

## Cross Country Championship Report



Proceedings commenced with the **Under 17 Women** saw the 'in form' Laura Park confirming why she was for many the pre-race favourite with a commanding 37 seconds victory. The Ellenborough AC athlete was quickly away and opened a gap that extended as the race progressed. Kate Avery of Shildon collected the silver after spending almost all the race in unenviable isolation, as her margin over third place Hannah Doughty was even greater, being 41 seconds. Hannah's bronze was one of two she collected as her club Sale Harriers Manchester picked up the third team awards. Vale Royal AC did just enough to take the team title, packing four in twenty four to hold off the Rotherham challenge who finished four in twenty five for the silver medals.

**Under 17 Men** It was a good day for the Schofield family who may well now come to St Helens for their holidays. Scarborough's Danny Schofield who was ninth last year commenced the family celebrations with his comfortable win over Sam Atkins of Lincoln Wellington AC, Sam did however have the consolation of leading his club to the team title. Charlie Hulson maintained the ever present Sale quest for medals with the bronze. Sale Harriers also collected the silver team medals ahead of Liverpool Pembroke & Sefton who collected their only medals of day the day in this event.



**Under 13 Girls** Carlisle Aspatria collected their first ever Northern title when Abbie Hetherington strode away for a comfortable win. Emma Tonner of Lincoln Wellington collected the silver with and Anna Fawcett of Chester le Street taking the bronze. Lincoln Wellington took the team title ahead of Liverpool Harriers with Stockport edging out local rivals Sale for the bronze medals.



**Senior Women** Kendal's Gemma Miles retained the title she won at Roundhay last year, although in the early stages it looked as though Hallamshire's Hattie Dean might have other ideas. Dean opened up an early lead and tried hard to press home the advantage whilst being doggedly chased by the Kendal pair of Miles and Sarah Tunstall. It was only in the second half of this enjoyable encounter that the unwavering Miles was able to haul in the plucky Dean and then set about putting distance between herself and the others. Miles ran out a comfortable winner with a display of single minded determination which is the hallmark of all good champions. Dean held on to keep out Sarah Tunstall ensuring that

the Kendal athlete had to settle for bronze this time not the silver that she won last year. In what turned out to be a difficult day for North East clubs their best hope of a team title was thwarted when Hallamshire Harriers did enough to hold off the always difficult to beat Chester-le-Street for the team gold medals. Meanwhile Sale picked up another set of team medals taking the bronze.

**Under 15 Boys** It was another Schofield who claimed the Under 15 title. Danny's younger brother Josh emulated his big brother by collecting a second Northern title for the family. (When was the last time two brothers won Northern Cross Country titles on the same day?) However this was a much tighter encounter than the under 17s with Josh Schofield just holding off Leeds's Elliot Todd after these two had broken clear of the chasing group. Cameron Boyek of Shildon collected the bronze. However we should spare a thought for Alistair Nelson, who fell badly at the start but managed to finish fourth, just shy of a prestigious medal. Wirral AC picked up the team title in a tight encounter, they just pipped Lancaster & Morecambe by one point with Holmfirth Harriers taking the bronze medals.



**Under 15 Girls.** All three individual medals and two of the three team medals went to North West clubs in this event. The East Cheshire & Tameside pair of Reynolds & Taylor Brown set the tone as they carved up the field and established a comfortable gap over the chasing group. Danielle Wallis of Macclesfield Harriers managed to claim the bronze from Fiona Bell of Hallamshire. The team title went to East Cheshire & Tameside who by packing four in the first fifteen had the most comprehensive of team win of the day. Vale Royal collected the silver with Wakefield District spoiling the North West domination by pushing Leigh Harriers into fourth.

**Under 13 Boys** This can be difficult age group to predict as not all the athletes have raced against each other prior to the January championships. However you can always depend on certain clubs to be strong in this area, and two of the local clubs Wirral & Liverpool Harriers once again had their athletes prominent as we looked for a likely winner. Ultimately though, it was James Knox from Helm Hill who finally broke clear and took the title from Adam Howard of Oldham & Royton Harriers with Ben Everson of Blackpool Wyre & Fylde taking the bronze. The team race looked to be tighter than it actually was with Wirral AC being clear victors with a 53 point margin over Lincoln Wellington, and Liverpool Harriers taking the bronze medals.



**Senior Men** Steve Vernon delivered a master class on how to handle a muddy course as he claimed his first senior title on the country.

Former champion Andi Jones led the charge and soon established a small lead over a strong chasing group which included Vernon, Dave Webb, Gareth Raven and Mark Hood. However he was hauled in by the end of the first large lap as the leaders jockeyed

for the best line in the increasingly muddy conditions. Steve Vernon took his opportunity and struck for home with almost two large laps to go. Vernon increased his lead with every stride and coming up the final hill before the finish he engaged the crowd with a cheer and a victory arm gesturing salute. David Webb had to battle hard to stay ahead of Sales' evergreen Gareth Raven who passed a tiring Andi Jones on the last lap to claim the bronze medal.

Leeds City who have dominated the team event for a number of years howed no sign of slacking as they came home with a 210 point winning margin! Liverpool Harriers took the silver with a three point margin over Salford in third. John Lunn was once again a happy man



**Under 20 Men** The North East contingent had to wait until the penultimate event to claim their first individual title of the day. Ricky Stevenson of New Marske Harriers duly stepped up to the mark and was a runaway winner from Liverpool

Harriers' Gunderson with Brownlee of Bingley taking the bronze. Ricky also picked up team silver as New Marske finished second behind Liverpool with the strong Warrington outfit claiming the bronze.



**Under 20 Women.** This was as muddy as it got as the under 20 women set off on the last event, however Leigh's Lauren Howarth, like Steve Vernon, made light work of the conditions as she led from gun to tape. The battle for silver was a different matter as Kirsty Milner of Trafford and Vicky Graves of City Of York pushed hard in this nip and tuck encounter. Kirsty finally came out on top with a flattering five second margin over the plucky Graves.

Rotherham Harriers took the team title with Kingston upon Hull and Blackburn taking silver and bronze

[Results may be found on 2009 Results Index](#)

*Sarah Tunstall 3rd , Gemma Miles 1st ,  
HattieDean 2nd in senior women's  
championship with Northern Athletics  
President Mr Malcolm Fletcher*

*Photos Harry Shakeshaft*

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