

Surrey cross country league match report – Fixture 4, Lloyd Park

Match 4 of the Surrey cross country league was run at a wet and windy Lloyd Park on Saturday 19th Feb. A depleted Walton team braved the strong wind and mud (and there was a lot of it, even by Lloyd Park standards) and scored well enough to ensure that we remain in division 2 next season.

Alex Kilby once again travelled down from Durham, recovering from an injury and illness, and produced a strong run to finish 1st Walton and 7th overall. This was enough for a third consecutive 1st placed U20 which mean Alex wins the U20 Surrey league individual title. Congratulations Alex – thoroughly deserved.

Second Walton athlete home was **Craig Jarman** in 14th, which is quite impressive considering he'd already run 28km earlier the same day, having thought that the race would be cancelled! Nevertheless, he put in a strong run for the team. Thank you Craig.

Next across the line for Walton (and it pains me to say this) was our beloved coach **Jamie McLoughlin**. Jamie has raced 3 times this week, setting a PB in the 10km last Sunday, running an indoor mile mid-week and now another strong performance in the mud to finish inside the top 50 (46th). Well done Jamie.

We then had **Robert Smith** (52nd), **Clint De Tarnowski** (60th), **Matt Reed** (78th), **Hugo Fleming** (80th) and **James Bartosik** (83rd) following not far behind.

Clint, Matt, Hugo, and James all fought hard to the line, not relinquishing any places on the final sprint to make sure we can fight again in division 2 next season. Thank you all very much for your super efforts!

Although we are a small club, we have shown this season that we can really compete in div 2. Had we had a full-strength team for all 4 matches, we'd have been placed in the top half of the table. We have a small group of talented and committed runners, which I believe is part of the charm of our club. Having said this, it is clear that we struggle if only 2 or 3 runners are unable to make a race on any given day. As team manager, I will be looking to address this issue over the coming months to ensure that we are as competitive as we can be in every match we take part in.

For now though, I'd like to thank every athlete that took part in a cross country match this season. Our margin for survival was 122 points, which means that every single performance counted. Thank you to parents who have travelled with and supported U20 athletes, thank you to our volunteers that marshalled at Denbies, and thank you to David Kilby who, by default, has become our unofficial team photographer. And well done to **Matt Reed** and **Clinton De Tarnowski** who ran all 4 matches.

I have enjoyed this season immensely and I hope you have too.

Robert

