

BMAF Cross Country Secretary's report to the BMAF AGM – 30/11/2024

BMAF Cross Country Championships:

The cross-country championships were held on Saturday 16th March at Rhug Farm, Corwen, North Wales courtesy of Lord Newborough. The venue choice was negotiated by retiring BMAF cross country Secretary, Mel James and once again, proved to be a popular choice by the 190 finishers.

The hosts were members of Prestatyn Running Club led by race organiser Gareth Hughes.

The course was undulating, and the first race was for all the women plus M65 to M80 over 6k. The second race was for M35 to M60 over 8k.

Lord Newborough attended the event and at the presentation ceremony stated that he was very keen to accommodate events like the BMAF cross country on his estate.

My thanks to Gareth Hughes and his team for their efforts in offering a quality cross country event. Also, thanks to Lord Newborough for accommodating the event on his estate.

BMAF cross country relays:

After a year's gap due to the course being completely flooded in 2023, the cross-country relay championships returned to the popular Long Eaton venue on 26th October 2024, for the 25th staging of the event.

With just 10 days to the entry deadline there were very few entries via the SportSoft entry system. There were fears that the event might have to be cancelled. However, by the deadline, lots of additional entries had been secured and a total of 50 men's teams and 38 women's teams finished the event on the day.

Organisers Rob Fox and Peter Matchett had lots of support from the Long Eaton Running Club members and county officials. My thanks to Rob, Peter and the Long Eaton Runners.

The Midland Masters Athletics Club cross country relay championship was incorporated into the event. Graham Lamb and Dr Matt Long presented the MMAC awards.

Some of the teams included athletes who had recently been selected to compete in the England Masters cross country team at the British & Irish Masters cross country international in Belfast in November.

I hope it will be possible to return to Long Eaton for the cross-country relays in 2025.

B&ICCI:

The 5 national teams for the cross country international, hosted by the Northern Ireland Masters Athletic Association on 16th November have been selected.

The Northern Ireland hosts have received a complaint from a female competitor about the categories and age groups. She is challenging the fact that some of the male age groups are 6 to run with four to score, while all the women's age groups are 4 to run with 3 to score. She stated that she had lodged a formal and written complaint under the equal status acts 2000-2015. The N.I. organisers are seeking legal advice on the matter and have asked that the complaint be discussed at the team manager meeting on Friday 15th November. She is also claiming age discrimination in her submission, by pointing out that men can compete in the event up to age 80 plus and the women's age cap is 75.

BMAF C.C. Championships 2025:

The Scottish Veteran Harrier Club (SVHC) will be hosting the cross-country championships on 15th March 2025 and the likely course will be Tollcross Park, Glasgow.

Harry Matthews,

BMAF Cross Country Secretary.