

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION

Cross-Country



2019

Report & Results



SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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2019 Cross-County Report Too much of the white stuff.

The pre-season seemed to be taken up by much administration whilst in the midst of the season swift decisions had to be made.

To probably all competitors, spectators and many officials the County Championships venue at Aldon Hill is well established but an incredible amount of upheaval in the background meant using this venue for the 2019 championships was not confirmed until quite late and then entailed much liaison with the new owner's agent.

As is now seemingly embedded into the season I continued to take an administrative position behind many of the championships: receiving entries for the Junior Championships and starting the races; organising the County Championships and marshalling on the 'back straight'; paperwork for the South-West Championships; bookings and paperwork for the National Championships and for all continuously updating the website so that the great many athletes, in particular, who participate during the season are well informed.

As I reported last year and highlight again here I can only adopt this administrative stance in the sound knowledge that during each of the championships there is a large band of officials, helpers and team managers working tirelessly and enthusiastically.

Junior Championships –

This now established championships took place as usual at King's College with Richard at the helm of the day's organisation. The course was the same as the previous year with conditions on and above ground very suitable for our young competitors to compete and spectators to enjoy the races during a setting sun.

Sadly, for whatever reasons, the entry numbers, from fewer schools, were far lower than the previous two years. Perhaps, from the figures below, schools are becoming more astute and only entering students who are most likely to participate as depicted by the low number of non-finishers which includes non-starters.

	Entries	Finishers	Non-finishers	Schools
2017	284	185	98	20
2018	385	283	102	24
2019	231	180	51	17

A champion's badge was presented to each individual winner as they exited the funnel; this was followed, by post, with certificates to the first six and the winning team in each age group.

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The champions and finishers were:

	Individual		Finishers	Team
Year 7 Girls	Skye Fisher	Hazlegrove	51	Hazlegrove
Year 7 Boys	Hal Sinfield	Hazlegrove	59	Hazlegrove
Year 8 Girls	Mackenzie O'Dea	Wellington	26	Hazlegrove
Year 8 Boys	Philip Monaghan	Hazlegrove	44	Hazlegrove

Hearty congratulations must go to Hazlegrove School for winning all four team competitions for the second successive year.

County Championships –

Organisation was identical to previous years, eg:

- detailed communication with the agent for the new owner from September
- information and entry forms sent to Area secretaries early in November as the first area championships took place in early December
- contact made with officials and subsequently duties drawn up
- Ian Humphreys enlisted to receive entries and produce results
- First Aid cover booked with Tim O'Neill
- hire of toilets from Yeovil Hire Centre
- refreshment van booked with Henry Chipperfield
- site visit in December to ascertain the impact of a new owner
- course map updated
- simple programme produced

The first bullet point, 'detailed communication ...' does not fully convey the depth and length of the liaison which took place involving numerous emails and the occasional telephone conversation. Throughout I always took a positive stance but at times even I thought the championships would not take place at Aldon in 2019 or subsequent years! (The latter is not confirmed.)

[Only quite recently (August '19) did I learn that the sale of the parkland scheduled for 1st January, and then delayed until 4th January, did not actually take place until 1st February. So we were, in fact, still running on the previous owner's land.]

Early in the morning of the championships the course was laid out - essentially identical to the previous year as were the positions of the start and finish areas, administration area and car park. Years of identical setting up means the placing of stakes, tape and direction indicators around the course, plus the elaborate start, finish and administration areas, doesn't take too long. Particular thanks must be extended to Brymore Academy for the use of their large gazebo. Thus some time before the first gun all was in place

The champions and finishers (compared to previous year) were:

	Individual		Finishers	
Minor Girls	Skye Fisher	Hazlegrove School	58	(+10)
Junior Girls	Daisy Pellow	Millfield School	55	(+7)
Inter Girls	Holly Bigger	Huish Episcopi Academy	16	(-9)
Senior Girls	Elise Thorner	Millfield School	13	(+3)
Minor Boys	Cameron Wallace	King's Hall School	44	(-8)
Junior Boys	Bradley Glover	Preston School	42	(-11)
Inter Boys	Joe Ponter	Bishop Fox's School	37	(-7)
Senior Boys	Niall Caley	Millfield School	16	(-4)

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The number of finishers is important as the entry fee is based on this number rather than the number of entries. This year, therefore, saw a £38 'loss' compared to the previous year; however, a loss was anticipated consequently the car parking fee was increased to £3 yielding a £200 increase on the previous year.

