



## Cross Country Awards 2022-23: Hornchurch Conservative Club - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Good evening everybody and welcome on behalf of Havering Athletic Club to the 2022-23 annual cross-country awards. As always, it's great to see so many familiar & friendly faces, with no hills, mud clogged shoes, a warm temperature and not even a hint of rain in sight.

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

Tonight is all about acknowledging the achievements of our athletes for both **Club Best Performance** and just as importantly **Team Member Awards**. The first awards being presented this evening will be by our Club President – me Claire Brennan! – and, as ever, the respective team managers have selected the winners. First of all, we start with the awards for the seniors and veterans.

Our second full winter programme back into action, after the 2020-21 COVID wipe-out, was another great season for the senior men and women, and although not quite as successful as the year before, was a great season by many clubs' standards. After the senior men's amazing 2021-22 season 2022-23 was a season of runners up spots, and so near yet so far, losing the Essex League narrowly on countback. The senior women had a strong winter, finishing second in the Essex League and Essex Cross Country relays but the highlight was their victory in the Essex Road Relays, the first for over 20 years. The team managers would like to thank all their squads for their hard work and commitment throughout the season.

We'll start with the award for **Club Best Performance by a Male Veteran** where the winner is a gentleman who had represented the club with distinction over many years, sometimes one of a handful of club runners at national events. This season, despite again being affected by injuries, he put these behind him and won the overall bronze in the Essex League. Always a good athlete to have in the team, the award goes to **MATT BLAND**.

The winner of the **Male Veterans Team Member Award** goes to a man who along with all his other club duties, has been mainstay for the club for more years than he would like to remember. His hard work for the club doesn't seem to hinder his running prowess however and he always gives his best to compete in the top of his age group. A member of the silver-medal winning Vet 50 road relay team, the winner is **MARTIN CHESTER**.



*I'll now hand over to our Chairman, Martin Chester*

We now move to the Ladies and the award for the winner of the **Veteran Ladies' Best Performance** goes to a long-standing team member who is receiving an award for the first time. She competed in three of the four Essex League meetings, placing 14<sup>th</sup> in the W45 standings, competed in the London Champs at Parliament Hill and the Vets Champs at Writtle, coming 22<sup>nd</sup> in the V45 category. She also took part in the Essex XC relays at South Weald. Well done to **CLARE RUDGLEY**.

The **Ladies' Vets Team Member** award once again goes to a long-standing valuable team member who regularly turns up to run for the club, and this cross-country season was no exception. She supported the team by competing in two of the four Essex League events, the Vets champs, finishing 16<sup>th</sup> in her W55 age group, and also ran in the cross-country relays. The winner once again is **TRACY O'NEILL** who is unable to be here tonight – her team manager Jane Hallam will pick up her award.



Now onto the **Senior Men's Best Performance** award. What can we say about this young man who would always be the first name on the team sheet. He won an Essex League race at Epping Forest, something many runners try to do each year, and went on to win the overall Senior men's league title. He was a key part of the silver medal-winning team of the cross-country relays, the bronze medal-winning team in the county championships and the silver medal winning road relay team. The well-deserved winner once again is **BEN DAVIS**.

Next to the **Senior Men's Team Member** award where the winner was a constant top 10 finisher in the Essex League. Always pushing himself to do better, he has come on leaps and bounds again this year. Another member of the silver medal-winning team in the cross-country relays, the bronze medal-winning team in the county championships, and running last leg in the medal-winning road relay team. The returning winner is **JAMES STEWART**.



The **Senior Women's Best Performance** award goes to a key member of the Senior Ladies team. She ran in all four Essex League races, finishing joint third overall, as the team were runners up. She ran at the Southern Champs and the Eastern Champs and represented Essex at the Southern Inter Counties. She also helped the mixed team win silver at the cross-country relays, and finished the season on a high, anchoring the road relay team to gold. She fully deserves the Best Performance award once again. Congratulations to **GINTE BAILEY**.

The winner of **Senior Women's Team Member** award goes to a reliable team member who competed in three of the four Essex League fixtures, placing 12<sup>th</sup> overall. She competed for the club team at the Essex, Southern and National champs and also competed on the roads at 10k, 10 miles and half marathon, the Benfleet 15 and Essex 20 and improved her PB in the recent London Marathon. Well done to **CLARE DAVIES**. Her coach pat Gahagan will collect her award



We now move down to the younger age groups who also had an excellent season with the Under 15 Boys and both Under 13 teams winning Essex League titles, also winning many other individual and team championship medals – the highlight being the Southern relay title win for the Under 15 Boys in October. We start with the Under 20s.

