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**Alan Newman's athletics reports appear in the Kent Messenger each Friday**

### **KENT MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE**

Medway and Maidstone AC made the perfect start in their attempt to regain both team titles in the 2009/10 Kent Men's cross country league at a very windy Capstone Park on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

Tonbridge wrested the four to score and twelve to score team trophies from the holders last winter and also provided the league champion in Huw Evans.

Home advantage was exploited to the full as Mike Coleman, who has never won the league trophy, charged off into the distance to win the opening race by 63 seconds from Alex Bruce-Littlewood of Blackheath and Bromley.

The consistent Evans was third, just ahead of a storming run from Jack Tyler of Medway and Maidstone. Julian Rendall (Tonbridge) and early pace maker, Aboura Mahieddine (Thanet Road Runners) completed the top six.

Medway and Maidstone finished their team in the top ten through Tom Collins (7th) and Ben Tyler (10th) for an unbeatable score of 22 points. Tonbridge AC (41) and Blackheath and Bromley (88) were left trailing on this occasion.

With talent such as former champion Barry Royden (14th) leading the twelve-man team and 800m specialist Tim Alexander (34th) completing the squad, the victory at this level was even more convincing.

Medway and Maidstone (212) take a commanding lead over Tonbridge (565) and Tunbridge Wells Harriers (966) into the next race at Somerhill School, Tonbridge later this month.

### **KENT WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE**

Grace Nicholls and Deirdre McDermot led Tonbridge AC to victory in a close fought Kent Women's cross country league race at Capstone Park on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

Nicholls is the Kent junior champion at 800m and 1500m and basic speed was the decisive factor in her first senior win by four seconds from defending league champion, McDermot. Vicky Rukin (18th), another junior athlete choosing to mix it with the seniors, completed the Tonbridge team.

Annabelle Stearns of Gravesend Road Runners was a close third to the Tonbridge pair and led the W35 master athletes category ahead of Helen

Wheeler (Folkestone Running Club) and Sharon Hawkins (Invicta) from Maidstone.

Tonbridge scored 21 points to defeat Folkestone Running Club (26) and Blackheath and Bromley (29) by narrow margins. Medway and Maidstone made a subdued start to the season in thirteenth position (140) with an all masters team.

### **KENT YOUNG ATHLETES CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE**

Jason Prickett of Invicta East Kent prevented a clean sweep for the boys of Tonbridge AC in the Kent Young Athletes cross country league at Capstone ark on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

Prickett won the under 20's race from Robert and Alasdair McDonald (Cambridge Harriers) to steer Invicta to an unopposed team success.

Earlier it had been one way traffic for Tonbridge AC as George Duggan (under 13), Charlie Joslin-Allen (under 15) and Robbie Farnham-Rose (under 17) all led their teams to clear victories.

Medway and Maidstone teams had their fair share of success, finishing on the podium in all three categories. Ben Murphy (8th) led the under 13's to second place, James West (7th) helped the under 15's to third place and Adam Gilbert (3rd) was in top form for the under 17's who also finished third.

Tonbridge and Invicta also shared the spoils in the girls' races. Invicta won the under 13's with Tonbridge third and Medway and Maidstone fifth. Bobby Clay of Invicta was the individual winner with Lucy Roud (9th) of Tonbridge and Jacinta Barham (16th) of M&M the leading scorers for their clubs.

Saffron Salih (Blackheath) won the under 15's race from Nicole Taylor, who led Tonbridge to team success. Medway and Maidstone were third with Georgia Humphries (18th) heading the team.

Emily Hosker-Thornhill took the under 17's victory from Kelsey Howard of Tonbridge and Cerys Sanders of an incomplete Medway and Maidstone. Tonbridge claimed the team win from Blackheath and Invicta.

No teams finished intact in the under 20's race won by Jen Hamer of Blackheath and Bromley.

The full results are at [www.kcaa.org.uk](http://www.kcaa.org.uk)

**Alan Newman**

