



Essex Schools XC Championships

Hockley

Saturday 19th January 2019

Seven of Ilford's young athletes travelled to Hockley at the weekend, to compete in the Essex Schools Cross country championships. In each race the first 20 would be chosen to represent Essex at The South East Inter Counties, with the top 6 also automatically picked for the English schools Championships later in the year

With the Athletes representing their Boroughs rather than the clubs, it was hard to keep an eye on the athletes in their unfamiliar vests.

First up was Matthew Hick representing Havering in the U15 boys, Matthew has been lacking in confidence lately and this was shown by his very cautious start., which meant he was always going to be leaving himself a lot of work to make the team. Nevertheless he gave it a good go and worked his way through the field to eventually finish a creditable 25th.

Next up was Jordan Hinds representing Redbridge in the Senior Girls, Jordan is studying hard for her A levels at the moment, and despite missing out on training she continues to compete in all the races. Jordan made a positive start and was up in around 15th place after the first small lap. However as the race went on she began to lose a few places and despite a concerted effort the last half mile she just missed out on a place in the top 20, with 22nd place.

Ilford had 4 athletes in the Intermediate boys, all running for different boroughs. Aaron Samuels has been running well all winter, but had picked up a niggle the previous week, so was very cautious at the start. He was joined towards the front by Jak Wright who is recovering after picking up a nasty bite whilst on holiday in Ghana. Bradley Deacon who is training really well and Farris Patel, who despite his dislike of cross country were also in close attendance, and this was still the case after the completing the small first lap.

As the second lap started a lead group of five began to break away, and Aaron was part of this group, with Jak in about 7th place and Bradley and Farris around 12th and 13th. At the top of the hill with about a mile to go Aaron shot to the front and opened up a gap which proved to be decisive. Jak was battling for a place in the English schools and with a great finish ended up 8th. It is hoped that he will get one of two discretionary places. Bradley had a great second half of the race and was rewarded for recent hard work with a great 11th place. Farris struggled a bit on the hills on the second half of the course, but still came in a very good



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15th.

Mungo Prior was Ilford's sole runner in the senior boy's race and from the start was in a great position in the middle of a large leading group. As the athletes reappeared at the end of the first lap, Mungo was at the head of a much smaller lead group.

The second visit to the hills was where the race was decided, with the first three athletes breaking away, Mungo was in the second group and managed to finish strongly holding onto to 6th place, the last automatic place for English Schools.