ENGLISH ROAD RUNNING ASSOCIATION NATIONAL ROAD RELAYS, Sutton Park, West Midlands, October 3

In perfect Autumnal weather there was a sense of déjà vu in the senior races as firstly, Vale Royal won the women's race and then Cambridge & Coleridge the men's as both retained their titles.
Due to park restrictions, this year was only the second time that the senior races were held over a new distance and times were generally around a minute-and-a-half quicker this year than in 2025
Among the six young athletes' events, where the same lap was used as previously, six different clubs took gold, whilst Chelmsford were the only club to take more than one team medal, with three.

Men
Holders Cambridge & Coleridge were always in the hunt and were only a few seconds off of the lead on the opening stage, through Thomas Keen's 15:36.
It had been Blackburn's Matt Ramsden who had 'won' the opening 5.47km stage with a 15:30 clocking that wound up fifth fastest overall, as Joe Tuffin, for BRAT and Tomer Tarragano, for Brighton, were close.
Ramsden said: "it was quite quick and hot and close, but I decided to speed it up on the way back."
Cambridge's Thomas Bridger diced with Brighton's Josh Hobbs on the second stage and he said: "I caught him with 200 to go and got round the last corner first."
He then handed over to their slowest runner Julian Moynihan who led from Brighton's James Turner at the half-way point.
Moynihan said of his effort: "I pushed too hard at the start," but all was well, as he handed over to Jonathan Escalante Phillips, who popped in a 15:50 clocking, to retain the lead.
There was a bit of a train behind as Tonbridge's James Kingston, who was second fastest last year, ran 15:19 and led fastest then, Western Tempo's Jacob Cann up to the podium positions. Salford's Harry Wakefield joined in the fun, with a 15:24 split.
Cann said: "I pulled him (Kingston) back, but then he pulled away again but I was hanging on in there."
Their three times were to wind up second, third and fourth fastest respectively but, up ahead, Cambridge & Coleridge were now almost certain to retain their title.
They finished off with Jack Gray, who said: "it was a bit lonely for me out in front," and Nathan Mapperley, who noted: "I probably lost a little bit," but were both inside 16-minutes and their club won by 45 seconds.

Behind, it was Ton bridge who snatched silver near the finish as Ted Higgins got the drop on Western Tempo's Dom James.
Deeper in the field Will Barnicoat, the 2024 under-23 European cross-country champion, who has been on the track of late, was having a storming last leg for Aldershot. A 15:10 clocking saw his club up to tenth and was the fastest overall time of the day.
Barnicoat returned to action late this past summer with a useful 13:29.49 5000-metres in Sweden among other track outings.
Cambridge & Coleridge also had the fastest B team, who were in eighth place and had their first stage runner, Alex Melloy faster than all but one of his club's A team. This was explained by the club saying that they promised their most of their runners in their South of England championship team a run out in the Nationals.

Women
Vale Royal comfortably retained their senior women's title and did so by nearly a minute from Leeds who, despite their successes elsewhere, have never won this title.
They started off with Sarah Dufour-Jackson who was second fastest last year, but they were 30 seconds off of the first leg lead set by Liverpool's Faye O'Hare and Norwich's Megan Gadsby.
Their times of 17:50 and 17:56 were to stand up as second and third best of the afternoon.
Gadsby led at the Jamboree Stone from O'Hare and Dufour-Jackson, but it was 22-year-old O'Hare who finished the strongest and said: "it was hot and warm and the last time I was here I was second in the under-15 race on the first stage."
Leg two had seen City of Leeds ahead mid-stage and it was their Eleanor Curran who held on to lead at the mid-race point from Salford's Freya Murdoch, as the eventual winners were back in third.
Curran said: "I took the lead going up the hill and that was my job."
Leeds held on to the lead on the penultimate stage, despite Holly Weedall eating into the advantage for Vale Royal, who were now just nine seconds adrift. It was Georgia Malir on duty for Leeds and she said: "I was hanging on in there."
Bristol ^& West closed right up on this stage three thanks to Charlotte Taylor's equal third fastest 17:56 and this was enough to ensure that her club were in the hunt for bronze medals.
With the fastest women's lap of the day, at 17:42, Katie Ward completed the job for Vale Royal, a time that exactly matched the 2025 fastest time set by Abbie Donnelly, on this new lap.

Ward was still behind half-way round, but then said: “I caught her just before the turn.” This was out on the dog leg before the run back down past Keepers Pool then up to the finish.
Sarah Potter took second for Leeds, as Bryony Shepherd held on to third ahead of Belgrave’s fast finishing Nancie Bowley.

Young Athletes
The first away on the day were the under-14 boys, quickly followed by the under-14 girls.
The boys race saw South London win from a Cornwall trio, after Isaac Taylor-Unitt had led for Salford Harriers on the 3.88km opening stage.
Fred Pochee then brought Cornwall into the lead mid-race before Cartyr Jenkin saw South London home to a 15 second win.
Mid-race Sebastian Buxton’s 11;54, for City of Stoke, ran out the fastest stage time.
For the girls, who mixed it with the boys a few minutes back, it was a bit of a procession as Brentwood Beagles won by a street.
They began with Lianne Esterhuysen’s 13:27, but she was headed by Gosforth’s Ada Penfold’s 13:21 and these two were second and third best of the girls’ age group.
Brentwood went ahead med-race through Jessica Davidson before Sophie Davies’ 13:18 posted the quickest lap, to see her club home by 96 seconds from Aldershot.
The under-16 boys followed and there was a rare national title for Solihull & Small Heath as they overcame a mid-race deficit to win by 29 seconds from Hercules Wimbledon.
It had been Wakefield’s Thomas Hastings who had led the first stage with an 11:57 clocking that was to end up second quickest, after taking the lead after 2km. His club then dropped back as Gosforth’s Mason Gaylor and Noah Penfold gave their club a slight lead over Chelmsford, with just one lap left to run.
Finally, it was race-fastest Zak Rush who closed the five second gap to the lead before going right away with the race’s quickest time of 11:54.
The Warriors Pentathlon club comfortably won the under-16 girls’ race after pulling back an opening lap lead set by Aldershot’s Koko O’Neill’s 13:28.
This was thanks to Ronnie Kohring taking over from one of the Beddow twins, Isobel, before Daisy McVicar completed the job with a 13:34 return that ensured that all of Warriors’ times were within nine seconds of each other.
Deep in the field mid-race and largely un-noticed, Birchfield’s Taylor Riches posted the fastest under-16 time of 13:22.

The smallest age group field was in the under-18 women's race but the men's held up well and there, Herne Hill won the men's before City of Stoke the women's, to ensure that there were six different clubs taking gold medals.
Thomas Clerkin led off for Herne Hill's men, with the race's third fastest split of 11:34 and was chased home by Bracknell's Elliott Langley-Aybar's 11:37 as the pattern of the race was quickly established.
James Clement-Nash, with the under-18 second fastest 11:28 and Caspian Holmes then finished things off for Herne Hill, as they took the win by 27 seconds.
Moving up to third, on the last leg, was Finn MacLennan, whose race quickest 11:24 secured Cambridge & Coleridge the bronze medals.
For the under-18 women, Stoke's Holly Turner gave them a good start with a first stage 13:21, but that was behind Derby's Olivia Lee's second fastest overall 13:03. Lee said: I led most of the time but was going away up the first hill."
They then lost the lead mid-race to Chelmsford and Windsor before Zara Bratt's 13:01 race quickest brought them home for the win.