

Mansfield Harriers continued to punch above their weight, taking a fifth of the team titles at the final fixture of the North Midlands Cross Country League. Against top opposition from counties stretching from Staffordshire to Northamptonshire the club again demonstrated their growing potential.

Stuart King produced his best ever finish in this league, taking eighth spot and clocking 37:38 over the 6.8 mile undulating Wollaton Park course. King has been putting some high mileage training in over the winter and will be looking to capitalise on this, and the benefits of cross country racing, as he moves onto the track over the next few months.

Doug Ross was next Harrier home in the Senior/Veterans men's race - a field which, at 211, was only nine runners short of the fields in all the other races combined. Finishing in 27th spot in 40:07 Ross not only scored good team points but took the VM45 series title.

Steve Davies was another Harrier to demonstrate that his solid winter training has paid off, running an excellent race to finish in 40th spot with a time of 41:04. Davies was followed home by Tim Raynor who has enjoyed a good winter and finished the Wollaton course in 49th with a time of 41:44. Both athletes placed in the age groups, Davies scoring as second VM50 and Raynor as third VM45.

Steve Grainger, recovering from a foot injury, returned to racing after a six month break to take 53rd spot in 42:07 with Chris Brown 20 seconds behind in 63rd. Alan Crewe, 86th in 44:52 and John Harrison, 95th in 45:31 both made the top 100.

Harriers Veteran men lost out on the team title by only eleven points – their 544 against Redhill's 533 over the four match series, the Veteran women also taking second spot overall to Holme Pierrepont Harriers.

Eva Williams took bronze in the VL40 series; finishing 33rd on the day just eleven seconds ahead of 35th placed Claire Coombes. Ann Brown bagged silver in the VL50 series with an impressive 45th place finish, one second ahead of Carol Hartin in 46th.

Sam Johnson shone for the juniors taking Gold individual and team medals at U13 level. Lying in second place overall on the same points as team mate Lewis Ashmore going into this last race the battle was on when both realised that leader Alex Hampson from Nene Valley wasn't on the start line.

Mansfield ended up with the first four finishers, Johnson (13:47) just edging out Alex Rieley (13:49) with Ashmore in third (14:07) doing enough to take the series silver. George King was fourth in 15:03.

Ellie Saxton led home the U15 Girls to team Gold with an excellent fourth place spot, backed up by Hannah Hardy (10th) and Chevelle Baxter (11th).

OTHER MANSFIELD FINISHERS: U13G – 3: Molly Johnson, 15: Claire Norris, 21: Rachel Norris, 23: S. Beckingham, 26: P. Mitchell. U15G- 14: Alice Mortiboy, 22: Harriet Codd, 23: Tamsin Smith, 26: Demi-Jade Jakymelen, 28: Amelia Mitchell, 30: Robyn Foster, 31: A. Keogh, 35: A. Winning, 36: C. Bellingham. U17W- 4: Claire Talbot. SW – 51: Amanda Hardy, 61: Sue Bellingham, 63: S. Armitage, 66: Denise Winfield, 67: Gina Radford. U13B – 9: Bailey Wardle, 15: Ben Hardy. U15B – 15: Jake Lancaster, 16: Sam Dobb, 22: Jordan Boam, 23: David Wilkinson, 30: Jonny Brown. U17M: 5: Ryan Saxton, 11: Richie Talbot. SM – 111: Graeme Wilkinson, 114: Terry Ashmore, 138: Trevor Muxlow, 145: Jonathan Mitchell, 150: Jason Foster, 158: Julian Wood, 186: J. Hardy, 187: C. Lancaster, 194: A. Bellingham, 209: A. Smith.

