



Cross Country Reports

20 December 2020

Christmas cross-country race

With us not having access to the centre at Fox Hollies it was decided to hold the race at Highbury Park. Also, because of uncertainty over the availability of cross-country races in January to March 2021 it was decided that the winners would be crowned as the 2020/21 club cross country champions.

It was a pleasant morning for the race but with recent rainfall the course was wet and heavy in places. Those who took part weren't entirely in agreement with my description of the course as flat. All I'm prepared to admit to is a slight incline. It amounted to about 4.3 miles.

Unusually for Sparkhill there was only one person (James) not ready for the start. I think Liz was quietly impressed that we started on time.

It was a good race to watch and it was pleasing to see how all coped well. Barry O put this down to the excellent coaching all receive (his words, not mine).

Nick took an early lead that he held to the end. Nick is an inspiration to us all at the age of 58. Mark W and Paul had a good tussle which led to them closing down Nick on the last couple of laps. Could they have gone faster earlier in the race? Simon was up there in the early stages but things went a little awry with him needing to stop on one lap. Patrick, Mark P and Andy W had a good battle with Patrick just coming out on top. No quarter given there. Suzy followed closely behind and was the first lady in. Suzy's been looking good in training and showed how competitive she can be.

Having been slightly late for the start James appeared to have a relaxed race. No change there then. Rob had a good run (might be down to encouragement from Hilary). We have a number of Andy's at the club and two came in next. Andy M followed by Andy L. Due to the number of Andy's I've introduced a separate championship for them (results below). Graham was very close to Andy L. We still need to work on the sprinting, Graham.

Barry O was in no man's land. He only reported 5 injuries before the start of the race. I'm pretty convinced Jenny's been training in secret. A great run. Meg and Pauline were close to each other and worked hard throughout. It was great to see Emma back from University and running well. I set this course up for Clare. It was flat but apparently further than she would have liked.

It was good to see Barry C taking part. Age is no barrier. Abi did enjoy it (I told her) and was smiling at the end. Last in but very together were Liz and Manisha. I looked very closely but couldn't separate them. I think it was intentional on their part.

A special mention to Martin. I said he didn't need to run the whole race and he took me at my word. He completed 3 laps (out of 5). Well done Martin.

Hilary and Charles were excellent marshals. Thank you to you both.

Thank you to all who turned up. When we good such good numbers it really pleases Barry and me and makes I worthwhile.

Position	Name	Time	
1	Nick Stringer	30:47	Men's champion
2	Mark Williams	31:16	
3	Paul Webster	31:20	
4	Patrick Finnegan	33:20	
5	Mark Pearce	33:29	
6	Andy Wadsworth	33:32	Andy champion
7	Suzy Berg	34:10	Ladies' champion
8	Simon Hodges	34:46	
9	James Hannon	35:06	
10	Rob Mills	35:20	
11	Andy Manning	36:08	
12	Andy Law	36:20	
13	Graham Hygate	36:24	
14	Barry O'Neill	37:40	
15	Jenny Price	38:16	
16	Meg Harris	38:49	
17	Pauline Hygate	38:58	

18	Emma Stringer	40:03
19	Clare Welbourn	40:23
20	Barry Crowley	40:54
21	Abi Frayling	41:33
22=	Liz Blake	44:11
22=	Manisha Pearce	44:11

Courageous effort Martin Millicheap 3 laps

Saturday 23rd February 2019

English National Cross Country Championships

Report by Vicki Bone:

I thought Harewood House was a perfect venue for the English National Cross Country Championships in Leeds, on Saturday 23rd February.

From the moment the magnificent Georgian property sitting on top of a hill within the “Capability” Brown designed landscape came into view, you knew it was going to be a special event

With the sun shining (a bit too much for some of us!) and not a patch of mud to contend with on the firm ground, including up and down some tricky hills, it proved a tough challenge for even the hardest cross country runner. We certainly weren't expecting that degree of heat in February!

Both the ladies and men's teams performed well and it was great having lots of cheering and support to help get us around. There were some great individual achievements and it's always nice to see how the elite runners do it and make it look so easy! We even managed to leave slightly earlier than expected, though the tent may have been taken down with Craig actually still in it!

There were an impressive number of finishers in both the women's and men's events with a total of 1,034 women and 2,006 men.

Tahir organised a lovely curry for us afterwards, which was very welcome and the food was really nice.

Thank you to Craig for organising the logistics and making sure everyone got home safely afterwards. Thank you also to Simon for expertly driving us all there and back.

It was an amazing atmosphere from the moment we were collected at our pick up points and dropped back home. Let's hope next year is half as good.

