



## **2019 Southern Cross Country Championships**

Parliament Hill

*Saturday 26th January*

The 2019 Southern Cross\_country Championship were held last weekend at Parliament Hill Fields on Hampstead Heath, considered to be the home of English Cross-Country.

The mass start up the hill is exhilarating for athletes and spectators alike with all the hallmarks of a charge into battle and the crush at the top of that first hill is a welcome break for the runners legs

The challenging course was firmer than usual due to the dry weather this winter which led to some good racing, although the course was not without its mud baths in places.

After a hard battle with the hills that Parliament hill is famous for, the runners get to fly down the finishing bend, sprinting as hard as they can on heavy legs to the line accompanied by loud cheering from the massed crowd of running clubs all cheering their runners home.

Injury and studying for exams, meant that Ilford only had four young athletes on show. All four athletes were in the men's U17 category which started around midday just as the weather began to get really cold. The race started in the traditional position which meant the first half mile was straight uphill, and then onto the mud. The course was meant to be one small lap followed by a large lap, but somehow they ended up running the large lap first.

Mungo Prior was the first up the hill for Ilford, followed by Jak Wright, with Bradley Deacon close behind and Farris Patel making up the Ilford quartet. Mungo continued to make good progress during the now extended first lap and was always moving forward. Jak and Bradley were still pretty close to each other and also making good progress. Farris is never entirely happy on the mud, but was hanging in there and gaining valuable places for the team.

The finish to the race is a long downhill stretch and Mungo finished really well to lead the team home in 58th place. Jak and Bradley continued their race long personal battle with Jak just coming out on top by 1 second in 121st with Bradley 122nd. Farris managed to gather himself for a sprint at the end and finished a very good 149th.

Ilford finished 11th in the team event, just behind local rivals woodford.











Ilford Senior ladies turned out a full team led by Anna Crawley in 579th in a large field with 44 mins 39 secs for the 8km race.

Next home was Julia Galea 650th in 49 mins 18 secs and Frieda Keane was 3 places back in 49 mins 46 secs.

Launa Broadley finished strongly for 691st with 56 mins 32 secs. In the Southern Team Championships Ilford ladies finished 71st.













There were strong results from the senior men of Ilford Ac with Alex Richards particularly impressive coming home 154th in the 15km event in 53 minutes 06 secs. Next home was Seb Parris, who is improving with each outing over the country, in 356th with 57 mins 23 secs. John Crawley finished a fine 600th in 61 mins 31 secs with Diarmuid Mac Donnell also looking good in 699th with a time of 63 mins 32 secs.













### **SEAA Round-up:**

The first big Indoor championships of 2019 came at Lee Valley in the form of the South of England AA Championships.

First up on the weekend of 12-13th January, Mario Dobrescu competed in the U17M 60m and set a personal best of 7.11 seconds in reaching the final. He backed up his performance in the shorter sprint with a dominant display in winning the U17M 400m Gold Medal with a national age-group leading performance of 49.82 which is his first sub-50 clocking on British soil.

The following weekend (19-20th January) Ilford had a few more athletes out in force competing in the South of England AA Championships for U20/Senior athletes. Esmeralda Mengeyele set a personal record of 8.09 seconds in the U20 Women's 60m event, and backed this up with a very creditable 7th place finish in the Long Jump against what was basically a national final quality field which saw 5 of the top 8 in the nation competing. Efe Austinz competed in the 60m and 200m, and performed creditably in her first big championships as an U20 athlete with good placings in her heats and a personal best of 8.25





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seconds in the 60m event.

Krystle Balogun was the solo Senior entry for Ilford in this meeting with her first indoor outing over 400m of the year. A solid run with a time close to her indoor personal best bodes well for the upcoming Essex Indoor Championships.

Ilford AC will have 7 athletes competing in the Essex Indoor Championships which takes place over the weekend of 2-3rd February with high expectations from the Sprints and Jumps coach Nat Senior that the squad will achieve a healthy medal haul.