

New Dad Runs BTR Port Sunlight 10K – Two Weeks After The Race

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A Liverpool runner has completed a 10K race after missing the official event when his wife went into labour two weeks early.

Avid runner, 35-year-old Stephen Lea from Bootle, was all set to compete in the third annual BTR Port Sunlight 10K race on Sunday, 11 May – but the newborn had other ideas.

Wife Carly, 34, had enjoyed her last day in work on the Saturday, but by the evening time she started getting pains – two weeks early.

Labour soon followed and, at 4.13am on the Sunday morning, baby Franky was born weighing a healthy 8lb 4ozs. The couple also have a two-year-old son, Bobby.

Stephen took up the story: “I was all set to run on the Sunday morning, but then Carly went into labour and Franky had other ideas. I got home at 8am after being in the hospital all night and I did think about heading over to Port Sunlight to run, but I’d had no sleep and thought I better rest then get back to Carly and the boys instead of racing.”

Missing the race around picturesque Port Sunlight left Stephen a medal short in his bid to finish the year with a full set of six BTR race medals for 2014. He missed out on getting a full set in 2013 by missing the Santa Dash and didn’t want to be in the same predicament – so BTR stepped in to help to keep Stephen on track.

On Friday (30 May), BTR Race Director Alan Rothwell officiated and cycled the course alongside Stephen running to gain an official time, finishers’ medal and T-shirt. He was joined on the run by Wallasey runner Tom Forshaw who was keen to wish him well.

When BTR posted on their Facebook page about Stephen’s special request and how they were assisting him, runners threw their support behind him – making it one of their most popular posts to date with over 360 Likes.

BTR Race Director Alan Rothwell commented:

“After hearing about Stephen’s dilemma, we were only too happy to help and arrange for him to run the exact same timed course. The set of six BTR medals includes one for the 52-mile Tour Of Merseyside in July, so I didn’t think twice in offering Stephen the opportunity to revisit the Port Sunlight 10K to keep him on track to complete his overall challenge.

“We were delighted with the response from fellow runners when we told them what Stephen was doing – it generated a huge amount of encouragement and support. It was a really nice experience seeing Stephen’s genuine enjoyment and Tom running alongside. The BTR team wish the Lea family all the very best.”

Stephen completed the BTR Port Sunlight 10K in 50:24, cheered along the course by wife Carly, sons Franky and Bobby, and family. He was presented with his medal

and T-shirt by Lionel Bolland, Chief Executive of Port Sunlight Museum & Garden Village.

Stephen added: "I am really touched that Alan and the BTR Team went out of their way to make this happen. I don't think that any other race organisers would do this, it's a fantastic gesture. And I'm really grateful that Tom came to run and support me.

"Franky had a tough start, at a week old he fell ill and spent a week in Alder Hey. He's now fighting fit and settling in at home. Completing the run and everyone's good wishes has really genuinely touched us as a family. I'm really excited about collecting the rest of the medals in my challenge – thank you BTR."

Next up for Stephen in his challenge is the BTR Mersey Tunnel 10K this Sunday (8 June) – the same day as oldest son Bobby's third Birthday. And then it's the 52-mile BTR Tour Of Merseyside in July.