Again I must extend my annual thanks to all who helped for without you this event simply cannot be the success it is. A particular warm 'thank you' to the helpers and indeed spectators who made their first visit to Aldon Hill in 2019 and who have added to the ever growing number of admirers of our cross-country course and its surroundings.

South-West Championships –

The selection for this championship took place immediately after the county championships and was held at Hazlegrove School; grateful thanks to Katie for the facility.

The system of automatic selection for the first 4 from the SSAA Championships is now well understood by athletes. Hence even though the number of finishers was less than the previous year there were no notable 'did not starts' whilst only two finishers declared themselves unavailable for the South-West Championships to be hosted by Avon Schools AA at The Bath Racecourse.

The team (8 age group teams of 10) was posted on the website and confirmations of availability flooded in.

We were all set to go but very severe weather struck the region the day before the championships depositing over a foot of snow in most areas and far more on the high ground of The Racecourse. As 'interim' SWSchAA Cross-Country Co-ordinator I had no other choice than to cancel the championships.

To depict the scenery, as I was making the relevant cancellation phone calls the traffic news was stating that all junctions leading off the M4 towards Bath were being closed; further the local organiser trying to get to The Racecourse found it impossible, then most local roads became impassable. The lying snow remained for a couple of days causing widespread disruption throughout the SWSchAA region meaning the cancellation of many sporting and non-sporting events.

The cancellation of any major championships is a great disappointment - a regional championships leading to a national championships even more so. With all athletes having competed at the County Championships and after a confirmatory discussion of each individual and team the tens simply became the top eights for the ESAA Championships.

'New Balance' English Schools' AA Championships –

Report by Richard Bowden

The 2019 Championships were due to be held in Essex but the unfortunate death of a key member of the Local Organising Committee caused the county to withdraw as hosts, entailing a fairly late appeal from ESAA for an alternative organising county and venue. We were therefore very grateful to Rob Cameron and his colleagues in the West Yorkshire Schools' AA when they offered to stage the Championships once again at Temple Newsam Park, Leeds on Saturday 16 March (with variations in the courses this time). That meant our 2018 arrangements could be largely repeated and thanks to Brian Baker's prompt booking, the team hotel was a return to the Wakefield City North Premier Inn, just 12 miles from the course.

The cancellation of the South-West Schools' AA Cross-Country Championships, though unavoidable, was a great disappointment, particularly to those athletes about to make their Somerset debut – including 20 Year 7 runners keen to win their first vest. In order to go some way to alleviating that disappointment, the decision was taken to offer the appropriate items of SSAA kit for purchase (including the new, black hoodie) and this proved to be a popular move, much appreciated by many athletes.

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Owing to the cancellation of the South-West Schools' AA Championships, selection was based mainly on the results from the SSAA Championships, with information from the Area Championships, the Tri-Counties Championships and the South-West Counties AA Championships being taken into account; the selectors meeting at King's College immediately following the SSAA Junior Championships on Monday 11 February.

The website was again used to notify individuals quickly and to indicate confirmation of availability, with selected athletes required to download the detailed information pack and ensure each school had a copy. The schools were notified of the selected team by post and asked to consider offering financial assistance. It was gratifying to note that some were again most generous in their responses.

Almost inevitably in a team of 48 there were several withdrawals – each with a valid reason. Abbie White (The Park School) withdrew from the Intermediate Girls' team on 17 February, Poppy Boyden (Senior Girl – King's School) withdrew on 19 February, Matthew Howard (Senior Boy – Wells Cathedral School) withdrew on 7 March and Alex Male (Senior Boy – Taunton School) withdrew on 14 March. Most unfortunate was Sam Cobb (King's College) who was forced to withdraw from the very strong Intermediate Boys' team on 14 March after sustaining facial injuries in a hockey match. The 5 reserves who came into the team were grateful for the opportunity, demonstrating the usual pride and loyalty in accepting late call-ups (though regretting the other athletes' illness or injury).

Pick-up points on Friday 15 March were King's College at 11.15am, Junction 25 of the M5 (the BP Fuel Station) at 11.45am and Junction 23 of the M5 (Dunball) at 12.00pm. All team members travelled on the Berry's double-decker coach, accompanied by 9 Team Managers. Jon Leonard showed typical loyalty in driving all the way to Leeds (joining us for the evening meal and the Team Meeting at the Premier Inn).

