

Mansfield Harriers lead the way in three of the ten categories after the second fixture of the North Midlands Cross Country League held at Corby. With the club placed second in a further three categories the hunt for medals continues next on home ground when the third fixture comes to Berry Hill Park on December 5th.

Lewis Ashmore continued his marked improvement this season with a second place finish in the U13 Boys race in a time of 10:37. Alex Rieley (4th in 10:45) and Sam Johnson (5th in 10:46) packed well to take the team honours, opening up a gap of 46 points on nearest rivals Peterborough at the halfway point in the four race series.

Chevelle Baxter led home a Mansfield contingent of ten runners in the U15 Girls race, finishing fourth in 11:19, just three seconds ahead of fifth placed Ellie Saxton. Demi-Jade Jakymelen, tenth in 11:51, was the third team counter, making sure Harriers held on to the overall series lead by a massive 49 points.

The U17 Women are the third team to be sitting in Gold medal spot. Rachel Brandham had an excellent run to take fourth place in 15:54 ahead of Hannah Wragg (6th in 15:59) and Claire Talbot (12th in 16:33).

Illness and injury led to a much weakened U13 Girls team, Mansfield only able to field two athletes. However Molly Johnson and Emma Heath both produced top ten finishes, fourth and seventh respectively, to keep the team in second position overall.

The U15 Boys missed out on victory at Corby by just one point from Amber Valley, Tom Wragg running well for seventh spot in a time of 14:27. Jake Lancaster was second Harrier home, 12th in 15:00 with Sam Dobb making up the scorers, clocking 15:23 for 18th position.

Ryan Saxton returned from illness to race over the country for the first time this season, opening his account with a sixth place finish in 21:38. Ewan Millar and Richie Talbot made up the scorers in this U17 Men's team with 12th and 14th place spots, giving the team third place on the day and in the league.

Luke Marshall returned from Birmingham University for the weekend and his 19th place was good enough to be first Harrier home in the Senior Men's race. Marshall recorded a time of 31:32 which gave him a seven second gap on new signing Callum Cullen, who was 21st, just three seconds clear of 23rd placed Chris Brown. Stuart King completed a quartet of Under 23 athletes taking 29th spot in 32:08.

Doug Ross goes into the third race leading the VM45 category after another strong run at Corby, finishing 33rd in a time of 32:23. Tim Raynor (48th in 33:45) and Mark Jenkins (73rd in 35:11) joined Ross as scorers in the Veteran Men category where second place kept them in silver medal position in the series.

It was another Chris Brown that secured the final scoring spot for the seniors and joining Marshall, Cullen, the other Brown and King in a team that finished in fifth. Brown was 88th in 36:02.

Senior Ladies were thin on the ground for Mansfield, Clare Coombes the first green and blue vest back in 36th place with a time of 27:10. The ever improving Sally Smith was not far behind, taking 45th place in 27:45 just ten seconds ahead of Ann Brown who was 47th in 27:55. Amanda Hardy (51st in 28:16) and

Tina Green (58th in 29:42) were the other women to travel and in so doing kept the Veteran Women in second place overall.

OTHER MANSFIELD FINISHERS: U13 Boys – 6: George King – 10:58, 10: James O’Mara – 11:25, 19: Ben Hardy – 12:30. U15 Boys – 27: Sam Raynor – 16:05, 28: Jordan Boam – 16:07, 31: David Wilkinson – 16:31, 34: Jonny Brown – 17:04. U17 Men – 18: Tom O’Mara – 22:52, 27: Shaun Bagguley – 23:56. SM/VM – 89: Graeme Wilkinson – 36:16, 92: Terry Ashmore – 36:28, 98: John Harrison – 36:56, 125: Grant Saxton – 38:34, 140: Jonathan Mitchell – 40:09, 149: James Bellingham – 45:15, 162: Carl Lancaster – 43:05, 170: I Dobb – 45:52, 171: J Hardy – 46:18, 182: Alan Smith – 50:20. U15 Girls – 13: Hannah Hardy – 11:56, 15: Alice Mortiboy – 12:01, 20: Tamsin Smith – 12:13, 30: Amelia Mitchell – 12:56, 32: Hazel Blount – 13:00, 37: L Wilde – 13:24, 48: Holly Smith – 16:43.

Danny Barks tested his winter fitness out at the Gateshead International Cross Country races. Barks raced over just 2km – an unusually short distance for cross country - and bagged a top ten finish against some class opposition, running a time of 6:35. With pace difficult to judge in such a short race, especially against quality senior athletes, he went off a little hard and paid for the early pace in the thick mud over the last 500 metres.

Steve Davies, Mansfield Harriers’ club chairman, gained another Welsh vest in the British Masters Home international cross country event staged this year in Birmingham. Davies finished the race as third Welsh scorer in a credible 20th position overall, recording 32:49 over the 9K course.

Former Mansfield Harrier, Billy Farquharson, who now runs for Notts AC, returned to winning ways at the Heanor 10k. Farquharson, a former GB cross country international had a convincing win recording a time of 32:14.

Claire Coombes was the first Mansfield Harrier back, recording 45:39 for 161st place with Maddy Collinge 237th in 48:15 and Carol Hartin 400th in 53:04.