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

KENT MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE FINAL, SWANLEY

Medway and Maidstone AC snatched defeat from the jaws of victory in the deciding fixture of the 2009-10 Kent senior men's cross country league at Swanley on Saturday, writes Alan Newman.

In one of the most exciting series for many years the holders, Tonbridge AC, reversed the positions going into the final race to retain the Kent Messenger Cup on count-back after a tie on league points with the former champions.

Dean Lacy of Cambridge Harriers regained the individual title after a loan of one season to the ultra consistent Huw Evans (Tonbridge), who finished fifth on a tortuous course in the grounds of Parkwood School.

Kent champion, Lacy, ran with new found confidence to open a gap of 24 seconds on Andy Rayner (Blackheath and Bromley) on the last of three laps. Steve Fennell (Tonbridge) led the champion's team home in third place followed by Evans, Julian Rendall (7th) and Dan Bradley (11th).

Medway and Maidstone had Tom Collins (6th), Jack Tyler (8th), Ben Tyler (9th) and Dan Evans (10th) packing superbly but it was not quite enough to wrest the four-to-score trophy back from Tonbridge.

Cambridge Harriers, inspired by Lacy, were third on the day but Invicta East Kent had done enough over the season to claim the third team place overall.

There was consolation for Medway and Maidstone in the Duodec Cup 12-to-score category. The vital points were secured by Adrian Lowther (13th), Pat Curran (16th), James Hogg (17th), Nathan Wilkins (21st), Gareth Williams (27th), Leon Iwanca (28th), Andrejs Safars (30th) and Nick Slade (36th).

Tonbridge had their twelve good men and true in the top sixty to finish second behind M&M both on the day and overall. Tunbridge Wells Harriers were third in this classification. Full results are available at www.dartfordharriersac.co.uk

Final Positions: 1 Tonbridge 56 points, 2 Medway and Maidstone 56, 3 Invicta East Kent 46, 4 Cambridge Harriers 44, 5 Tunbridge Wells Harriers 32, 6 Beckenham Running Club 31. **Duodec:** 1 Medway and Maidstone 14, 2 Tonbridge 12, 3 Tunbridge Wells Harriers 5, 4 Cambridge Harriers 3, 5 Bexley 3. **Overall Individuals:** 1 Dean Lacy (Cambridge Harriers) 13, 2 Alex Bruce-Littlewood (Blackheath and Bromley) 17, 3 Julian Rendall (Tonbridge) 23, 4 Tom Collins (Medway and Maidstone) 27, 5 Huw Evans (Tonbridge) 33, 6 Mark Wilkins (Invicta) 59.

KENT WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE FINAL, SWANLEY

Deirdre McDermott of Tonbridge AC retained her Kent women's cross country league title without winning a single race this season, writes Alan Newman. Four second places this winter was more than enough to ensure the trophy went back to Tonbridge in the 30-year-old Irish woman's kit bag.

McDermott led from the gun at Swanley but was shadowed by W45 masters international, Clare Elms of Beckenham RC, who unleashed her trademark kick with 200m remaining to win by three seconds from the league champion.

W40 Helen Wheeler and Kylara Hassell of Folkestone Running Club were next to finish, followed by W35 plus masters champion, Melanie Burdett (Beckenham) and Amy Skinner of Medway and Maidstone.

McDermott led Tonbridge in their successful defence of the league trophy with support from W45 Pippa Blackstone (14th) and junior athlete, Jess Owen (16th). Folkestone RC finished second overall and a resurgent Invicta East Kent were third, just as they were in the men's league. The full results are available at www.dartfordharriersac.co.uk

Final Positions: 1 Tonbridge 40 points, 2 Folkestone RC 39, 3 Invicta East Kent 36, 4 Beckenham RC 32, 5 Dartford Harriers 27, 6 Blackheath and Bromley 17. Overall Individuals: 1 Deirdre McDermott (Tonbridge) 8, 2 Lauren Fawke (Folkestone) 37, 3 Melanie Burdett (Beckenham) 46, 4 Claire Brown (Invicta) 50, 5 Jess Owen (Tonbridge) 68, 6 Anika Jones (Beckenham) 75. Masters: 1 Melanie Burdett (Beckenham) 16, 2 Anika Jones (Beckenham) 28, 3 Lynne Champion (Istead and Ifield) 50.

Alan Newman