



## **JUNIOR PRESS REPORT**

### **Essex Cross Country Championships**

Writtle College

*Saturday 5th January*

#### **History Boys**

Saturday was the start of a busy month for Ilford young athletes, with 5 races including three championships in the next 5 weeks.

Writtle college was the venue for the Essex championships and after the excess of Christmas, the form book is usually thrown out of the window. Due to some controversial messing about with race distances the U17 and U20 races were combined boys and girls.

Ilford had four boys in the U17 race and prior to the start they thought they were in with a team medal opportunity. A slight downhill meant that it was a very fast start and the four Ilford boys all made good starts, with Aaron Samuel and Mungo Prior being in the leading group, with Farris Patel and Bradley Deacon in the second group.

As the athletes moved out of sight, the leading group had reduced down to 8 which still contained both Aaron and Mungo, whilst Farris and Bradley were still working their way through the field. The team event looked close with Ilford, Thurrock and Basildon all in contention.

The middle section of the course included a few twists and turns and on one of these Leon Wheeler of Thurrock made what turned out to be the decisive move. A battle ensued over the last half mile for second place, which was won by Aaron. Mungo battled away over the last part of the course for a very good 7th place.

Slightly further back Farris and Bradley were having their personal battle, whilst still going past other athletes, at the end Farris just prevailed in 20th place with Bradley just one place behind in 21st.

The team race was very close with only 9 points separating the top three, with Ilford coming out on top of Thurrock and Basildon.

This was the first time Ilford had won the U17 team race since 1965. Tony Nixon, Ilford Vet, who was a member of the 1965 team was happy to pose with the 2019 winners.



The U20's was one of those where the distance had been upped to 8k, Ilford sole representative was Jordan Hinds, who had never raced this far before.

She made a steady start and even though she found the distance pretty tough going she kept going the whole way and ended up with a very good 12th place.





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