The winner of the **Club Best performance** award for **Junior Men** is an athlete who has great future at cross country, winning individual bronze in the Under 20s Essex League standings for the silver-medal winning team. A reliable team member who represented the team in all four Essex League races and competed in the Essex County and Southern Championships & Road Relays and also the Nationals. The winner is: **LUKE CHESTER**

Onto the **Junior Women Best Performance** award. The winner is a young lady who has made the transition to this older age group in style. Outstanding performances saw her win gold medals in the Essex League, Essex Championships, Eastern Championships and the Essex road-relays, and a bronze at the Essex schools. She was equally impressive on the National stage, her best being a hard-earned 19<sup>th</sup> place in swamp like conditions at the Inter-counties at Loughborough. Congratulations on a fantastic season **MADDIE BARKER**.

On to the **Junior Women Team member** award. The deserving winner goes to a dedicated young lady who ran each race with confidence and enthusiasm. Continuing her momentum from an incredible track season as part of the English Paralympic Talent programme, her Essex League performances not only saw her score valuable points for the U17/U20W team and finish the season in 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall, but also earn Essex selection at the Southern Inter-Counties. She finished fourth in the Essex county championships and also squeezed in a race at the South of England championships between an impressive number of Parkruns! Congratulations on a busy and successful season **REBECCA O'ROURKE**.



The winner of the **Club Best Performance** award for **Under-17 Men** had a good winter season. He finished in the top 15 at each of his Essex League races, to place him 11<sup>th</sup> in the individual league standings. He finished in the top 20 at both the Essex County and the Essex Schools Champs, earning Essex selection for the Schools Inter Counties, competed at the Southern Champs and Essex Road Relays, and was also 41<sup>st</sup> in the London Youth Games. The deserving winner is **CHARLIE BURGESS**.

The **Under 17 Men Team Member** award goes to an athlete who has come back from past injuries to show consistent form throughout the season, competing for the team in three of the four races, finishing in the top 20 each time, to contribute to the team's third place in the league and to finish 12<sup>th</sup> in the individual league standings. He competed in the London Youth Games, South of England Championship and county clubs and school championships. Well done and good luck with the track season where he has already improved his 1500m PB, **TOBY JOHNSON**.



The winner of the **Club Best Performance Award for Under-17 Women** goes to a talented young lady who gave some impressive performances in her first season as an under 17. Her season started with a strong run at the Essex cross-country relays and a team silver, followed by a commendable 13<sup>th</sup> place at the London Youth Games. She represented both Essex and Essex schools at their Southern Inter-counties events, and finished the Essex league just out of the medals in fourth place. Her anchor leg at the Essex road relays moved the team into silver medal. With her sights set on even greater achievements next season **CHARLOTTE EVANS**.

The **Under 17 Women Team Member** award goes a dedicated young lady who wins an award for the second year in a row. Always keen to participate, she helped her team win silver medals at the Essex cross-country and Essex road-relay championships, and place eighth at the Southern cross-country relays. She competed in the Essex and South of England championships, and represented Essex Schools in the Southern Inter-Counties. Her valuable Essex league placings helped the team to silver medal position. Always finishing her races despite what the course throws at her, this award goes to **ABI SWAN**.

The **Club Best Performance** award for **Under-15 boys'** award goes to an athlete who was back in full flow after an injury hit 2021/22 season. His excellent Essex League season saw him win two third places followed by a coveted win in the last race at Hainault to finish second overall and help the team to the league title. He was member of the Southern cross-country relay gold medal team in October and also finished second in the Essex schools, was part of the silver team at the Essex relays, capping it off with a top 10 finish in the London Boroughs Mini Marathon. Well done to **FINDLAY MCLAREN**.

The **Under-15 boys Team Member** award also goes to another fine athlete who was also a member of the Southern cross-country relay gold medal team. He finished in the top 10 in his two Essex league appearances, followed by a seventh place in the county champs and then represented Essex in the National inter counties. He also competed in the Essex Schools championships and South of England Champs. We wish him more success in the Under 17s next winter. The deserving winner is **JACK WEST**. Jack isn't able to make it so his coach Eileen will collect it for him.



We now come to the award for **Club Best Performance for under-15 girls** which goes to a young lady who had a very busy winter. Making the most of every opportunity, she ran in all four Essex league events, placing joint fifth in the league table. Her impressive sixth place at the Essex Schools and eighth at the Essex championships saw her selected to represent the county at four separate southern and national events. She was also a valuable team member at the London Youth Games, Essex cross-country relays, South of England championships and the Essex road-relays. She's looking forward to next season as an U17 as she gets to run further! The award goes to **ROSIE WARNER**.

The **Team Member** award in this **under-15 girls'** age group is a committed and reliable team member, who has shown consistent effort over the season and ensured the U15 girls had a scoring team wherever possible. She raced at every Essex league event and helped the team finish sixth in the table. She also competed in the Essex cross country relays, the Essex championships, the London Youth Games, the South of England Championships and the Essex road relays. Always helping to lift team spirits despite the rain, mud and cold weather, this award goes to **ABI ROGERS**.



