

English Cross Country Championships Parliament Hill, London 21 Feb 2009 Senior mens report by Tom Kenderdine

Weather wise, a glorious day as the sun warmed up the spring air!!
A safe travel down on the team mini bus, navigated by sherpa Nock, driven safely by chauffeur Towison.

Arriving with ample time to spare, we made our way on foot to base camp situated on the sloping banks of Parliament Hill ready to compete in this year's National cross country race!!!

The day was already in full spring, as junior races were under way. I could see from the mud splattered bodies, that the course was going to be a bit moist underfoot.

Some of the guys jogged around the course to get some idea of where the route took us. Its the only chance you get to actually look at the spectacular views over looking the Big Smoke. Clear blue skies meant that you could see for miles, and spot certain landmarks!!

The womens race started on time, and i saw the runners climb up the first steepish bank, before descending down into the mud flats, that just sap your energy out of your legs. Our girls worked so well over the 8km course, and were well supported by our club.

Soon it was just before 3pm, the start of the senior mens race. It seemed a big field as we got into our correct pens.

I stood behind King Kesterton, just across from Dom Morton and the other lads. The horn sound, and an almighty surge of runners was unleashed onto the Heath.
I managed to have an ok start, tucked in behind Dave. We approached the mud flats, not quite seeing where i was going, a mixture of bright sunlight, and a wall of runners around me. I was beginning to lose sight of Dave, as i just struggled through the mud. I did not feel good at all. I was like a giraffe on ice!!

Dom launched past me, and quickly made a gap between us. He looks like he's going to have a strong run, somehow i just have to hold on!!
All of a sudden, I saw another Halesowen vest past me, containing the legendary Billy Nock!!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

In 4th position for the club, I need to get myself sorted, and try to bridge the gap.
The first lap of 6km went by and I need now to work on the damage caused by Bill & Dom. Bill was uncatchable as he headed off in the distance, in search of King Kesterton, but I had Dom in my sights.
I worked through the barrage of runners, still I struggled with that damn mud, and it seemed any gap i managed to gain I lost as Doms powerful legs cut through the sapping mud. I worked hard on the more firm ground, which saw me level and overtake Dom.
This was short lived as once again he put in another surge which i could not respond. I needed him to blow up but with the finish sooo close the boy was homeward bound.
I came in for the club 4th and spent out!!
Dave, had an awesome run, on what he quoted on saying "that this is probably the most testing course he has ever run on" He finished 136 ish

Bill not far behind, on what was his finest race of the season 157th

Dom, very difficult for me to say as he beat me, a bloody splendid run, showing signs of what is yet to come!! 194th

I finished 202, just missing out on top 200

Mark Hadley, who has improved over the winter season finishing in a respectable 374th

And to finish our scoring 6 was the good Dr Caruthers in 483.

Well done to the rest of our runners that managed to battle there way around a very demanding course indeed.

My thanks also to all that supported, and drove down to make it all possible for us!!

Regards
Tommy k