

Reprinted by kind permission of Alan Newman and Kent Messenger Group

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

KENT MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

Rarely has one club been as dominant in the Kent Men's cross country league as the defending title holders Tonbridge AC were at Bexleyheath on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

Tonbridge put seven athletes in the top ten places on a tortuous, muddy course in Danson Park to annex both four to score and twelve to score team categories.

Dean Lacy of Cambridge Harriers took the race win by 28 seconds from under 20 junior Andy Combs of Tonbridge to confirm his return to top form in good time for the Kent championships at the Detling Showground next month.

League champion, Huw Evans and Steve Fennell then filed in for Tonbridge ahead of Alex Bruce-Littlewood of Blackheath and Bromley and Tom Collins, who headed the second placed Medway and Maidstone squad.

The Tonbridge express continued to roll in to the finish station in the form of Julian Rendall, M45 Graeme Saker, James Taylor and Sam Bradley.

There were some glum faces in the M&M camp before the start as a roll call revealed only eleven athletes present but long time club servant, Colin Carpenter, came to the rescue as twelfth man to allow the holders to maintain their challenge for both team trophies this season.

Collins' fine run was supported by M40 masters Barry Royden (13th) and Gareth Williams (16th), who had to stop to replace a lost shoe. Winter captain, Adrian Lowther (19th) completed the fourth scorer.

Invicta East Kent are staging a revival this year and finished third team with Mark Wilkins (12th) and James Cotton (17th) prominent. Cambridge Harriers were fourth after their excellent start through Lacy and Paddock Wood were fifth with Paul Hasler (14th) and Gareth Robb (18th) in the top 20 in a field of 150 starters.

Mike Coleman of M&M, who won the first two races, forfeits his chance of winning the men's individual trophy after missing this race. However, his club holds a slender lead over arch rivals, Tonbridge AC in both team categories.

The final destination of the awards in the Kent men's league will be decided at Parkwood School, Swanley on February 13.

Full results are available at www.kcaa.org.uk

KENT YOUNG ATHLETES CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

Tonbridge AC secured six team and four individual titles in the Kent Young Athletes cross country league at Danson Park, Bexleyheath last December. One year on, back at the same venue, little has changed as the West Kent club accounted for five team and five individual awards, writes Alan Newman.

Invicta East Kent (under 13 girls and under 20 men) were the only other gold medal winners and no club finished a team in the under 20 women's event.

George Duggan led a clean sweep of the top six places by Tonbridge athletes in the final under 13 boy's league race of the season. Duggan was chased home by Tim Faes, William Roud, Alex Kidd, Will Seymour and Euan Nicholls.

Duggan is the individual champion after an undefeated season from Roud and Stephen Jones of Medway and Maidstone AC. Tonbridge claimed the team awards from Medway and Maidstone and host club Bexley AC.

Max Nicholls (Tonbridge) won the under 15's race from Jake Rogers (Invicta) and Charlie Joslin-Allen (Tonbridge). Tonbridge team mate Corey De'ath, Dominic Brown (Sevenoaks) and Cameron Knapp (Tonbridge) completed the top six on the day.

Joslin-Allen, Corey De'ath and Brown are the individual medallists and Tonbridge won team gold from Medway and Maidstone and Ashford AC.

Tonbridge filled the rostrum in the under 17's race with Robbie Farnham-Rose, Henry Pearce and Luca Russo. Adam Gilbert's fourth place ahead of Jamie Bryant and Alex King of Tonbridge was important in the overall stakes.

Farnham-Rose is the new champion with a perfect record of four wins from Gilbert of M&M and Russo. Tonbridge took the team medals from Blackheath and Bromley Harriers and Medway and Maidstone.

Donald Carter defeated his Invicta East Kent colleague Jason Prickett in the under 20's race with Robert and Alasdair McDonald (Cambridge Harriers) next to finish ahead of Jamie Bailey and James Reilly of Invicta East Kent.

Prickett is the 2009 champion from Robert and Alasdair McDonald for the league winning Invicta team. Only one team finished the full season intact.

Bobby Clay (Invicta East Kent) maintained her 100% record in the under 13 girl's race from Georgina Taylor (Blackheath) and Leah Melvin of Tonbridge.

Anna Weston (Invicta), Tilley Ellis-Jarman (Thanet) and Lilly Coward (Invicta) completed the leader board.

Clay is the undefeated champion from Weston and Coward as Invicta won the league ahead of Blackheath, Tonbridge and M&M.

Amber Reed (Blackheath) won her first under 15's league race of the season from Nicole Taylor and Alice Wood of Tonbridge AC. Alex Clay (Invicta), Amelia Jones (Ashford) and Pandora Banbury (Tonbridge) completed a closely matched top six.

Wood, Reed and Clay ensured that three different clubs were rewarded with the individual medals as Tonbridge, Blackheath and Cambridge Harriers were the most successful teams.

Cerys Sanders of Medway and Maidstone stormed to her first win this season in the under 17 women's league. Annabel Shepherd-Baron and Ellen Holmes of Tonbridge were next across the line ahead of Rebecca Farrell (Bexley), Kelsey Howard (Tonbridge) and Emily Nolan of Blackheath and Bromley.

Howard was rewarded for her consistency with the individual title from Farrell and Sarah Shepherd of Paddock Wood. Tonbridge are team champions from Blackheath and Invicta East Kent.

Ejiro Okoro of Medway and Maidstone won the under 20's race from Jen Hamer (Blackheath) and Helen Robinson (Invicta). Catherine Symons (Tonbridge) was fourth ahead of the overall medal winners, Amy De Matos (Blackheath), Rachel Seaman (Invicta) and Isobel Dickinson (Ashford). Full results are available at www.kcaa.org.uk

Alan Newman