



Essex Veteran Cross Country Championships

Chigwell Row

Saturday 29 November

Veteran athletes from all over Essex enjoyed ideal running conditions in some warm autumnal sunshine as they tackled a classic challenging cross country course hosted by Ilford AC at their Chigwell Row venue last Saturday morning. The heavy rain leading up to the Essex XC Veterans Championship event had produced some very boggy conditions as the first race combining the over 50s men category with the women set off from the Common opposite Lambourne Road at 11am. Within 200 metres of the start the 200 strong field were into the worst of the long muddy climb which had to be negotiated twice on the 2 lap course of 5.4 miles.

Neil Crisp led the men's A team home finishing 21st in 38.49. A strong run by Andy Catton was rewarded by a silver medal in the V60 category clocking 39.22 for 26th. He was followed in by Terry Knightley, 54th in 44.00 and Steve Parker who closed in 60th place in 45.28. The "B" team was headed by John Mackenzie 76th in 48.38 who was joined by Steve Cheal, 87th in 50.50, Rob Sargent 94th in 53.56 and Graham Williams 104th in 61.36 who also took the bronze in the over 70s. The two Ilford mens teams were 9th and 17th respectively out of the 17 teams competing. The mens 50s race was won by Colchester's Colin Ridley in 35.00.

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The ladies race produced the run of the day with Sarah Stradling Colchester Harriers taking the women's title clocking 36.00 and beating the 3rd man home in the process. Bree Nordin led the women's squad home in 30th position, 46.32, a performance which also took the W55 gold medal. She was well supported by Mel Jones, 33rd, 46.53, Nicola Hopkinson, 45th, 49.99 and Pam Jones, a silver medalist in the W65s in 92nd and 64.02. The Ilford ladies team placed 11th out of the competing 16 teams.

The younger veteran 40 men set off in their separate race an hour later with a reduced field of only 67 runners due to many last minute cancellations. The course, by now badly churned up, was much to the liking of Ilford's Malcolm Muir who started as one of the three favourites with Orion's international triathlete Nick Sasha and former Essex Senior XC Champion Kevin Murphy of Woodford Green. Indeed it was these three that made the early pace with former winner Alan Smalls of Colchester and Barny Foot of Orion giving chase. By halfway Sasha had set up a 100 metre lead on the Ilford man with Murphy about the same distance adrift in 3rd. Going up the last climb it seemed that Murphy might catch Muir having closed to within 25 metres but Muir used his speed to pull away again through the flatter section through the woods and the long sprint in back across the common. It finished Sasha 1st in 32.51, Muir 2nd in 33.14 and Muir 3rd in 33.37.



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Steve Philcox was another Ilford man producing an excellent run making 10th position with 35.31 and Kevin Wotton adding great support placing 27th in 37.31. Unfortunately The Club were unable to close a team of 4 in this race due to the forced retirement of Tony Hyde who sustained an injury on the first lap.

Serpentine 5km

Hyde Park

Friday 28 November

Two runners from Ilford Ac ran in the November edition of the Last Friday of the Month 5km in Hyde Park. Carol Muir came home 220th and 36th female in 26min 40 secs, while Pam Jones was once again first in the F75 category in 30m 46s

Kingston 10km

Sunday 30 November

Club newcomer Doris Gaga travelled to Surrey to run in the Kingston 10km recording 59m 09s for 106th female and 323rd in a field of over 450 starters.