

Cycle Speedway report for the North West AGM.

Like every other activity, the 2021 cycle speedway season has again been restricted due to the Covid pandemic. The first two months of the season were lost, before racing resumed in mid May. This resulted in the cancellation of the European Championships, which were due to be held at Astley & Tyldesley in July. The event will be re-staged there in July 2023. National series events have been either reduced or cancelled, but the British Individual Championships will take place in the South and South Wales region over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Several riders from the North West region will be strong contenders to win titles. Astley & Tyldesley successfully staged the re-arranged Home Internationals event at the end of July, whilst the North West pair won the Women's Regional Pairs Championship for the third year running. Astley & Tyldesley are due to stage the final rounds of the Men's and Women's Battle of Britain and HSBC Elite Grand Prix Rounds on 16th/17th October respectively.

The North & Scotland Regional events have been reduced and run as three sub regions: North West, Yorkshire, Scotland, with Play Off Finals due to be held in September. The midweek Manchester League series has been able to run as usual, with a full programme of events. However, rider turnouts have been well down on previous years, with a variety of reasons cited. Astley & Tyldesley have retained the Division 1 series, with Bury winning the Division 2 series, along with various individual and grand prix titles decided.

Clubwise, Bury have been the least affected by the pandemic, with most of their riders and officials returning, along with several newcomers. Astley & Tyldesley had a large membership before the pandemic, but a significant number of experienced riders and officials haven't returned to activity. The club has recruited a large number of newcomers this year, partly from their new partnership with Access Sport's Wingz project. Stockport had a low membership before the pandemic and they have been further hit, with several riders and officials not returning to activity. At their request, they have been officially classified as a "struggling club" by the North & Scotland Cycle Speedway Region.

Here's hoping for a return to a semblance of normality in 2022.

Mike Hack
Chair, North & Scotland Cycle Speedway Region

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