

Barcelona Half Marathon

Sunday 16th February

The Barcelona Half Marathon is one of the biggest running events in Spain attracting close to 19,000 runners, one of whom was Ray 'Sparra' Everingham from Ilford AC running his second international running event in preparation for his first ever Marathon in London in April. Escaping 'Storm Dennis', which cancelled most events in England at the weekend the race nonetheless took part on an overcast but chilly morning.

Starting and finishing at the Parc de la Cuitadella, Sparras aim was his first sub 2 hour marathon, so prepared was he that he had his planned split times written on the back of his hand!.

After a steady start the congestion on some parts of the route meant the sub 2 hour target slowly slipped away but he was still very pleased with his time of 2 hours 7 minutes 24 seconds which was a PB by over 2 and a half minutes for the distance.







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Sparra wasn't the only Ilford runner to represent the club abroad this weekend though. Over in Melbourne Australia, Tom Gardner, who is on a holiday, entered a local graded track meeting and came second in the 5000m in a time of 15 minutes 50 seconds.

Southern Counties Vets AC Indoor Championship

Lee Valley

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Ilford Super-Vet John Batchelor also managed to escape the storm....by running indoors. In his first race for a year John competed in the mixed M70/75 400m race, finishing third overall however taking first place and Gold medal in the M75 category in a time of 79.73 secs which exceeded his expectations on the day

Due to last weekend's storm, meaning the final Essex Cross country League of the season was cancelled, several of the Ilford young athletes were denied the chance to improve their overall League position.

Jak Wright who had a chance of winning the U17 men's title had to settle for second place as did Jordan Hinds who also finished 2nd in the U20 women. Bradley Deacon was hoping to use the last race to get into the medal positions but had to settle for 4th place in the U17 men's category.

Several of the clubs senior runners also claimed medal positions in the final tables to cap off a successful season of Cross Country running..

Paul Grange Gold M40, Gary Coombes Bronze M45, Paul Holloway Bronze M50, Nicola Hopkinson Bronze W55, Breege Nordin Gold W60, Alan Pearl Silver M60 and James Huddart Bronze M70.

In the team places Ilford finished in the following positions:-

6th U13 Boys, 7th U15 Boys, 4th U17 Men, 8th U17 Women, 3rd Senior Men, 10th Senior Women, 4th Veteran men and 11th Veteran women.

Many of the Cross Country squad took out their frustration of not running by doing one of the local Park runs,

Bradley Deacon ran a park run pb of 17.31 at Valentines Park to finish first, 6 seconds in front



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of fellow Ilford runner Gary Coombes for an Ilford first and second place.

Terry Knightly also ran a PB of 19:32 to finish 10th

Ilford U13 runner James Thake ran his first ever parkrun also at Valentines in a great time of 21:02, and was joined by fellow U13 runners from the club Ryder Islam in 25th for a time of 21:04 and Jacob Emeagi in his first time over 5k in 106th place in 25:24

In total Ilford AC were represented by 14 runners at Valentines Park

Over at Raphaels Park Ilford AC also had 3 runners in the first 10.

Paul Grange finished 1st in 16:01 for a new pb. Ryan Holeyman came in 2nd place with a time of 18:01 which was also a pb. Joseph Grange, Pauls son, finished in 10th place completing a trio of pb's with a time of 18:24

In total Ilford AC were represented by 7 runners at Raphaels Park