Our return to the Wakefield City North Premier Inn was welcomed by our hosts - the hotel and Brewers Fayre restaurant staff stating that they were looking forward to working with another pleasant, co-operative, well-behaved Somerset group. Registration at the Premier Inn was swift and efficient and the restaurant had been set up to allow the entire team to eat together on the Friday evening. The meal was followed by the Team Meeting during which the Team Managers were introduced and athletes were given the opportunity to ask any questions. The traditional team photographs were taken on the Saturday morning before departure for the course.

We avoided snow this year but strong winds and rain made conditions very tough, the bursts of sunshine little consolation in the heavy going. Full results appeared on the website immediately after the Championships but the table below gives an outline of team positions (out of 46 counties) and our best individual performances.

Age Group	Winner	Winning Team	1 st Somerset Finisher	Team Position
JG	Kiya Dee (Gloucestershire)	Cheshire 272	Hannah Blundy (Preston) 47	21 - 743
IG	Bethany Cook (Sussex)	Surrey 301	Poppy Pellow (Millfield) 110	27 - 935
SG	India Pentland (Durham)	Surrey 152	Elise Thorner (Millfield) 6	21 - 904
Aggregate Girls C Counties		Durham 1627	Somerset 2582	4 C Group
JB	Lewis Sullivan (Suffolk)	Surrey 80	Bradley Glover (Preston) 38	31 - 1024
IB	Oliver Smart (Devon)	Kent 155	Joe Ponter (Bishop Fox's) 48	19 - 778
SB	Sam Charlton (Northumberland)	Kent 155	Niall Caley (Millfield) 75	35 - 1297
Aggregate Boys C Counties		Suffolk 1583	Somerset 3099	5 C Group

Huge thanks go to the Team Managers who supported our athletes so wonderfully well throughout the weekend: Jo Pike (JG), Katie Cobb (IG), Abi Tickner and Emma Radford-James (SG), Adrian Palmer and Jon Leonard (JB), Richard Llewellyn-Eaton and Simon Prior (IB) and Jason Allen (SB).

Unfortunately there was no silverware but we could not have asked anything more from our athletes. In a national event where a top-50 finish is a real achievement, the individual highlight was a 6th place for Elise Thorner in the Senior Girls' race on her 18th birthday - an improvement of 39 places from 2018.

Finally, part of my thank you message to Lynne Pope and Paul Allison (ESAA Cross-Country Co-ordinators) and Rob Cameron (Local Organising Secretary) may serve to give a flavour of the whole event:

"First, I should like to thank you most sincerely for your magnificent efforts in the organisation of another wonderful event, thoroughly enjoyed by all who made the long trek north from the West Country.

The pre-meeting communication was first class, giving team staff, athletes and parents full confidence that the Championships were in safe hands, with all the preparations in place for a most successful day – and what a success it was!

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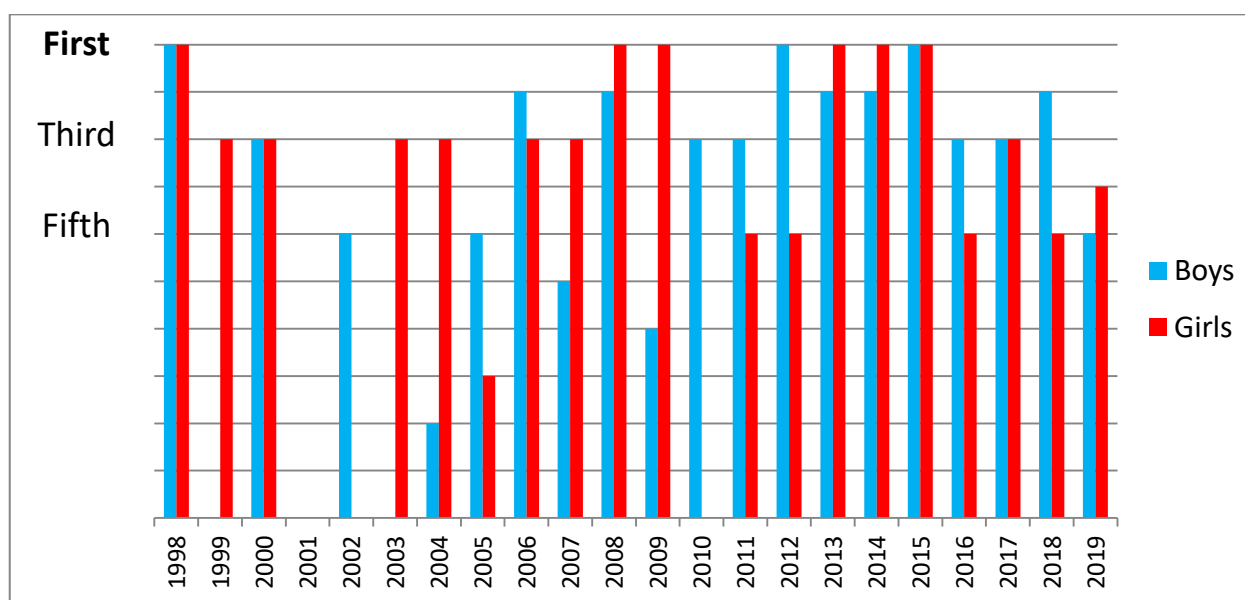
The venue and the course, in combination with the wind, rain, (occasional sunshine?) and the heavy conditions offered a truly 'English' Cross-Country setting and presented the athletes, team staff and officials with a real challenge – one to which they all rose in fine fashion.

