

# Consecutive defeats in league and cup

By Gavin Browne  
gavin.browne@pimedia.co.uk  
@GavinBrowne77

Garstang FC endured a difficult week with cup defeat followed by another loss in the league.

Zach Clark's players lost in the NWCFL First Division Cup last midweek, losing 1-0 against Ilkley Town.

That was backed up by a 2-1 loss against First Division North leaders Bury AFC at the weekend.

The Riversiders welcomed Ilkley last Wednesday, having only met them three days earlier in the league.

That match had ended goalless and the return encounter started in even fashion.

Ilkley's Ben Atkinson fired over from 20 yards before Clark was denied by visiting keeper Tim Edney and Joe Noblet fired another attempt off target.

James Hudson also failed to test Riversiders' keeper Will Kitchen, who got the better of Luke Barker and Charlie Nixon.

Barker came close again, heading against the woodwork before Kitchen denied him, one-on-one.

The deadlock was, however, broken in some style eight minutes after the restart.

Atkinson collected the ball out wide before cutting inside and firing into the top corner from distance.

The Riversiders responded, coming close to an equaliser with Ilkley forced into a



Garstang FC keeper Will Kitchen was beaten by two stunning strikes in the space of a few days

goalline clearance and another last-ditch intervention.

At the other end, the post denied Atkinson a second goal but one ultimately proved enough on the night.

Then, last weekend saw Clark's players up against a Bury AFC team in need of

points in their quest for the First Division North title.

In front of a crowd of more than 1,600, Bury opened the scoring 12 minutes in as Abimbola Obasoto curled an effort past Kitchen and into the top corner.

The keeper saved Tom

Greaves' acrobatic effort before Noblet was denied an equaliser by a fine stop from Bury keeper Jack Atkinson.

Then, with half-time four minutes away, Bury extended their lead as Kristian Holt fired home from 18 yards.

Bury came close to a third

before Garstang gave themselves hope eight minutes from time as Danny Squires scored from distance.

They were unable to find a leveller with defeat leaving them ninth in the table going into Wednesday's Macron Cup tie with St Helens Town.

## Athletes conclude the latest Mid Lancs cross country campaign

Six runners from Garstang Running Club took part in the sixth and final round of the Mid-Lancashire Cross Country League race last weekend.

The race was held at Towneley Park, Burnley, where the weather was bright and spring-like, with a mild wind.

All of the runners taking part were also presented with multi-lap courses which were flat, fast and, despite the

overnight rain, firm.

There were only 96 runners in the ladies' race, which was held over 5.8 kilometres.

The first of the Garstang ladies to finish was Vicky Doherty, who came home 29th in a time of 25:47.

That was enough for her to claim the coveted Garstang Running Club ladies' cross country championship for the 2021-22 season.

She was followed by Mary

Hewitt, who was 63rd thanks to her time of 30:22.

That performance saw her finish as the second female veteran 65 in the race, as well as taking third spot overall in the league's individual championship for her age group.

The race itself saw Lancaster University claim three of the first four finishers.

Finty Royle was first to cross the line in 20:20, ahead

of Anna Philps (21:14) in second.

Clubmate Rheagan Edwards (22:02) was fourth, finishing behind Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde AC's Caroline Betmead (21:33).

The senior men's race was 9.8 kilometres long and attracted a field of 160 runners.

First in for Garstang was Simon Gora, who claimed 83rd position with a time of 40:20.

Next to cross the finishing line was Andy Neville, whose time of 45:27 gave him 127th position.

Tony Pritchard finished

147th thanks to his time of 50:24, narrowly beating Graham Hobson who was 148th in 50:41.

Lancaster University were able to celebrate a double as Matthew Briggs won the men's race in 31:41.

He led in Preston Harriers' Gary Livesey (32:08) and Burnley AC's Gary Shaw (33:07).

The Garstang club is continuing to welcome new members.

They meet every Tuesday at Garstang Sports Club at 7pm with further information at [www.garstangrc.co.uk](http://www.garstangrc.co.uk) or on Facebook.

## Revving up for the return of rallying

This weekend's Legend Fires North West Stages Rally, in partnership with Simpson's Skoda and ND Civils, sees closed-road motorsport return to Lancashire following its suspension in 2020/21 because of the pandemic.

The rally, which aims to raise thousands of pounds for charitable causes, is going ahead thanks to the co-operation of Wyre Council, Lancaster City Council, Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Garstang Town Council and parish councils throughout the route.

Starting with a ceremonial start in Garstang town centre at around 6.30pm on Friday evening, the rally begins at 8.45am the following morning from its headquarters at Myerscough College.

Competitors will then head off for the special stages on closed roads, including the Nicky Nook stage to the east of Garstang.

That gets underway just after 10am and is repeated at 1.30pm and 5pm, with parking available at the Scorton Showground.

The Long Knotts Stage runs at 9.20am, 12.45pm and 4.10pm, with parking at Chipping Showground.

Friday's ceremonial start promises a carnival-style atmosphere, complete with the internationally-renowned Samba Espirito drum band of Notting Hill Carnival and New York Brazilian Day fame.

The band will play ahead of car one as it reaches the High Street, and leading crews will be interviewed while awaiting their run over the start ramp.

Leading the field away at car one is 2019 European Rally Champion Chris Ingram in the Skoda Fabia Rally2, in which he is competing in this year's World Rally Championship.

Former World Rally Championship contender Neil Wearden, from Pilling, starts at car 29 in his Hyundai i20 F2.

They are among the hopeful contingent of competitors from the likes of South Shore Motor Club and Garstang and Preston Motor Club, hoping to go well on home ground.

They all face some tough competition as the 125-car field has attracted some of the UK's top tarmac rally crews.

The final outcome will be known when the champagne sprays at the finish, scheduled for Garstang's High Street at 5.20pm on Saturday.