own mental health and wellbeing while honouring a close friend, which truly embodies the spirit of Almost Athletes! Well done Ben!

Graeme Stopp

Graeme is one of our runners who is very generous with his time and support for other club runners. He is regularly leading groups at club run and there is always superb feedback about how much he cares for and supports the runners he is leading. And he will happily step in to set up the run when required. Graeme is a very keen parkrunner having done over 200 parkruns at 35 different locations consistently running great times with his best last year of 23:01 and has volunteered 47 times, many times as a pacer to help other runners. Last year he knocked out some very impressive half marathon times with a PB at Kew in 1:46.37 and delivered a great leg at the Cotswold Way Relay in 2:13.33. And recently volunteered, as he always does, at our Linda Franks race. We are very fortunate to have Graeme as one of our members. Well done Graeme!

Bob Spawton

Bob is a very popular member of the club who is always kind and friendly to other club runners. He is a regular member of the Thursday morning club runs and a great supporter of our race series again last year by running a total of 15 races in the road and off road race series. I was delighted to present him with very well earned trophies for 3rd place in his age category for both series, which is an excellent achievement given how strong and competitive that age category is! Bob showed last year that he was willing to tackle any distance from 1 mile to a marathon and relishes taking on the more challenging off road races. His first marathon in October was certainly not the easiest one he could have chosen as he completed the Snowdonia Marathon Eyri in an impressive 5:28.03. Well done Bob!