

2290 & 2296 Start of the 2019 Blackpool Inter Club at Stanley Park. 2411 the empty start in 2020.

Dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

On the 1st April Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde AC should have been hosting the first race of the season of the Inter Club Series, however this was cancelled/postponed because the Coronavirus emergency. This would have been the first of seven races with the others hosted by Lytham St Annes RRC, Preston Harriers, Thornton Cleveleys RRC, Wesham RRC, Chorley Tri Club and Red Rose Runners.

BWFAC Club Secretary commenting said "The Blackpool Inter Club was due to be held on 1st April, but given the current pandemic, and in line with Government and England Athletics advice, the race has had to be cancelled in order to observe all the regulations currently in force to prevent the spread of the disease. Whilst sport has an important role to play in society, at times like these, it has to take a back seat, especially to ensure no additional burden is placed upon the NHS, and the sterling work they are undertaking on our behalf. In due course we will resume our friendly competition, but only when the All Clear has been given for us to do so. Until then I trust that everyone stays fit and well, and follows the guidelines issued by the Government to hopefully reduce the spread of the virus. Please continue to support your families and each other in the coming weeks, and months"

The Inter Club Series is a popular event, with its roots back in 1985. Then there were just three Athletic/Running clubs in the local area, Preston Harriers, Chorley AC and Springfield's, who started a triangular race, starting by the Continental Pub/Restaurant, near Avenham Park in Preston. The first and second races on 30/5/85 and 31/7/85 were both won by Ken Moss, and Preston Harriers won the team competition, while the final race (3/9/85) attracted 55 runners, was run in reverse and was won by John Nuttall. Prior to this, there is evidence that in 1984 there was a series of 10 five mile races, with a Handicap to finish with 36 running in the final race.

It appears that this was the genesis of the Inter Club Series, with numbers rising to upto 200 and six clubs competing in the early 2000s. Since then another club has joined, and at the 2019 Blackpool Inter Club, there were 455 who finished. It is not just the competitive element, but the social aspect which attracts runners, who can mix and socialise with members of other clubs. Each Club also provides refreshments when they are hosts, and it often seems to me that competition in providing the best spread, is more important than the running competition!

Sadly it seems unlikely that the next few Inter Clubs will be take place, but hopefully everyone will be able meet before the end of the season.



