

Vice-Chair and Roller Ski Challenge Coordinator's AGM report 2026

Roller ski challenges in 2026 comprise the Southern Series, while racing has so far comprised the British Distance Roller Ski Championships held in Fife, Scotland in July, and the British Sprint and Biathlon Championships to be held at Redbridge, east London, in October. All British Championships races are organised this year by the BBU. The events are all presented as 'challenges' instead of 'races' to allow those holding only SE Green licences to take part.

The Southern Series is made up of nine challenges, all held at the Hillingdon circuit:

- two 2 lap classic technique, on the 29th March and the 1st November,
- three 2 laps (3 km) free technique, on the 10th May, 6th September and the 18th October,
- two 8 lap (12 km), one CT on the 12th April and on FT on the 28th June,
- the 2 hour FT distance challenge on the 14th June,
- the 2 x 2 lap CT relay on the 4th October (AGM day).

The first two challenges of the year were held as classic technique time trials, making them more amenable and less intimidating to newcomers. They attracted 11 and 14 participants, the longer (12 km) challenge proving more popular than the shorter one. The first short free technique challenge attracted 14 participants, while the 2 hour event proved the most attractive, with 25 participants. The long free technique challenge, held in the heat of late June, attracted only a disappointing 4 participants.

The British Roller Ski Series, which has run (except for a break during Covid) since 2004, was postponed because of a perceived general lack of interest, combined with the costs of travel to Scotland for those seeking maximum Series points. The replacement (the two British Championships (distance and sprint) and the British Biathlon Championship) have thus far proved very successful, attracting 60+ participants on each of the two days in Scotland. A few LRNSC members attended the event in Fife and enjoyed the new (for them) circuit, despite some sharp corners. LRNSC gained two British Champions (Gerard Evans, Male Super Vet 60+ and Lauro Francese, Male Ultra Vet 70+) and two second places (Beatrix Evans, U14 female and Adam Pinney, Male Super Vet 60+).

At the time of writing this report, there are four more challenges to be run, all at Hillingdon:

- free 2-lap challenge on the 6th September,
- 2 x 2 lap classic relay on the 4th October,
- free 2-lap challenge on the 18th October,
- classic 2-lap challenge on the 1st November.

The Club has saved money on race prizes compared to previous years, with challenges offering only 'fun rewards' to all participants costing less than £10 per event (some rewards from the Winter Olympics were kindly donated by Megan Campbell).

Agreement has been reached, though, to buy small trophies for child winners of the overall Southern Series.

One issue is the time gap between the end of children's coaching and challenge starts, which is usually about one hour. This means that children and their parents do not stay to participate. The only way to address this would be to offer the challenge before the coaching. This has the disadvantage of making people tired before the coaching, but might be worth trying for one or two challenges next year. Apart from this possible change, the Southern Series of challenges is likely to return much the same in 2027. It is also possible that LRNSC will be asked to host the British Distance Roller Ski Championships next year.

Adam