

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC  
ASSOCIATION



**Cross Country**  
**Report and Results**  
**2005**

# SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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## Cross Country Report - 2005

I am not quite sure how to start this report! Should I start with the positive headline, the negative headline, the sporting statistic or the lump in the throat comment?

**Somerset Athlete Gains International Honour.**

***Athlete wasn't informed!***

Started 48 – 48 Finished

*“I've been trying for 4 years for one of these.”*

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Area championships took place either just prior to the Christmas holiday or in the week just after the break. From entries received for the county I would imagine areas had a good turnout.

## County Championship

The county championships took place at Millfield Preparatory School and the association's thanks go to Clive Thomas for hosting the event, his band of helpers and Pete Darton for producing results.

Unfortunately no amount of planning can determine the weather – it was atrocious, cold, wet and windy. But cross-country runners are a 'battling' breed and close competition was seen in a very friendly atmosphere. This again was no greater than in the administration area where old friendships were rekindled and aspirations heightened by our guest of honour – Olympian Kate Allenby.

Winners were:

Minor Girls	Individual - Christy Jones (Mendip)	Team - Mendip
Junior Girls	Justine Bowers (Mendip)	Mendip

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Inter Girls	=	Laura Parker (Sedgemoor)	Yeovil
		Rosy Cooper (Mendip)	
Senior Girls		Beth Pascall (Taunton)	Taunton
Minor Boys		Torsten Junker (Taunton)	Yeovil
Junior Boys		Charlie Maclean (Yeovil)	Yeovil
Inter Boys		Joe Tavener (Yeovil)	Sedgemoor
Senior Boys		Charles Albrow (Taunton)	Taunton

## Southwest Championships

The Southwest Championships were hosted by Avon Schools at Blaise Castle. Eight teams of 10 competitors were entered. In the days leading up to the championships a number of schools/athletes were slow in acknowledging their inclusion but on the day 74 athletes competed for the county. A number were unavailable due to illness!

The weather for this championships was worse than atrocious being cold, wet, windy and muddy! Added to this there was no cover from the elements!! Thanks must be expressed to Avon Schools for selecting an area with a good course but by the end the conditions were taking their toll with junior athletes in particular finding conditions difficult.

The presentations took place in a village hall away from the course. I was keen to get athletes back home as quickly as possible and thus I alone represented the County. Everyone knew that Nathan Young (Junior Boy) had finished second (there were no other Somerset competitors in the top six!) but it was a surprise to all that we should win the Junior Boys trophy and the Senior Girls trophy. This was due simply to the team togetherness and 'packing' just outside the top six.

My thanks for getting wet, keeping cheerful and doing a good job goes to the large number of team mangers at Blaise Castle: Clive Thomas, Angela Thomas, Les Neville, Ian Bradbury, Tracey Parker, Jane Yandall, Nick Summerville and Jason Allen.

## National Championships

Selection for the National championships was a little problematic as a number of athletes had not been available for the southwest due to other commitments, notable skiing trips, or illness. The selection for this team took place on the day after the southwest championships and information was sent to schools the next day. Unfortunately detailed information had not been received from ESAA at this time and thus the complete package arrived with headteachers on the first Monday of the new half term some three weeks before the national championships.

I began to receive replies during that first week. One new addition was the inclusion of email addresses in the returned information; consequently I could inform of receipt and put minds at rest.

However, again, as with the southwest replies, some returns did not materialise within what I thought was a reasonable time. Some 'excuses' were extremely

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reasonable viz. trying to sort money out with school. But one phone call contained devastating news: the information had not been passed to the athlete!  
(Letter has been sent to headteacher.)

Finding a replacement also became an 'interesting' task but we travelled to Norwich with a full team on the coach, a rare occurrence.

As in previous years the first pick up point was Wellington School, this year at 10.00am, with further pick ups at Taunton and Podimore. After two stops on the motorway we eventually arrived at the Travel Inn at 5.40pm. This arrival time gave ample opportunity to relax the legs, have a meal and meet the team, which by the end of the evening included parents some of whom had travelled on the coach. Breakfast was not hurried and followed by team photographs before departure from the Travel Inn at 10.20 arriving at the Norwich Showground some 15 minutes later. Our arrival time meant that the coach was parked within very close proximity of the start / finish, the toilets and the burger van. It could not have been better!

The course was set within the confines of the flat showground and neighbouring fields of various inclines and terrain. The weather was dry but with a chilling wind, there had been a covering of snow the previous evening, which had melted away.

Spirit within the six individual teams was good with much support to fellow teammates. Put very simply the team did ALL that was expected of it.

48 athletes started their individual races and 48 finished.

We can ask no more. And there was a feeling of combined success on the journey home.

This though was enhanced by the performance of Nathan Young. He finished fifth and was subsequently selected to represent England in the home international. This, I felt, enabled the whole team to appreciate that there is a progressive system (school, area, county, region, national, international) within schools athletics which all can aspire to and it can be achieved within Somerset.

My sincere thanks goes to the group of team managers: Clive for his detailed knowledge, Les for his meticulous approach, Jane for her abounding joy of athlete's success, Tracey for her eye for the ultimate goal and John (Rix) for filling in the gaps and above all for everyone's enthusiasm, effort, time and friendship.

Finally we do what we do for the athletes and perhaps we forget what the athletes do for themselves. As always they were well behaved, listened to advice, chatted and made friends. But at the end one athlete's comment shows how much prolonged effort and determination exists within our young sports stars. Within a low level conversation an athlete who had been brought into the team as a reserve simply said, with arms folded around his wet top, "I've been trying for four years for one of these."

BB