

# **BTR LIVERPOOL SANTA DASH TAKES WORLD TITLE**

## **City festive spectacle tops Las Vegas on 10th anniversary**

December 8th 2014

A staggering 8,500 Santas defied challenging weather conditions yesterday (Sunday, 7 December) and took to the streets of Liverpool for the 10th anniversary BTR Liverpool Santa Dash – winning back the world title honours from Las Vegas.

Liverpool was awash with a sea of red – and 750 blue Santas – for the city's biggest annual festive spectacle.

The event started at the Pier Head on the city's world famous waterfront, under the gaze of the iconic Liver Birds. A 5K route took the Santas through the city centre, before finishing outside Liverpool Town Hall where finishers were greeted by stilt walking characters and snow.

The Santas were given a lively send off by Santa himself; Radio City's Breakfast Show hosts Leanne Campbell and Dave Kelly; Lord Mayor of Liverpool Councillor Erica Kemp; Liverpool Football Club legend Alan Kennedy; and representatives from the five BTR Footsteps Fundraisers charities – Radio City's Cash For Kids, Claire House Children's Hospice, Everton in the Community, Jospice, and Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

Guests also included Paul Simons and Joel Hicks.

Paul, from Oldham, is a Guinness World Record holder as the fastest Marathon runner dressed as Santa. This was Paul's first Liverpool Santa Dash. His sons, Alfie aged seven and Archie aged four, later took part in the Mini Dash.

Joel is a model and actor and his Santa Dash costumes usually get him recognised. He holds various World Records for quirky events including the most World Gravy Wrestling Wins and World Titles. This was his ninth Liverpool Santa Dash.

The event also featured the biggest ever Mini Dash 1K for youngsters aged 12 and under, with 750 youngsters enjoying their own race from Castle Street shortly after the main 5K Santa Dash had been completed.

Finishers in both fun runs received a special 10th anniversary commemorative medal.

A huge boost on the day was the breaking news that Liverpool had beaten Las Vegas in the World Santa Challenge. The Vegas event took place the day before on Saturday (6 December) with less than 8,000 Santas taking part.

Liverpool recorded 8,500 – so have regained the title, finally winning it back since last holding it in 2010. Official figures are in the process of being counted but the BTR Liverpool Santa Dash is now officially both the UK's and the world's biggest festive fun run.

Santas had travelled far and wide to take part. On home soil runners had come from the South of England, the North East, Yorkshire and North Wales. They were joined by a number of overseas participants travelling from America (Pennsylvania, New York), Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Slovakia, South Africa and Switzerland.

Wirral Santas were even invited to arrive in style with Mersey Ferries laying on three special early morning services from Seacombe to the start line.

BTR Liverpool is the leading independent organisation for organising and delivering race events in Liverpool City Region.

BTR Race Director Alan Rothwell, creator of the Liverpool Santa Dash, commented:

“It’s been a fantastic 10th anniversary event. All our Santa Dashers really got into the spirit of the day, with some very creative costumes. Seeing the Pier Head and city covered in a sea of Santas is just the most amazing sight.

“It is very fitting that we have regained the World Santa Challenge title on our 10th anniversary. We are absolutely thrilled and we could not do it without the support of our thousands of Santas – they are all what make this day so special. We are now not only the UK’s biggest festive fun run – but now also the world’s. That’s quite a coup! Well done Liverpool, you have done yourselves extremely proud.

“The BTR Liverpool Santa Dash continues to increase in popularity and has firmly become the city’s largest Christmas spectacle. It not only attracts thousands of participants from across the country and, indeed from overseas, but a large number of spectators travel into the city to enjoy the day. The participants and spectators together generate a huge economic impact for Liverpool City Region.

“We even have a number of Santas who have supported the event from year one and have now taken part in every Liverpool Santa Dash since. See you on 6 December next year to do it all again when we try to keep that title where it belongs.”

Entries opened today (Monday, 8 December) for the BTR Liverpool Santa Dash 2015, which will take place on 6 December.

The Liverpool Santa Dash was the first event in a year-long joint fundraising partnership between BTR Liverpool and its five official charities for the next 12 months.

The BTR Footsteps Fundraisers will bring the charities together to benefit financially through BTR’s key race events over the next year by encouraging participants to fundraise and support them. The five BTR Footsteps Fundraisers official charities are Radio City’s Cash For Kids, Claire House Children’s Hospice, Everton in the Community, Jospice, and Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

More details can be found at [www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/supportbtrfootsteps](http://www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/supportbtrfootsteps)

BTR staged the very first Liverpool Santa Dash in 2004 with 2,000 entries. It has since grown in size year on year. In 2007, the event was expanded to also include a 1K Mini Dash for youngsters, followed by the introduction of blue Santa suits in 2010.

Full details can be found at [www.btrliverpool.com](http://www.btrliverpool.com)