

England Athletics East Midlands news bulletin

Your weekly up-date takes in international, regional, county and schools action...

Euro praise for brave Billy

Billy Farquharson, who built his athletics reputation on the slopes of Nottingham's Wollaton Park and Mansfield's Berry Hill, earned sympathy and praise after battling into 44th position in the senior men's race at the SPAR European Cross Country Championships on a fast, flat course at Toro in Spain.

"This was not a course Farquharson would flourish on, but he kept going and he deserves credit for that," said the Norwich Union Great Britain and Northern Ireland team leader, Alan Storey.

Returning to the international scene after a three-year battle against a career-threatening injury, Farquharson ran much more aggressively than his finishing position would suggest as GB finished fourth in the team competition, just five points away from a place on the podium, despite being without the reigning champion, Mo Farah, who is injured.

He was leading the GB sextet and placed ninth a quarter of the way into the 10.7km race on a bone-hard surface in bright sunshine among the Spanish mountains. Even though the thin air took its toll and the wind grew in intensity, Farquharson battled to the bitter end.

And he was brutally honest about his performance: "I'm not that happy with my run as I didn't think it was much good. I couldn't breathe after the second lap and that really took its toll. I thought the first two loops were quite easy, but it got difficult after that. The pace wasn't that fast but I think the wind played a part."

But Farquharson has always insisted that his training is geared for him to peak after Christmas for the English National Championships at Alton Towers on 23 February and the World Trials, which will again be a part of the UK Inter-Counties Championships on 15 March at Wollaton Park.

Notts dominate Midland 7

Notts AC, building-up for a serious bid for glory at the English National Cross Country Championships in the new year, continued their domination of the regional scene by cruising to victory in the Midland 7 Cross Country Championship at Gloucester,

They took all three individual medals through Darren Fowlie, who won in 34 minutes 18 seconds; Richard Kay, second in 35:18; and 3 Martin Whitehouse, third in 36:07.

And Notts clinched the team title when Tom Bailey finished fifth in 37:07, Ashley Sabin sixth in 37:52 and Martyn Gibbons 11th in 39:27. This gave them a total of 28 points to give them a handsome victory over runners-up Halesowen, who scored 77.

While many clubs struggled to field scoring sextets, Notts had three more finishers: 16 Mike Benford 40:20; 18 Scott Rischer 41:00; 31 Mick Robinson 53:56.

Lincolnshire League latest

The fourth **Lincolnshire** Cross Country League meeting on Sunday took athletes to Princes' Parade, Skegness – to a course so close to the North Sea that a part of it had to be rerouted because the recent tidal wave had partially flooded it. Race leaders were:

Senior, Junior and Veteran Men: 1 G Knight (Boston and District AC) 30:52; 2 M Grimmer (Nene Valley Harriers) 31:23; 3 D McGrory (Boston) 32:00.

Senior, Junior and Veteran Women: 1 J Stones (Mablethorpe AC) 21:35; 2 L Pitcher (Lincoln Wellington) 22:16; 3 J Clark (Lincoln Wellington) 23:14.

Under 17 Men: 1 G Woodger (Lincoln Wellington) 18:56; 2 A Gibb (Nene Valley Harriers) 19:36; 3 M Duncan (Cleethorpes) 19:42.

Under 17 Women: 1 R Robinson (Scunthorpe and District AC) 16:25; 2 G Ball (Lincoln Wellington) 16:27; 3 A Sharp (Louth) 16:32.

Under 15 Boys: 1 I Mablethorpe (Lincoln Wellington) 15:05; 2 J Bailey (Boston) 16:17; 3 T Gamells (Cleethorpes) 16:29.

Under 15 Girls: 1 D-A Davey (Mansfield Harriers, guest) 12:49; 2 C Taylor (Nene Valley Harriers) 12:51; 3 C Brackett (Boston) 12:59.

Under 13 Boys: 1 R Brine (Lincoln Wellington) 8:32; 2 L Taylor (Kings School, Grantham) 8:34; 3 J Miller (Sleaford Striders) 8:36.

Under 13 Girls: C Wing (Nene Valley Harriers) 9:03; 2 N Collier (Grantham) 9:04; 3 P Lambert (Nene Valley Harriers) 9:04.

For the full results, please go to <http://www.rosegger.eclipse.co.uk/gac/xc/xsprogramme.htm>

School runners brave the chill

Despite sleet and temperatures plummeting to 3° C, there were 105 finishers at the **Notts** Schools Cross Country League match at Mansfield's Berry Hill Park. Overall leaders after the three matches this term:

Years 10-11 boys: 1 J Peake (Nottm High School) 9pts; 2 A Keefe (Carlton-le-Willows) 10; 3 A Sansom (Garibaldi) 12. Team: All Saints 190.

Years 10-11 girls: 1 H Wragg (Joseph Whittaker) 3; 2 C Waring (Emmanuel) 7; 3 Georgia Milton (Southwell Minster) 9. Team: Sherwood Hall 106.

Year 8-9 boys: 1 R Saxton (Joseph Whittaker) 4; 2 E Miller (Minster) 6; 3 M Williams (Bluecoat) 12. Team: Trinity 187.

Year 8-9 girls: 1 S Coldwell (South Wolds) 3; 2 C Talbot (Gaibaldi) 6; 3 R Morley (Colonel Frank Seeley) 10. Team: Colonel Frank Seeley 136.

Year 7 boys: 1 J Mackintosh (Minster) 7; 2 D Wilkinson (Joseph Whittaker) 12; 3 E Goddard (Nottm High) 13. Team: Nottm High 104.

Year 7 girls: 1 C Baxter (Brunts) 3; 2 R Foster (Dukeries) 9; 3 H Codd (Minster) 14. Team: Trinity 171.

Year 5-6 boys: 1 A Riley (East Bridgford St Peters) 4; 2 G King (Woods Foundation) 14; 3 J Barnes (Lowes Wong) 27. Team: Lowes Wong 71.

Year 5-6 girls: 1 E Shirley (Woods Foundation) 6; 2 C Norris (Lowes Wong) 7; 3 S Smith (Lowes Wong) 8. Team: Lowes Wong 30.

- The **Leicestershire** Primary Schools Cross Country League lived up to its reputation as the biggest and most competitive organisation of its kind in the country by attracting 1,728 finishers to its monthly meeting. Find the details at <http://beehive.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/default.asp?WCI=SiteHome&ID=13076&PageID=97106>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES...

County Cross Country Championships are being staged as follows:

- 5 January: **Derbyshire** and **Nottinghamshire** at Markeaton Park, Derby
- 5 January: **Leicestershire** at Burbage Common, Hinckley
- 6 January: **Lincolnshire** at Hubbards Hills, Louth

For more details about the No.1 Olympic sport in the East Midlands, please contact England Athletics Regional Manager Chris Mallender on 01509 228765 or email him at cmallender@englandathletics.org