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Alan Newman's reports appear in the KM every Friday

**KENT CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE,
BEECH GROVE ACADEMY, NONINGTON**

Senior Women and M70

Nicole Taylor (Tonbridge) has one hand firmly on the Cliff Temple Memorial Trophy for the Kent Women's cross country league individual winner following her latest win on a superb new course at Beech Grove Academy, Nonington on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

The former physical education college near Dover proved a popular addition to the fixture list with its testing circuit on open countryside and through a muddy farmyard, enjoyed by some more than others.

Taylor had her sights set on victory from the start and reached the finish line with 28 seconds in hand over Kent's leading master athlete Tina Oldershaw (W45, Paddock Wood), who was followed home by W35 Alice Heather-Hayes (Tunbridge Wells Harriers). These three athletes now hold the leading overall positions in the league with just one race remaining this season.

Rona Loubser (Folkestone) ran well for fourth ahead of junior athlete Amber Reed, who led Blackheath and Bromley Harriers to team success together with W40 Jane Bradshaw (9th) and W35 Sarah Elmquist (13th).

Mary Edmonds made the top six for team runners-up Medway and Maidstone with W35 Jenny Fowler (8th) and Hannah Miller (16th) completing the scoring.

Folkestone Running Club - bolstered by the first appearance of the season by Loubser - were third team with Nikki Smyth (12th) and Lauren Fawke (19th). Folkestone also won the six-to-score team category from Tunbridge Wells Harriers and Tonbridge AC.

The effect of all this activity in the rain at Nonington is that Nicole Taylor only needs to finish in the top six in the final match at Parkwood School, Swanley on February 9 to claim the title and the Ron Hale veteran's trophy is almost a certainty for Tina Oldershaw.

The team events remain close with Blackheath and Bromley Harriers now one match point ahead of Medway and Maidstone AC. Trophy holders Tonbridge are three points adrift in third overall.

The six-to-score league is still tight with Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells Harriers and Blackheath and Bromley Harriers separated by one match point. The final event at Swanley should be a cracker with much still to be decided.

The new class of men over-70 ran with the women and this race saw a third consecutive victory for Eric Schofield over his Tunbridge Wells Harriers team mates John Dyson and Bryon Taylor. Schofield is now effectively unbeatable in the league standings.

Young Athletes

The Kent Young Athletes league races at Beech Grove Academy attracted good fields with 218 finishers and a much stronger men's under-20 race. Tonbridge AC took all the male individual and team races on offer but there were changes in the female races with the winners from Dartford Harriers, Cambridge Harriers, Invicta East Kent and Ashford AC.

Charlie Crick (Tonbridge) took an assured second under-13 league win from Jake Potter (Blackheath) and Alex Cavanagh (Thanet). Oliver Plunkett (4th) and Dan Schofield (9th) ensured success for Tonbridge from an improved Medway and Maidstone and Thanet Road Runners.

Alasdair Kinloch also won his second race of the league season for Tonbridge in the under-15 race ahead of his club mate Chris Cohen and Callum Ward of Dartford Harriers. Euan Nicholls (5th) brought Tonbridge home safely ahead of Blackheath and Dartford Harriers.

Corey De'ath profited from the absence of double winner George Duggan to win the under-17 men's race from Jack Goss (Invicta) and Tonbridge team mates Sean Molloy and James West. Bexley AC and Invicta were chasing Tonbridge in this one.

Kent's 2011 junior cross country champion Tom Cox, Laurie Probert and Keiran Reilly dominated the under-20 men's race for Tonbridge ahead of Bexley and hosts, Beech Grove Academy. The absence of a senior men's race clearly had a positive effect on the high quality of the competitors.

Holly Page (Dartford Harriers) maintained the last remaining 100% record in the league with a third win in the under-13 girls race, only five seconds clear of Megan Warner (Medway and Maidstone). Kathleen Faes of Tonbridge was third but it was Naomi Kingston in fourth place who led Blackheath to victory. Dartford and Tonbridge chased the black vests home in this race.

Sabrinha Sinha (Cambridge Harriers) and Jessica Keene (Blackheath) fought hard for victory in the under-15 girls' race with Sinha gaining the verdict by just one second, with Anna Weston (Invicta) third. Blackheath took the team race from Medway and Maidstone and Invicta East Kent.

Bobby Clay finished 15 seconds clear of her sister Alex in the under-17 race to set up the team victory for Invicta. Sophie Foreman (Tonbridge) was third to lead her team to second place ahead of Blackheath.

Amelia Jones (Ashford) took the under-20s from Cambridge Harriers' Cassia Soards and Megan Williams as for the third time no teams completed.

The young athletes' league will be decided at Danson Park, Bexleyheath on December 1.

Alan Newman