



## Cross Country Awards 2019-20

By Zoom 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020



**Good evening everybody and welcome on behalf of Havering Athletic Club to the 2019-20 annual cross-country awards. We're about six months later than usual, we're not all in the same room, and we can't offer you a buffet or free drink for reasons you're all aware of, but better late than never!**

Firstly, as always, we would also like to recognise and congratulate the parents for making sure athletes got to the start line in the first place, fit and well to wear the club vest with such distinction. **So, let's give them a round of "virtual" applause!**

Tonight is all about acknowledging the achievements of our athletes for both **Club Best Performance** and just as importantly **Team Member Awards**. As ever, the respective team managers have selected the winners. As we're on line this year we can't have the usual award presentations by our Club President, Claire Brennan, but the actual awards can be collected from the track on training nights.

We start with the awards for the seniors and veterans.

The cross-country season was completed the weekend before the lockdown in March although strong winds had caused the cancellation of the final Essex League fixture a month before. The winter season was another great one for the senior men and women. The senior men won the cross-country relays in September, comfortably defended their county championship title by an enormous points margin, and won three of the four Essex league meetings to add a third consecutive title. Our M40 team also won the county championships for the first time in many years and also won the Essex League title. Not to be left out, the senior women also won three of the four rounds to add another title defence. The team managers would like to thank all of their squads for their hard work and commitment throughout the season.

I'll start with the award for **Club Best Performance by a Male Veteran**. This gentleman has the ability to keep going. He ran the fastest V50 leg in the road relays and was close to winning the same standing in the Essex League but was foiled by the last race being cancelled so he had to settle for the second-place trophy. An inspiration to all of his training group, the award goes to **MATT BLAND**.

The winner of the **Male Veterans Team Member Award** goes to a man who was always in or around the scoring six in the Essex League. His efforts earned him the individual M40 third place trophy, helping the M40 team to win the league title. He led home the gold medal winning M40 team in the county

championships and was a strong member of the senior squad who won the Essex League for the third time in succession. The winner is **BARRY SMITH**.



The award for the winner of the **Veteran Ladies' Best Performance** award goes to an athlete who has probably lost count of the number of times that she's attended these award evenings! She was the fastest in the senior team at the Essex Cross Country Relays at the start of the season and competed in two of the four Essex League fixtures, coming home as second placed veteran in Round three. At the Essex Vets championships last November she was fifth overall and runner-up in the V45 category. On the roads she was third W45 in the Southend 10k. As ever a valuable member of our winning Essex League cross country team. Well done to **DEBBIE APPLETON**.

The **Ladies' Vets Team Member** is another reliable team member who competed in all four of the Essex League races, running consistently in all of them finishing between 71<sup>st</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> overall and between second and eighth in her W55 age group, placing her fourth in the league table. She was also ninth in her age group in the Essex Vets championships and also had some good placings in road events. **TRACY O'NEILL**.



Now onto the **Senior Men's Best Performance** award. What can we say about this runner? He was the Essex League individual champion for the fourth time in a row. His hard work and determination not to give in was shown in the road relays when he brought the team up from a lowly ninth to fourth giving the team a chance of a medal. He was part of the cross country championship gold medal winning team, the cross country relay winning team, the Essex League winning team and the third-place road relay team. **ROB WARNER**.

Next to the **Senior Men's Team Member** award where the award winner is starting to command the respect from his peers. After a slow start to the season owing to work commitments things levelled out and he produced some very good results, culminating in his last leg of the road relays where his great run earned the team the bronze medal. He was a key part of the cross country championship winning team and the Essex League winning team. We expect even better things from this man in future. **BEN DAVIS**.



The **Senior Women's Best Performance** award goes to an athlete who showed great improvement and placed in the top four at all the Essex League races and won the overall title, a big improvement on fourth place last year. She started the cross country season as part of the silver medal winning Mixed relay team, and also competed for club teams in the London, Southern and National Championships and for Essex in the Southern Inter Counties. She raced week in and week out and excellent road race results included runner up in the Havering Half and fourth in the Chelmsford 10k. Well done **MORGAN CAMPBELL**

The winner of **Senior Women's Team Member** award also had an excellent season with top six finishes in all her Essex League races, to finish overall runner up to Morgan, and a vital part of the squad which defended their Essex League title. She joined Morgan as part of the silver medal winning Mixed relay team, and competed for the club teams in the South of England, the London and the National Championships and represented Essex in the Southern Inter Counties! She is of course **GINTE BAILEY**.