Although we returned to the South-West without medals or team silverware this year, our athletes put in extremely encouraging performances to finish 5th in the Sussex Trophy competition (Boys) and 4th in the Sidney Rose Trophy (Girls). In large fields of around 340 runners, a place in the top-50 may be said to be praiseworthy so we were particularly pleased with the performances of Elise Thorner (6th in the Senior Girls' race), Millie Wills (29th in the Senior Girls' race), Bradley Glover (38th in the Junior Boys' race), Hannah Blundy (47th in the Junior Girls' race) and Joe Ponter (48th in the Intermediate Boys' race).

I have received some excellent feedback from various parents who have told me their youngsters thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of travelling away with the Somerset team, staying overnight in a hotel and competing in such a prestigious event so I am certain they would wish me to tell you of their gratitude.

Please pass on these sentiments to anyone else on the Local Organising Committee who should be reminded what a tremendous job they did – many thanks to all."

The Past 22 Years at ESAA Championships –



- In 2017 ESAA reorganised County groups; there are 13 counties in 'C' Group
- 2001 championships did not take place due to foot-and-mouth restrictions

Finally a huge 'Thank You' to those team managers who worked for the athletes and the Association during the season:

Richard Bowden
Richard Llewellyn-Eaton
Adrian Palmer
Jason Allen
Simon Prior
Jon Leonard

Katie Cobb
Jo Pike
Abi Tickner
Emma Radford-James

Finance –

In this paragraph of the report I always repeat a statement from previous years: 'Only those close to the financial ramifications of a SSAA season will fully appreciate the projections that take place to make, in my

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case, the cross-county season break-even: meaning not a loss for the Association and not excessive fees for athletes.'

This year I can report that through financial trickery my season's account showed a nil surplus and a nil loss! The turnover was in excess of £14000. The 'trickery' being that although there was no income from the cancelled South-West Championships the Association bore the 'calculated' shortfall (coupled with a donation specifically towards cross-country) to keep athlete fees to the ESAA Championships on a par with previous years.

(The season's account within the full treasurer's report may be different as other small credits or debits may have been included into these accounts.)

Schools Cup Competition –

The County round of this competition (in the autumn of 2018) sees schools from just outside the border participating alongside Somerset schools in order to facilitate good competition.

Nine schools entered from the County with Millfield Preparatory or Millfield School winning the four age group events. Millfield Preparatory, Millfield School, Wellington School and King's College progressed to the Regional finals at which Millfield School won the Intermediate Girls' competition.

At the National final Millfield School's Intermediate Girls placed 2nd and in the Junior Boys' Millfield Preparatory School came 9th.

Brian Baker

Somerset Schools Athletic Association

2019 Cross-Country Teams

Minor Boys		SSAA	SW
Cameron Wallace	King's Hall School	1	
Hal Sinfield	Hazlegrove School	2	
Charlie Galpin	Hazlegrove School	3	
Gray Sinfield	Hazlegrove School	4	
Finlay Downes	Holyrood Academy	5	
Noah Heal	Kingsmead School	6	
Jack Pool	Taunton Preparatory School	7	
Ben Longman	Hazlegrove School	8	
Charles Goodridge	The Castle School	9	
Jack White	Taunton Preparatory School	10	
Will Ladd	Kingsmead School	11	
Henry Earp	King's Hall School	12	

