

Aviva English Schools Cross Country Championships 2011

The climax of the cross country season for junior athletes, the Aviva English schools cross country championships took place at Wollaton Park, Nottingham.

Teams of eight runners representing each English county contested the six age group races giving fields in excess of 350 runners.

Eleven West Suffolk AC athletes were in the Suffolk teams and one, Holly Archer, in the Cambridgeshire team.

The weather was superb, bright and sunny with little breeze. The firm underfoot conditions and generally flat course made for very fast paced races.

The best individual performance of the day came in the Junior Boys race over 4100m. Having won the Anglian Schools championship Cameron McKie was determined to finish the season on a high and set off aggressively, leading the field through the opening 600m. As he slipped back down the field over the ensuing 3000m to 26th it looked as if he had misjudged his effort but to his credit Cameron rallied again and in a storming last 400m over the small hill and on the run downhill to the finish he passed no less than 15 runners to finish a superb 11th, clocking 14:16. Steadily improving Michael Bartram was the next Suffolk finisher in 111th (15:06) with an under the weather Seb Anthony 206th (15:35), 3rd Suffolk and first year Ben Eames 236th (15:47) 4th Suffolk finisher.

Another athlete producing his best race of the season was Mac Delo in Inter Boys over 5600m. A natural slow starter Mac tried hard to get out fast but still found himself caught in the midfield crush early on. His improving strength showed as he steadily carved his way through the field and resulted in an excellent 28th from over 330 finishers and leading home the Suffolk team.

There were solid results in the longest race of the day, the Senior Boys over 6700m. Simon Dawson led home a trio of West Suffolk AC runners in 94th clocking 23:04. Next up was Dominic Thackery, 124th (23:29) and Asa Burnett 149th (23:48). Asa's performance was especially noteworthy as he has been unable to train with the squad for most of the winter.

Beth Tooley received a last minute call up to the Suffolk team in the Inter Girls race and didn't have the best of runs but stuck to her task placing 323rd.

Holly Archer led home a trio of West Suffolk AC runners in the Senior Girls race over 4100m. Holly was a pleasing 46th in 16:03 leading home the Cambridgeshire team. Sophie Tupman, having only returned to training in the last few weeks showed glimpses of her potential with a respectable 157th, clocking 17:28 and was closely followed by another improving athlete, Justine Anthony in 169th in 17:41. All three are bottom of the age group and so can look forward to still better results next year.

After a very successful cross country season by the endurance squad attention turns to the track with the county championships in May the first major target.

West Suffolk AC always welcome new squad members of all ages and if you would like more details contact Gordon Palmer on 01284 753687 or email gordonepalmer@yahoo.com.

