



## **Essex Cross Country Champs**

*Basildon*

4th January 2020

After the excess of Christmas ,Ilford Youngsters found themselves at the start of a busy January, which will contain 5 races including 3 championships. The first of which was the Essex Clubs Championships at Basildon last weekend.

First race was the U17 over 5k, where Ilford had 4 runners, with the boys and girls combined in a field of around 60 began the first race.

After the initial charge a group of about 20 quickly broke clear, which contained all the Ilford Athletes. The team had hatched a plan to try and keep the pace fairly slow and keep away from the front. As they approached the hill for the first time, Aaron Samuels was just behind the leaders, closely followed by Jak Wright and Bradley Deacon, with Farris Patel in his first race of the season ,hanging in at the back of the group.

The athletes disappear from spectators for long parts of the race and when they re-emerged near the finish, Aaron once again was in first place and went on to win by 14 seconds, from Joel Doye of Woodford.

Jak was having his personal battle for the bronze medal and cheered on by the Ilford supporters he held on to take his first individual cross country medal. Bradley was also having a great run and came in 7th place which was his highest county finishing, but just missed out on automatic selection for the Essex team.

With three runners in 7, it all rested on final scorer Farris, who despite his dislike of the mud, always gives 100% and he produced his usual great sprint finish to finish 16th. With 27 points Ilford retained the team trophy, and have now won the Essex title 4 years on the trot (twice as U15's and now twice as U17's)

Mungo Prior and Jordan Hinds were both in the U20's race, with again the men and ladies being run together, due to new equalisation rules this meant the ladies had to run almost 5 miles. Mungo made a positive start in the men's race and was actually leading for the first mile or so, but after the first lap he had dropped back to 3rd place. As the hill section approached he was still hanging in there, but gradually lost a few places on the second half of the race to finish 7th.

Jordan has been training well all through the winter and also made a good start, and was

looking strong early on, but the field split up very quickly and this meant she had to run most of the race on her own, unperturbed she stuck to the task and finished in 8th place, which is her best ever finish in the Essex Cross country.

It is hoped that Bradley, Mungo and Jordan, will join Aaron and Jak in being selected for the Essex team for the Inter counties championships in March.







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