

NA Cross Country Championships Report 30th January 2013

Knowsley Safari Park was a triumph of organisation for the Merseyside hosts, delivered in style. The venue, accessibility and organisation drew plaudits all round and only a handful of clubs failed to get there. The build up to the event had been a challenge with difficult weather conditions making great demands on those involved in promoting this championship. However we enjoy our cross country in the North and weather did not defeat us due to the resolve of both the staff at Knowsley Park and the hard working local volunteers the event went ahead successfully.

Under 17 Women

Ilkley's Georgie Malir claimed the first title of the day with a 7 second victory over Abbie Donnelly of Lincoln Wellington in second place and Lydia Turner (Birtley) taking the bronze. Lincoln Wellington claimed the team title with excellent packing having their last counter in 31st place.

Junior Women

North west clubs contested this event strongly with the first five athletes home all coming from here. Sale's Georgia Taylor-Brown was the winner with Amelia Pettit of Vale Royal taking silver and Laura Riches from Leigh taking bronze. The team race was also dominated by the North West as Vale Royal AC took gold, Liverpool H the silver and Leigh Harriers the bronze.

Under 17 Men

The north west clubs domination continued in this race with the first seven athletes home all coming from that area. Patrick Dever of Preston H beat East Cheshire's Joe Steward by 2 second to claim his crown with Elliot Bowker a further 3 seconds adrift of him. Vale Royal claimed their second team title of the day, with Preston second and Trafford third.

Junior Men



A mature runner with an eye catching pedigree is the Sunderland athlete Weynay Ghebresilasie. Despite being chased by some top national juniors Weynay made light work of the difficult underfoot conditions and ran with the confidence and strength seldom seen in eighteen year olds. Gateshead's Callum Johnson ran a good race to hold off the strong Toby Loveridge of Liverpool Pembroke Sefton. The team race looked interesting throughout as it swung one way then another. Gateshead claimed the title with 50 points followed by Liverpool Pembroke Sefton on 56 points and Sale with 57 points.

The medal winners in the junior mens race Loveridge leads Ghebresilasie with Johnson

Senior Women

No stranger to epic cross country battles at the very highest levels Hallamshire's Hatti Archer found the Knowsley course to her liking. Giving a faultless performance in the tricky conditions she came home 15 seconds clear of determined Ellie Baker of Stockport. Susan Partridge of Leeds City was third, coincidentally Susan was third the last time Hatti won this title back in 2010 at Blackburn. Susan has now finished in the top three in this event for the last four years, winning this title herself in 2011. In the closest team race of the day Stockport piped Hallamshire Harriers Sheffield by 1 point to take the title. Leeds City AC collected the bronze medals.

Senior Men

Stockport's Steve Vernon ran away from a strong field to claim his fifth senior Northern Cross Country title. Steve's previous senior titles being in 2004, 2009, 2010 and 2012, if you also add his two junior championships in 2000 and 2001 you get an idea of his pedigree.

A sixty one second victory hardly done justice to the Stockport athlete as he made light work of the

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undulated snow covered course. Leading from the gun Vernon had a 12 meter lead by halfway around the first of three laps, this grew as did his confidence with each passing lap. The placings behind Steve shifted as the race progressed with his teammate Pat Martin getting the upper hand of the chasing group to take the silver medal. Dan Garbutt of Durham took the bronze with Yorkshire champion Meles Okbazghi just missing out on a medal. Former Northern champion David Webb in 5th led the Leeds City charge and the usual tight packing saw them take the title from Stockport with Morpeth in third.



Stockport's Steve Vernon smiles after winning his fifth Northern Senior title.

[Results](#)