

Kent Fitness League – Canterbury**24th October 2010**

Around 350 runners turned out for our opening race at Canterbury on Sunday. They were treated to mild autumnal temperatures and a cloudless sky as they negotiated a 5 ¼ mile circuit of slippery woodland tracks and the result provided an early team success for Larkfield AC.

Larkfield's leading trio of Gareth Evans, Ashley Howes and Simon Hesketh were well to the fore after the opening mile, along with Medway's Clayton Barrett, Invicta's Jamie Bailey and an unfamiliar figure in the shape of Essex-based runner Jonathan Briggs making a guest appearance. Briggs started to pull away in the woods taking Evans in tow, followed some distance behind by Bailey, Hesketh and Barrett. After 1 ½ miles, Briggs drew away from Evans and steadily built up a lead of nearly a minute by the time he crossed the finish line.

Gareth Evans, a talented triathlete and modern pentathlete, crossed the line in a time of 29.13 as the official winner and followed his exertions with a 35 mile cycle ride back to his home in Cobham. Howes took second place and Hesketh (leading over 40 man) made it a 1-2-3 for Larkfield.

Invicta East Kent had two teenagers – Jamie Bailey and Kieron Riley finishing 5th and 6th respectively. In all, there were 6 clubs represented amongst the top 10 finishers pointing to a closely fought competition throughout the winter. The leading over 50 man was Mike Baron (Swanley) in 18th place while Phil Wallace (Medway & Maidstone) was the fastest over 60 runner in 43rd position.

Larkfield's celebrations were completed when Nicola Groom came home the clear winner in the ladies' race having beaten all but 34 of the men. Her time of 33.11 brought her across the line over 1½ minutes clear of her nearest challenger Heather Fitzmaurice (Sevenoaks) with Claire Gaskill (Gravesend) closely following in 3rd place.

In the combined team race, Larkfield AC were the clear winners ahead of Canterbury Harriers and Dartford Roadrunners. Gravesend RR pulled out their best ever team effort to finish 4th. Reigning champions Paddock Wood AC opened their campaign in 12th place and face an uphill task to get back up with the leaders having fielded an under-strength team on the day.

There was also a 2k race, the first of the Junior League series, the results of which are published below (note that no times are available for this event as the watch broke down).

Pos	Name 1	Name 2	M/F	Age	Club/School
1	James	Graves	M	12	Swanley & District AC
2	Bradley	Spurr	M	15	Gravesend RR
3	Alex	Kavanagh	M	9	Thanet RR
4	Aaron	Rowland	M	11	Paddock Wood AC
5	Oliver	Cooper	M	12	Thanet RR
6	Kealy	Goldsmith	F	10	Thanet RR
7	Isabel	Kelly	F	11	Swanley Panthers
8	Sean	White	M	12	Swanley & District AC
9	Summer	Reeves	F	9	Barming Primary School
10	Olivia	Willard	F	12	Swanley & District AC
11	James	Pullen	M	9	Canterbury H
12	Sophie	Dunmall	F	10	Swanley & District AC
13	Lorcan	Rodgers	M	9	Medway & Mdstn
14	Joshua	Mason	M	6	English Martyrs
15	Zara	Rowland	F	9	Paddock Wood AC
16	Finn	Rodgers	M	6	Medway & Mdstn
17	Ayla	Furminger	F	9	Invicta EK AC
18	Jessica	Wright	F	14	Gravesend RR
19	Alexander	Pullen	M	12	Canterbury H
20	Libby	Meager	F	10	Swanley & District AC
21	Patrick	Mason	M	9	English Martyrs
22	Lucy	Wright	F	12	Gravesend RR
23	Charlotte	Phillips	F	10	Swanley & District AC

The next race is at Swanley on 14th November.

ROB BRIGHT 25/10/10