An excellent season sees the **Club Best Performance for under-13 boys** award go to an athlete who always gives his all and can often be found lying prostrate in agony after exiting the finishing funnel! His two third places and two other top six placings saw him finish third overall in Essex league and his sixth place in county champs saw him selected for Essex in the Southern and national inter counties. He was also a fine 13<sup>th</sup> in the London Youth Games. The deserving winner is **LIAM BATTRUM**.

The **Team Member** award winner for **under-13 boys** goes to an athlete who had an impressive first winter season at the club who was a key member of the winning Essex League team which saw him record top 10 finishes in all four matches and saw him place in sixth in the league table. He was a member of the silver medal winning Essex cross country relay team on his club debut and the bronze medal team at the Southern relay, and finished 34<sup>th</sup> in the London Youth games. He always runs with as smile so we hope to see more of the same from **FABIO REINA**.



We have now come to the final age group, the **Under-13 girls** and the **Club Best Performance** award which goes to a young runner who had a fantastic season, finishing the Essex League in joint third position but missing out on a medal on countback. She was the only junior girl to represent Havering at the National, battling the wind and rain to finish a commendable 67<sup>th</sup> and another impressive performance saw a 12<sup>th</sup> place finish at the London Youth Games. Her valuable contributions, which saw her team win Essex league gold, silver at the Essex road-relays, bronze at the Essex Cross-Country relays, and just missing a medal at the Southern cross-country relays. An impressive first season for the club for the deserving winner **JASMIN ASMAL**.

The **Under-13 girls Team Member** award winner is a much-valued team member who raced all four Essex league events and placed ninth in the league table. Finishing in a scoring position in all four races, her contribution helped the U13 Girls to win the Essex League title. She also gained team silver at both the Essex cross-country championships and the Essex road-relays, and was one of the scoring four at the South of England cross-country championships. Always giving maximum effort to her races and finishing with a smile, the winner of this award **POPPY VINES**.



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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 is in the **Male Under-20 to Veteran category**. It is hard to begin to describe the winner who has been the glue that has kept the team going for many years. His hard work and determination saw him win the England Masters M40 trial at Derby to earn him a deserved England call up where he was the first England runner in the Vet 40 race in Ireland. He was consistently in the top twenty in the Essex league, won silver in the county M40 championships, and was part of the senior bronze medal winning team in county Cross-country championship and in the silver medal-winning teams in both the Essex cross-country and road relays. Congratulations once again go to **ROB WARNER**.

The **Female Under-20 to Veteran category** sees us welcome back a great athlete who has won numerous awards in the past, both on the country and the track. Now concentrating on road running she has had a fantastic winter which has earned her this award. First female home in the Southend 10k in September and the Cambridge 10k in October, she was fourth female and first W35 in the Brighton 10k in November and fifth W35 at the competitive Telford 10 in December. The best was yet to come and in February she improved her half marathon best to 74:11 in a superb win at Wokingham, just 15 seconds short of the club record and on her marathon debut in Manchester last month she ran the second fastest time by a club female 2 hours 44:04. She is ranked second W35 nationally at both half-marathon and marathon and the worthy winner is the former Miss Deadman, **LAUREN REED**.



We now come to the **Male Under-13 to Under 17** Another great season for Freddie. Wins in three of the four Essex league saw him become overall champion, leading the team to gold, and his local dominance continued with gold medals in both the Essex County and Essex Schools Championships. Outside of Essex, he won silver at the London Youth Games in November, placed eight in the South of England Champs, 18th in the National and 38th for Essex in the Inter counties. He ran the fastest U15 leg in the South of England Cross Country relays anchoring the team to gold, and also ran fastest leg in the Essex road relays. The icing on the cake was his win in the London Boroughs Mini Marathon, and placing a fine fifth in the National event. He's started his track season in style by taking five seconds off the club 1500m record. Congratulations for a second year go to **FREDDIE ROWE**.



Finally, we come to the **Female Under-13 to Under 17** but certainly last but by no means least, and I'll need to take a breath to list the winner's achievements. Wins in her three Essex League races to win the individual title, and to lead the U13 team to victory. Wins in both the Essex County U13 and Essex Schools Year 7 championships, and winner of the Southern Schools Year 7 title, second in the London Youth Games, and in the London Boroughs Mini Marathon (& ninth nationally), third for her school in the National Schools Cup final, fourth in the Southern Championships, fifth in both the Southern Inter Counties and Southern Champs and ninth in the National inter counties. Still an Under 13 on the country next winter I'm sure we'll see much more of **SUMMER SMITH**. As she is unable to be her tonight her coach Eileen Naylor will collect her trophy.



Finally, we are now able to present the engraved trophies from the Boxing Day Handicap – now the Dave Bland memorial race to Ben Davis, Luke Chester and Ginte Bailey.



That concludes the formalities of the evening, so in a moment could all the winners join us at the front for the traditional group photo.



The buffet will also be opened, so please help yourselves.

Thank You.