**We now move down to the younger age groups who also had an excellent season with both Under 15 teams and the Under 13 boys winning Essex League titles, the Under 20 women adding the county gold, and the Under 15 girls winning the county relays, with other individual and team medals also.**

We start with the Under 20s. The winner of the **Club Best performance** award for **Junior Men** is a breath of fresh air, not only does he want to run but he has the ability to run fast. Many of his age group over the years have had one or the other but his athlete has both and is not afraid to prove it. He was part of the senior county winning team where he stepped up an age group to help the club retain the trophy, part of the cross country relay team plus a regular member of the league winning squad. He only missed out on the road relays through illness, where with his help, we would have done even better. **SAM ATKINS**.

Now to the winner of the award for **Junior Men Team Member**. This athlete showed the same commitment as his father. Although not a natural cross-country runner his determination to do well out shone many of his age group. We can only hope he can develop into the top-class athlete that his training promises. **LOUIS BERRETT**.

Onto the **Junior Women Best Performance** award. The winner had a series of good results for the club teams in the Essex League, the county cross country relays, and she just missed a medal in placing fourth in the county champs, and also competed in the National Champs. She also again represented the Essex U20 team in both the Southern & National Inter Counties championships. Congratulations **SOPHIE RAND**.



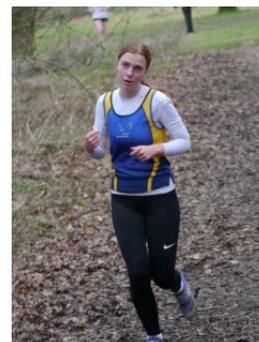
The winner of the **Club Best Performance** award for **under-17 men** was sixth overall in the Essex League standings, after finishing between fourth and eighth in his three races. He ran the fastest leg for the club team in the Essex relays and placed a good 14<sup>th</sup> in the Essex Schools Championships and performed well for the club at the Southern Champs. He showed promise on the roads with his first attempts at 10k in the Chelmsford and Southend Events. The clear winner is **ALEX FORD**.

The **Under 17 Men Team Member** award goes to an athlete who did well in his first season at Under 17, competing in two of the Essex League events and running for the club team in the Essex relays event. A true team player turning up for races for a very short-handed U17s team, showing grit and determination in all of his races. Well done to **LENNY HOUSTON**.



The winner of the **Club Best Performance Award for Under-17 Women** goes to an athlete who competed well in three rounds of the Essex League, including a runner up spot, finishing fourth in the individual standings. She competed well in both the county relays and main championships, and the Essex Schools event, representing Essex in the Southern inter counties, the schools inter counties and the English schools. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic caused the cancellation of the World Schools event in Slovakia which she was due to compete in. Well done **SYDNEY FOLEY**.

The **Under 17 Women Team Member** award goes to a young lady who was a dedicated team member competing in all four of the Essex League races, finishing 18<sup>th</sup> in the individual standings. She also competed for club teams in the cross country relays, the county championships and the Southern Championships, always giving her best. Keep up the training. **REBECCA O'ROURKE**.



The **Club Best Performance** award for **Under-15 boys'** award goes to an athlete who had an excellent season, with three top three finishes in the Essex league to place third in the individual league placings leading the team to the league title, with wins in three of the four races. He added county bronze gold, leading the team to county silver and ran well in the county relays. He was a top 10 finisher for Essex in the Southern Inter Counties and placed eight in the Essex Schools, and went on to compete in the English Schools event. We hope to see him run in any Under 17 events. The deserving winner is **CHARLIE HOWELL**.

The **Under-15 boys Team Member** award also goes to an athlete who again performed consistently well this season, with fourth place finishes in all four Essex League fixtures, for fourth in the standings, as part of the title winning club squad. He was fifth in the Essex County, earning team silver, won Essex vests at the Southern and National Inter Counties and represented the club in the Southern and National events. The winner is **MATTHEW BLACKLOCK**.



We now come to the award for **Club Best Performance for under-15 girls** which goes to a young lady who had a cracking first season in the age group. Her consistent performances in the Essex league and county relays helped the teams win gold in both, and she also competed in the ERRA national athlete relays, the South of England Champs and the Nationals. Fifth place in the county schools earned her Essex selection in her first English Schools' Championships. Still an U15 this winter, the winner is **TILLY CANTY**.

