

14th London to Brighton Walk 7th Sep 1932

The Club's Fourteenth Annual Open Brighton Walk deserves to be one of the most memorable in the long series of races on the famous road. True, the entry was the smallest for some years, but one cannot be surprised at that, considering the bad state of trade and the consequent shortage of spare cash throughout the country.

Eighty-two starters were dispatched on the first stroke of 7 a.m. from Big Ben, a perfect start without a single late arrival, and although the number was small, there was certainly no lack of quality, as the subsequent performances of the leaders showed a further advance on anything hitherto seen.

It is now a matter of history that record was beaten, and by a new record-breaker. This makes the third performance in three consecutive years, in which Ross's old record has been eclipsed. But that is not all. This year, for the very first time, three men beat 8½ hours; terrific going which seems to suggest the inevitability of less than 8 hours being accomplished within the next few years. In this connection it is interesting to note that Ludlow is only 25 years of age and Whitlock 29, so both should still improve, and nobody would suggest that Green is yet finished with. (Ludlow, by the way, wins the race at an earlier age than any previous winner, with the possible exception of Giani, whose age is not within the writer's knowledge).

We all were disappointed at the partial eclipse of the holder, Tommy Green, who, fresh from his glorious Olympic triumph, was confidently expected to win and beat that elusive 8 hours mark. But it was soon apparent to shrewd judges that Green was not walking with his accustomed zest and facility, and had not had time to recover from the grilling conditions of the Olympic 50 kms. in Los Angeles, during the course of which race. I am told, he lost 12 lbs. in weight. This takes time to replace and he certainly had not recovered his full strength in time for the Brighton.

However, dauntless as always, he gave a great exhibition of walking and showed, not for the first time in his career, that he can lose or win with equal grace and unruffled temper. Richards was a most worthy fourth after 'being in the fight all the way.

It is to be hoped that nothing will happen meanwhile to prevent the four-cornered fight being repeated next year.

The climatic conditions were not favourable to the walkers. There was a cool wind with dampness in it from early in the day, and as the race wore on this stiffened into a nasty head-wind, with the beginnings of a gale in its tail. Actually rain kept off until the leaders had finished. The under mentioned times will serve to show the way the race went, and the changing fortunes of the leaders

h
m
s

Swan, Croydon, 10.5 miles (approx.)

Green, Ludlow, Rickards, Gum

1
34
30

Whitlock was 7th

1
36
23

Star, Hooley (16).

Green, Rickards, Gum

2

25

21

Whitlock, 5th

2

28

28

Feathers, Mertsam (18.5).

Green, Ludlow

2

46

58

Rickards

2

46

59

Gum

2

48

55

Bentley, Whitlock

2

51

4

Redhili (20.25)

Green, Rickards, Ludlow

3

5

9

Gum

3

8

13

Bentley, Whitlock

3

9

54

Horley. (24.5).

Green

3

43

33

Ludlow

3

43

34

Rickards

3

45

23

Gum

3

49

37

Whitlock

3

49

52

George, Crawley (29.75).

Ludlow

4

31

4

Rickards

4

34

26

Green

4

36

20

Whitlock

4

39

56

(Green in 1930 was 4.29.17).

Handcross (34).

Ludlow

5

14

18

Rickards

5

18

11

Green

5

18

30

Whitlock

5

23

30

(Green in 1930, was 5.11.55).

Bolney (38.25).

Ludlow

5

54

0

Green

5

57

35

Rickards

5

58

30

Whitlock

6

3

0

(Green in 1930, was 5.50.0).

Albourne (42.5).

Ludlow

6

33

41

Green

6

39

27

Rickards

6

41

35

Whitlock

6

43

0

(Green in 1930, was 6.31.5).

Dale Hill (45 m. 167 yds).

Ludlow

7

1

26

Green

7

10

14

Whitlock

7

11

14

Rickards

7

14

17

(Green in 1930, was 7.5.12).

It will be seen that between Alborne and the top of Dale Hill is where Ludlow gained on Green's 1930 time and it will be remembered that in 1930 it was from Albourne to the finish that Green had to battle against a terrific south-westerly gale and driving rain, which at the time everybody realised was adding minutes to Green's time.

This year, over the final stretch Green was obviously tiring, and Whitlock, fresh as when he started and walking nearly as fast as Ludlow, overhauled Green just before Patcham, keeping second position to the finish.

Results: