



## **Ilford AC 10 Miles Cross Country “Race for Kev”**

Hainault Forest

Monday 28th December

Over 150 runners from all over the county mixed with runners from local clubs to pay tribute to Ilford athlete Kevin Newell as Ilford AC successfully hosted their 10 miles cross country event (“Race for Kev”) over a very muddy traditional 3 lap course at Chigwell Row on Bank Holiday Monday. Kevin sustained a serious brain injury when falling from a ladder last January and now requires full time care. Competitors responded in typical fashion to the call with the tribute event raising a substantial donation to Kevin’s charity.

With the unseasonal weather continuing the beautiful sunny day that greeted the runners did little to disguise the seriously challenging nature of a boggy and well “churned up” course, it also having been used on Boxing Day.

With the race also doubling as the Club’s own 10 mile Club Championships Ilford runners featured highly with Tom Gardner once again demonstrating his current fine form cruising through the mud to win in 61.44. He was chased hard for the first 2 laps by veteran Malcolm Muir who finally had to settle for 2nd in 63.25. Supervet Stephen Philcox was 3rd home for the club in 7th place overall and 66.36. A good run by Paul Holloway brought him 9th place in 67.15 and following him home were Sam Rahman, 13th in 69.07, Kevin Wotton, 16th in 72.23, and Neil Crisp, 17th in 72.24.

In the ladies race 2 unattached runners led from the start, Gemma Hockett and Faye Beechener, with Ilford’s experienced over 55 Bree Nordin tracking them closely. By the 2nd lap Hockett had pulled clear but Nordin had superbly eased herself into 2nd, a position she consolidated at the end to record 83.10. Next home for Ilford were Jenni Sheehan and Mel Jones who had run in tandem for the whole of the race and shared identical times of 90.23 at the end.

Other Ilford runners with times and overall positions were Bradley Brown 40th 82.09, Terry Knightley 43rd 83.05, Stephen Parker 66th 88.50, Declan Cullen 69th 89.02, Rachel Halpin 93rd 100.31, Billy Green 94th 100.31, Baldev Singh 111th 109.21, Doris Gaga 125th 124.47,

Race Organiser Martin Clarke was extremely pleased with the success of the event together with the numbers of runners and supporters and was also delighted to accept a cheque for £500 at the presentation afterwards raised separately by Ilford’s friends at East London Runners. With the total funds raised likely to be well in excess of £1000 it is now planned to



hold the event annually over the Christmas holiday period.

### **Quick Hick Wins Boxing Day Handicap.**

A record field of 17 brushed aside the excesses of Christmas day to toe the line at the Club's 7th annual Ilford AC Boxing Day handicap.

The race takes place over 3 miles of some of the muddiest sections of Hainault Forest. First to go off was Doris Gaga and then the other athletes at regular intervals until finally after 11 minutes scratch man Ahmed Abdulle set off.

Ernie Forsyth had quickly overtaken, Doris and was the leader at half way, but 11 year old Matthew Hick was moving through the field, together with his father Wayne. Further back Tom Gardner was rapidly gaining ground. However scratch runner Ahmed had trouble with the local wildlife and had to hide behind a tree to let both horses and dogs go past him. Entering the last stretch of the race the Hick family were still leading the way and young Matthew held on to win bragging rights. His winning time was 26 minutes exactly, which was 26 seconds clear of his father. In 3rd place was Tom Gardner who ran not only the fastest time of the day 19.46, but the second fastest time in the events history. First lady home was Mel Jones in 4th place in a time of 27.22. Other places were:- 5th Steve Philcox 21.01, 6th Neil Crisp 22.49, 7th Bradley Brown 24.46, 8th Sam Rahman 21.30, 9th Ahmed Abdulle 20.51, 10th Jenni Sheehan 26.25, 11th Ernie Forsyth 31.13, 12th Declan Cullen 27.58, 13th Martin Clarke 29.04, 14th Nikki Fairbairn 33.04, 15th Doris Gaga 35.37, 16th Billy Green 32.49, 17th Rob Sargent 34.19

### **ESSEX CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE**

Round 4 Epping Forest

Saturday 2 January

Ilford AC opened 2016 opened with a good turnout and some excellent results from both the junior and senior sections of the Club .The 4th round of this winters Essex Cross-Country League was held on an extremely challenging muddy course in Epping Forest.

First up were the Club's youngsters who all performed to a very high standard with some outstanding results. In the U17's Boys race , Ahmed Abdullah led the race from start to finish to win by nearly a minute. In the U15's Boys race Mungo Prior competed in his ever first ever race for the club and came an amazing 5th position. In the U15's Girls Jordan Hinds came 12th, which was her highest position this season. In the U13s Boys Ilford had 4 athletes competing and the team battled to a 3rd position overall. First home for Ilford was Farris Patel, who improves with every race , coming in a excellent 6th position .Backing Farris up was Bradley Deacon in 17th and Matthew Hick in 19th. These were their best positions of the



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season so far. Euan Johnstone also battled through to 43rd place to earn the team a credible third position.

The senior ladies raced over 6.7km with the Ilford challenge headed by Jenni Sheehan, who improves with every race and clocking 33 mins 19 secs for 22nd place. Just one place behind was Bree Nordin with the top F55 category run of the day, 23rd in 33m 31s, while Nicola Hopkinson put in a strong run for 35th in 35m 57s. The scoring team was completed by Rachel Halpin with a good run for 51st in 35m 59s. The team placed 5th in the league match, their best of the season. Backing up the team were Julia Galea in 65th (42.35) and Doris Gaga 69th (42.56) in a field of 83 finishers.

The men's race was over 7.6km and Ilford's Tom Gardner was in excellent form coming home 7th in 29m 02s, while Kiwi Blair McWhirter finished a fine 14th in his English cross-country debut in 30m 03s. Malcolm Muir returned to action after injury to finish 20th, and 3rd in the M40 age group, with 30m 34s and Steve Philcox was 35th, 2nd in the M50 category, in 32m 00s. The Ilford scorers were completed by Sam Rahman in 62nd with 33m 53s and Kevin Wotton in 34m 18s for 67th. In the Essex League match the men matched the club's ladies with a 5th place finish. The club had another 5 finishers with Neil Crisp 69th in 34m 21s and Robin McNelis recording 35m 06s in 78th. There was a rare outing on the country for Gary Floate in 125th with 41m 13s and the team was completed by Steve Parker in 132nd (42.04) and Ed Skinner 137th (42m 49s). There were 165 finishers.

With one more round of the league to go at Colchester the men are placed 9th in division 1 and the ladies 7th in the top tier. On the individual rankings Tom Gardner lies 2nd in the senior mens competition, with Neil Crisp 8th in the M50 category. Andy Catton and Tony Nixon, both not in action this weekend, are 1 and 2 in the M60 age category. For the ladies Bree Nordin heads the F55 rankings and Nicola Hopkinson is 9th in the F45 category.





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