The **Team Member** award in this **under-15 girls'** age group goes to an athlete whose winter season was hampered by ill-health but she was still able to compete at a high standard and was another member of the club team who won the Essex League and county relays. She represented Essex in the Southern schools and the English Schools Championships and was another athlete who missed out on the cancelled World Schools event in Slovakia. **NATALIE SEWELL**.



An excellent second season sees the **Club Best Performance** for **under-13 boys** award go to an athlete who represented the club at all four league races with top 10 finishes each time, for fifth place overall, leading the team to the league title. He was a key member in the silver medal winning Essex relays team, and in the winning team at the Colchester relays and was seventh in the Essex Championships and eighth in the Essex Year 8 event, gaining Essex vests in the inter counties races. A real asset to the team with potential to do better. The future looks bright for **OLIVER TAYLOR-BUSH**.

The **Team Member** award winner for **under-13 boys** goes to a great team member who showed real commitment to the cause, taking part in all four league races, helping the winning club squad to victory. He also competed for club teams in the Essex Champs and relays, and the Southern Champs. Someone who gives his all for the team, in races and at training the well-deserved winner is **JOSEPH GRAY**.



We have now come to the final age group, the **Under-13 girls**. It was hard for the team manager to choose between an equally talented duo for these awards, who were both ever-present and achieved similar results. The team manager's difficulty was not surprising as it's often hard for others to tell the duo apart! The **Club Best Performance** award went to the athlete who had slightly better results achieving two Essex League runner up placings and also finishing second in the league standings, and placing fifth at county level. A key member of the Essex League team which finished second and the third placed team at the county relays, and competing in the South of England and National races and representing Essex at the Inter Counties. The winner is **CHARLOTTE EVANS**.

The **Under-13 girls Team Member** award winner's best results were a third place Essex league finish and sixth in the county champs and she was also a key member of the Essex League team which finished second and the third placed team at the county relays, and competing in the South of England and National races and earned her Essex vest at the Inter Counties. Well done to **HANNAH EVANS**.



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We now come to the first of the special awards where the winner has been selected by the Club's Management Committee. The Committee can elect each year to make a special presentations to those athletes who have excelled when competing outside the League structure – for example in prestigious County, Regional and National Championships.

The first of these special awards this evening is in the **Female Under-20 to Veteran category** and as the season went on it was clear that this talented young lady was the stand out club performer in cross country events. After a comfortable county championship win, after good runs for her university, this young lady added to her international vests with a fourth place finish for England on Spain. She then took silver in the Southern Championships, before an excellent British Universities bronze, seventh in the National before ending her season on a high with bronze for Essex in the Inter Counties. The deserving winner is of course **KATE O'NEILL**.

The second of these special awards is in the **Male Under-20 to Veteran category** and goes to an athlete who returned to his best form in road races after an injury affected few years. He started the winter with victory in the Pleshey & Essex County Half Marathon before placing 11<sup>th</sup> in the Glasgow Half Marathon a few weeks later. He went on to place a fine 40<sup>th</sup> in the Frankfurt Marathon, with an excellent time of 2 hours 22 mins and 7 seconds - the second fastest time ever by a club athlete. In a rare cross-country appearance, he won bronze at the Essex championships leading the senior men's team to gold and finished his winter season with runner up in the Brentwood Half Marathon. Congratulations go to **JAMES CONNOR**



The third & final of these special awards is in the **Services to Cross Country category**. One of the reasons that the club has such a good reputation is because of our many volunteers who go above and beyond to support our athletes. It's one thing to go along and support your child at cross country events through the worst winter months but it takes special person who steps forward to be there from well before the start of the first race to well after the last one has finished, week in, week out for the good of the sport. And that's after spending hours at the track, or on the phone or sending emails chasing up athletes, plus putting entries together, and numerous other things such as trying to find venues for the club to host events. The latest person who is receiving this Services to Cross Country Award has been doing exactly this for the past few years as a team manager for the boys U13s to U17s and as our Cross Country Coordinator. He's now standing down so it's time we recognised his contribution. The winner is **MICK FORD**



That concludes the formalities of the evening, but could the winners please stay on line and join us on screen for a group photo screen shot!