Junior Boys		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Bradley Glover	Preston School	1		38
Daniel Fisher	The Castle School	3		55
Philip Monaghan	Hazlegrove School	6		202
Jake Fisher	King's College	7		221
Tommy Hummel	Huish Episcopi Academy	2		233
Josh Cobb	Hazlegrove School	5		275
Jack Harvey	Huish Episcopi Academy	4		276
Joshua Hurford	Haygrove School	8		330
Archie Smellie	Downside Abbey School	9		
Jacob Wakeling	King's College	10		
Ashton Gifford-Groves	Millfield Prep. School	11		
Jacob Ferguson	Taunton School	12		

Inter Boys		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Joe Ponter	Bishop Fox's School	1		48
Tom Heal	Kingsmead School	3		69
Matthew Quarterman	Huish Episcopi Academy	6		104
Charlie Cook	Crispin School	9		180
William Aitken	Millfield School	4		185
Sam Ponter	Bishop Fox's School	5		192
Dan Maydew	The King Alfred School	7		210
Oscar Lee	The Castle School	8		dns
Sam Cobb	King's College	2		dns
Archie Tyler	Stanchester Academy	10		
Toby Watson	The Blue School	11		
Andrew Power	Court Fields School	12		

Senior Boys		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Niall Caley	Millfield School	1		75
Will Howard	Millfield School	4		159
Dylan Dukes	The Blue School	5		209
Tom Simpson	Millfield School	6		271
Jago Betts	Millfield School	7		290
Huw Downes	King's School	11		293
George Mathew	Downside Abbey School	9		295
Sebastian Berkley	Millfield School	8		302
Alex Male	Taunton School	2		dns
Matthew Howard	Wells Cathedral School	3		dns
Joe Day	Taunton School	10		
Derrick Lai	Wellington School	12		



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2019 Cross-Country Teams

Minor Girls		SSAA	SW
Skye Fisher	Hazlegrove School	1	
Imogen Whitehead	Hazlegrove School	2	
Greta Siakoufis	Queen's College	3	
Millie Stoneman	Holyrood Academy	4	
Hollie Tappin	Millfield Prep School	5	Cancelled
Araminta Wakelin	All Hallows	6	
Claudia Oakley	King Arthur's School	7	
Jasmine Porter	Taunton Preparatory School	8	
Tabitha Lorenz	Wellington School	9	
Macy Noad	The King Alfred School	10	
Ella Stadden	Huish Episcopi Academy	11	
Lizzie Houghton-King	Taunton Preparatory School	12	

Junior Girls		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Hannah Blundy	Preston School	2		47
Daisy Pellow	Millfield School	1		61
Mackenzie O'Dea	Wellington School	8		107
Thea Piercy	Ansford Academy	6		152
Jasmin Caley	Millfield School	5	Cancelled	165
Lydia Louw	Millfield School	4		211
Lauren Pickup	Millfield School	3		213
India Porter	Wellington School	7		283
Lucy Shenton	Hazlegrove School	9		
Emily Murphy	The King Alfred School	10		
Phoebe Evans	Whitstone School	11		
Katie Sherlock	Millfield Prep. School	12		

Inter Girls		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Poppy Pellow	Millfield School	2		110
Sophia Wilson	Millfield School	4		120
Pia Lewis	Millfield School	9		132
Lizzy Ingram	Ansford Academy	6		168
Holly Bigger	Huish Episcopi Academy	1	Cancelled	190
Lucy Chalmers	Millfield School	3		215
Charlotte Brown	Kingsmead School	8		236
Anya Evans	King's School	7		304
Abbie White	The Park School	5		dns
Emily Murray	The Kings of Wessex School	10		
Jo Keogan	Queen's College	11		
Ophelia Cooper	Court Fields School	12		

Senior Girls		SSAA	SW	ESAA
Elise Thorner	Millfield School	1		6
Millie Wills	Millfield School	2		29
Anna Parkinson	Taunton School	3		88
Astrid Thomas	Taunton School	4		210
Imogen Rogers	Richard Huish College	7		285
Harriet Fox	King's College	10	Cancelled	286
Ella Leonard	Wells Cathedral School	5		299
Amelia Rennie	Millfield School	8		307
Poppy Boyden	King's School	6		dns
Andrea Gilbert	Taunton School	9		
Amy Cotterell	Sexey's School	11		
Charlotte Vickery	Taunton School	12		

