



## 2011 Bupa London 10,000 Pavey beats Radcliffe as Farah retains his title

Paula Radcliffe suffered defeat on her return to racing this morning as Jo Pavey stormed to victory in the Bupa London 10,000, part of the Run Britain series, while a jetlagged Mo Farah retained the men's title with an easy win over domestic competition on much of the London 2012 Olympic marathon route.

Radcliffe was hoping for a victorious come-back in her first competitive appearance for 18 months, but the road 10km world record holder was no match for Pavey who led from the start to take the UK 10km championships title.

While Pavey powered home on a beautiful London morning in 32:22, a sore back left Radcliffe struggling to find her rhythm and the 37-year-old could only finish third in 33:17, 29 seconds behind British cross country international Gemma Steel.

"It was a bit of a disaster for me," said Radcliffe, who has recently recovered from bouts of bronchitis and laryngitis. "I didn't see Jo after 4km. I just couldn't stay with her and from that point it was just terrible for me. I just wanted it to be so much better."

Radcliffe finished nearly three minutes outside her world best, clearly hampered by a lower back problem which flared up four weeks ago.

"It's very frustrating," she added. "I had some problems with my back coming in to the race, but I thought it was going to be alright. I wanted to come back and at least do myself justice but I didn't. It was rubbish and I'm embarrassed."

While Radcliffe had a frustrating morning, Pavey enjoyed another morale-boosting performance following her 2:28:24 debut at the Virgin London Marathon six weeks ago when she pencilled her name in for Olympic selection.

"I loved it out there; it's such a fantastic event," said Pavey. "I would have liked a quicker time but my legs weren't quite ready after the marathon. It was a solid enough run though, and it was nice just to get back out there and get on with it."

While Pavey led from the start, Steel made her move at half way, closing in on Radcliffe and moving into second before 6km. She quickly built a lead that Radcliffe couldn't close and was delighted to take second nearly half a minute ahead of her idol.

"I saw Paula and I was starting to catch her, but I couldn't believe it," said the 25-year-old. "I didn't know whether to pass her or not. Paula is my idol so I just didn't think I should be passing Paula Radcliffe."

"I hung back at first but at 5km I felt really comfortable and just went for it. I could see Jo but she had too much on me."



Radcliffe has already ruled out an appearance at this year's World Championships in Daegu, and she will now seek treatment on her back before deciding whether and where to run an autumn marathon as she seeks the Olympic qualifying time.

"I really wanted to come and run on this course and get used to it before the Olympics," she said. "It's such a great day and the atmosphere out there was fantastic, so I am really gutted. I just didn't have the turnover at all. My breathing was fine, but my leg just felt a bit dead and there was no power.

"Every time somebody passed me I kept saying 'go with them, go with them', and when Gemma passed I tried to go with her but I couldn't. It was all I could do to stay relaxed.

"I've been training really hard since January and I should be in much better shape. I will need to run a marathon faster than I ran today."

Farah wasn't quite at his best today, either. After twice breaking the British record on this course in the last two years, the 28-year-old was content to secure a third consecutive victory after arriving from his USA training base only 24 hours earlier.

The Briton often leads from the outset, but Farah left it late this time, breaking clear from a leading pack of five with only a quarter of the race remaining to win in 29:15, more than a minute and a half outside his course record.

London athlete Solomon Mehretab was the surprise package as he took second in 29:37, slicing 34 seconds from his personal best, while Scotsman Andrew Lemoncello overhauled Phil Wicks to finish third in 29:38. (NB: Solomon Mehretab is not eligible for UK Championships or prize money).

"I just decided to see what happened today because I'm a bit jetlagged," said Farah. "My aim was just to get the win. The time was really slow but I just wanted to put in a good performance. I felt alright but my legs were a bit heavy."

Eschewing his usual front-running tactics, Farah set off with caution, tucking in behind Wicks, the early leader, in a large group of 14. Looking relaxed, he shadowed Lemoncello, who made the first significant move after 4km as the leading pack was cut to five.

They passed 5km in 14:42 with Farah on Lemoncello's heels, followed by Wicks and Mehretab, and this group negotiated the tight corners through the City of London and past St Paul's Cathedral before dipping back to Victoria Embankment.

Farah made his bid for home emerging from the underpass beneath Blackfriars Bridge. Surprisingly, it was the little known Mehretab who stuck to the double European champion as Lemoncello and Wicks dropped back. The two ran side-by-side through 8km (a 2:51 split) before Farah kicked clear.

"I wasn't worried at all," said Farah afterwards. "I just wanted to see what happened today. I knew we were running slowly so I was confident, but there was one guy I didn't know who stuck with me for a bit."



## **Results**

### **Men**

1. Mo Farah (Newham and Essex Beagles) 29:15
2. Solomon Mehretab (Not eligible for UK Championships) 29:37
3. Andrew Lemoncello (Fife AC) 29:38
4. Phil Wicks (Belgrave Harriers) 29:41
5. Mark Warmby (Newham and Essex Beagles) 29:50
6. Josh Lily (Tipton Harriers) 29:52

### **Women**

1. Jo Pavey (Exeter) 32:22
2. Gemma Steel (Charnwood) 32:48
3. Paula Radcliffe (Bedford & County) 33:17
4. Justina Heslop (Clapham Chasers) 33:20
5. Hollie Rowland (City of Norwich) 33:58