



Inter Counties Cross Country Championships Nottingham Sat 7th March

Freddie Rowe was a fine fourth and Kate O'Neill was fifth as the eight club athletes wore the red vests of Essex at the Inter Counties Cross Country Championships held on Saturday in dry conditions on the iconic undulating Wollaton Park, Nottingham parkland course that has become the home to these championships.

Although short of recent races while recovering from illness Freddie Rowe showed little effects as he finished fourth in the Under 17 men's race improving on his ninth finish in last year's race. Freddie was up with the leading group throughout, and he seemed on the way to a podium place as he was in third in the closing stages, but in the final kilometre he was overhauled for bronze by Kent's Joseph Hill. His fourth place. Findlay McLaren has had a full cross country season, which brought him the Essex League title and a top 10 South of England finish, and he ran well at Nottingham for 15th place in a field of almost 300 while teammate Sam Horsley was the third Essex athlete home in 39th, over 80 places higher than last year, in the seventh placed team.

Kate O'Neill capped a superb winter season when she finished fifth in the Senior Women's 8000m race, one place higher than last year to improve her highest ever national placing. England international Kate started quickly over the initial half mile but soon settled into a top ten placing as the race progressed, working her way towards the front before her usual strong finish over the closing stages took her up to fifth. Oxfordshire's Jessica Gibbon comfortably defended her title to add to her National gold the previous week. Lauren Reed was always well placed throughout and finished in 22nd place, while Lydia Smith was 127th of the 280 finishers for the incomplete Essex team.

Also pulling on the red vest of Essex at Nottingham were James Stewart who was the fourth of the six Essex scorers in the senior men's race with his 99th place finish, and Kieran O'Hara was 123rd as Essex placed eighth.

Under 17 Men: 4th Freddie Rowe 19:08; 15th Findlay McLaren 19:39; 39th Sam Horsley 20:06

Senior Women: 5th Kate O'Neill 28:21; 22nd Lauren Reed 29:22; 127th Lydia Smith 32:54

Senior Men: 99th James Stewart 33:27; 123rd Kieran O'Hara 33:59

