



2016 Vitality London 10,000

Weir wins double as Butchart bounces back to take first British title

Wheelchair star David Weir completed a spectacular road race double at the Vitality London 10,000 in central London this morning while Scotland's Andrew Butchart went from second to first in less than 24 hours to claim his first British championship title.

Weir shook off any lingering tiredness from his historic barrier-breaking one-mile world record in the Vitality Westminster Mile on Sunday to win the British men's 10km wheelchair title in 21 minutes and six seconds ahead of South Africa's Ernst van Dyk, while Butchart bounced back from yesterday's narrow defeat in the men's mile to defeat defending champion Andy Vernon in a personal best of 28:28.

Butchart has been in brilliant form recently with a 13:13.30 5000m PB at the FBK Games in Hengelo last weekend. But he was disappointed to miss out on the British one-mile title in front of Buckingham Place on Sunday afternoon when Nick Goolab was given the judges' verdict after the pair dipped for the line at the end of a thrilling race.

But the confident 24-year-old, who was fourth here last year, returned to The Mall this morning in determined mood. Leading from the start, he opened a 30-metre lead on Vernon by halfway on the central London course and came home 36 seconds clear to take 41 seconds from his one-year-old PB.

It was a measure of Butchart's performance on a cold and breezy morning that he finished 10 seconds quicker than Vernon's winning PB in 2015 and now lies behind only Mo Farah among British athletes in the nine-year history of this event.

"Yesterday's mile probably helped my legs to be honest," said Butchart after he breezed through the Finish Line on Spur Road. "If I hadn't run yesterday I probably would have felt worse, but I ended up taking more than 30 seconds from my PB.

"I knew I could go sub-28, because I've been in such good form, but it's my first UK title so I've got to be pleased with that."

Weir was rightly pleased with his weekend's work too. The six-times London Marathon champion became the first ever sub three-minute miler when he sped around St James's Park in 2:57 on Sunday and returned to the scene 18 hours later to win the inaugural wheelchair race at the London 10,000 with a start-to-finish 33-second victory over van Dyk.

"It's always good to get a double," said Weir, who has a 10km road PB of 19:26. "I'd like to have broken 20 minutes today but it was quite windy out there and there are a lot of corners on this course.



“But there were no after effects from yesterday and this morning’s race capped a really good weekend for me. Now we just need to get some more of the top guys down here and make it a more competitive race.”

Weir has targeted marathon gold at the Rio Paralympic Games this September so was delighted to beat the 10-times Boston Marathon winner by such a clear margin.

“I went from the start but Ernst was always lingering there five-to-10 metres back,” said the 36-year-old. “You know Ernst is always going to chase you down, that’s his strength, but I’m confident now I can stay ahead.”

Two-times London Marathon winner Shelly Woods was in confident form too as she dominated the women’s wheelchair event to beat Sunday’s one-mile champion Nikki Emerson by two-and-a-half minutes in 27:47.

Meanwhile, late entrant Lily Partridge was a surprise victor in the women’s elite race in 33:03, her second 10km PB of the year.

“It was nice to come and win again on this course,” said Woods, who has dropped out of the London Marathon in the last two years. “It was nice to be finishing here in front of Buckingham Palace instead of at Tower Bridge. It was fun.”

Butchart appeared to be having fun too as he sped away from the field from the start and passed the 1km point on the Strand in 2:53 with Vernon heading a pack of five in second place.

Butchart was quickly into a rhythm of his own, and the Scot went through 2km in 5:43, extending his lead to 30m by the time he passed the 3km mark near Holborn in 8:30. The reigning champion was now clear in second place, but Butchart was already away and gone.

He strode past St Paul’s Cathedral and clicked through 4km in 11:19 with a 17-second lead, which he maintained to halfway (14:10) close to the Bank of England.

Vernon was doing his best to close the gap but Butchart was in a race of his own. By 6km he was 22 seconds clear in 17:04. He passed 7km in 19:57 and 8km in 22:46, now so far ahead that he had time to pose for a cheeky selfie with a spectator on Whitehall, making a peace sign to the camera phone before stretching out along Bird Cage Walk to finish in glorious isolation in front of the Palace.

“It was just a bit of fun and banter,” said Butchart of his photo antics afterwards. “They were having fun and I was having fun too. I just hope they get the picture.”

“Once I found my rhythm the course felt really flat and fast and I could just bang it out,” he added. “I noticed the wind a bit on the way back but I’m from Scotland so I’m used to it.”

“It felt like a comfortable pace and I know Andy is not really fighting fit at the moment, so I was confident.”



Vernon may have been denied a hat-trick of London 10,000 victories but the European silver medallist on the track was happy to acknowledge Butchart's dominance on the roads this morning.

"Butchart is in a different league at the moment, so it was always going to be very difficult to beat him today," said the 30-year-old Aldershot, Farnham and District athlete. "I was hoping that over 10km he would struggle towards the end and slow down, but he's too strong and quick at the moment.

"I wanted a hard run today but Butchart did that instead and I couldn't quite go with him."

Ben Connor finished third in 29:21 on his London 10,000 debut while Rachel Felton was runner-up in the women's race behind Partridge in 33:35, 10 seconds clear of third-placed Hannah Walker.

Like Butchart, Partridge led from the early stages. She pulled away from a chasing pack containing race favourite Charlotte Purdue after halfway, driven on by a desire to put her poor performance at last weekend's British Olympic 10,000m trials well and truly behind her.

"It's nice to draw a line under last week," said the 25-year-old British cross country international who finished fifth in the Highgate trials. "I just wanted to get my confidence back and it was nice to feel myself again.

"I hadn't planned to run here but last weekend was so awful I just wanted to get out again. It was good of the organisers to let me in and thankfully I have another British title at the end of it."

Behind the elites, around 12,000 runners completed the scenic course which takes in many of the capital's best known sights, including Trafalgar Square, St Paul's Cathedral, Whitehall and Parliament Square.

Top Three Finishers

Men

1. Andrew Butchart (Central) 28:28
2. Andy Vernon (Aldershot, Farnham & District) 29:04
3. Ben Connor (Derby) 29:21

Women

1. Lily Partridge (Aldershot, Farnham & District) 33:03



2. Rachel Felton (Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers) 33:35

3. Hannah Walker (Run Fast) 33:45

Wheelchair men

1. David Weir (Weir Archer Academy) 21:06

2. Ernst van Dyk (South Africa) 21:39

3. Rafael Botello Jimenez (Spain) 24:51

Wheelchair women

1. Shelly Woods (Weir Archer Academy) 27:47

2. Nikki Emerson (British Wheelchair Athletics Association) 30:21

3. Martyna Snopek (Weir Archer Academy) 36:57