



HALESOWEN ATHLETICS CLUB

NEWSROUND FEBRUARY 2026

February saw a feast of cross country with the final League races for our junior and senior athletes plus a trip up to Durham for the English National.

In the less muddy and drier indoor environs, there was a first ever British gold medal for Maddie Down and British Masters gold for James Robinson.

Our parkrun round-up has a decidedly international flavour and we have hot off the press news from the Ty Careg training weekend!

MIXED FORTUNES FOR HALESOWEN IN XC LEAGUE FINALE

The shortened cross country league season came to end at Ispley Meadows in Redditch, with the never ending rain since the turn of the year leading to one of the wettest and soggiest cross country courses seen in recent history (Midland 7 notwithstanding!)

With only three races to accumulate points compared with the normal four following the cancellation of January's race at Holt Heath, the men's team pulled out all the stops in the fight to retain their top flight status.

29 runners in total lined up for the club in the men's Birmingham League race over 5.6 miles, meaning the old gold vests made up 13% of the total field of 219 runners!

The two Joes were the first runners back for the club, with Mr Donkin in 21st in 34:17 coming in ahead of Mr Rogers, who was 33rd in 35:10.

The rest of the scoring six were Alex Taylor in 59th in 36:48, Dan Tsagay in 101st in 38:41, Matt Wilkinson Jr in 112th in 39:11 and James Hault, who was 120th in 39:38.



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Halesowen finished fourteenth on the day with 446 points but unfortunately, that wasn't enough to move out of the relegation zone.



The fourteenth place finish in the League table means that Halesowen's men will be competing in Division Two next season.

Men's captain Mark Hadley said: "We ran as hard as we could.

"We had some excellent runners putting themselves on the line but unfortunately we've just come short," he told Radio Halesowen Town.

"It's not for the lack of trying and everyone represented the club brilliantly.

"The Birmingham League is the toughest cross country league in the country and the three race season made it very hard as we were chasing points to stay in the division.



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"The club's in a great place at the moment and the men will push on from strength to strength I'm sure."

The ladies' team also had to battle hard to maintain their top flight status in the Midland League Division One.



Phoebe Dodd led the team home in 27th place, finishing the 3.8 mile course in 27:06.

Louise Collins was 39th in 27:59, Jess Dale was 44th in 28:10 and Sarah Gill was 69th in 29:40.



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The scoring four amassed a total of 179 points to finish eighth on the day.

That secured a fifteenth place finish on the table, but due to City of Stoke AC failing to field a team for two out of the three races and being automatically relegated, Halesowen remained in Division One.

Big thanks go to our keen team of supporters including Mick Deakin, Jo and Graeme Gill and Ali Grant, Jenny Taylor for the photos and to Mo Cusworth-Yafai for sourcing the minibus.

The remaining results from both races with photos of all the athletes can be found on the Halesowen AC club website

GOLDEN DOWN! MADDIE WINS FIRST BRITISH TITLE

Maddie Down won her first British gold with a dominant run at the UK Athletics Indoor Championships in Birmingham.

In front of a home crowd at the Utilita Arena, she powered to victory in 8.24 seconds and was the only West Midlands medallist across the whole weekend.

“To finally win the title is really cool,” Maddie told the Podium Athletics podcast.

“I executed the race pretty well and although there are still some things to work on, overall I’m really happy.”

“I had all my family down here and it was great to get support from a home crowd.”

Maddie now has her eye on glory this summer at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.



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PHOTO: Getty Images for British Athletics

She added: "That was my last indoor race of the season."

"Winter training is going really well and I'm now looking forward to building towards the 100 metres and long jump at the Commonwealth Games."

News of Maddie's achievements spread far and wide, and she was featured in the Express and Star, the Halesowen News and on Black Country Radio.

Video of his race also featured on BBC Midlands Today and she also took part in a radio interview on BBC Radio WM on Sunday February 22nd, where she appeared on the Sunday Breakfast Show with Donna Alos.

You can listen back to the interview via the BBC WM feed on BBC Sounds.



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WMYACCL at WOLVERHAMPTON

Team manager Matt Wilkinson reports:

Our young athletes concluded their 2025-26 West Midlands Young Athletes Cross Country League season at a very muddy Aldersley Stadium in Wolverhampton.



22 young athletes put in some strong performances with twelve securing a top half finish.

The team secured fifteenth place overall in the league from 23 clubs with a big congratulations to our Under 17 Women team (pictured left) who took home second place overall.

Our biggest team was our Under 11 Boys with seven boys doing at least one race.

Everyone did themselves and the club proud especially with really tough conditions at this final race.

The full results from the Wolverhampton race and the final League team and individual athlete series standings, along with Halesowen athlete photos, can be found on the club website.



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ENGLISH CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Halesowen headed north for the 2026 edition of the English National Cross Country Championships, held at Sedgfield in County Durham.



Hardwick East Park welcomed over a thousand runners for the senior men's race held over 7.9 miles.

Ethan Jordan was first back for the club in 380th place in 48:31 followed by James Houlton in 386th in 48:41.

Matt Wilkinson Jr. was 431st in 49:40, Mark Hadley was 608th in 54:10, Roger Mallard was 640th in 54:50 and Alex Morgan was 792 in 58:29.

The Halesowen team placed 48th out of the 64 complete teams.

The rest of the men's results were as follows:

836th	Phill Scar	59:42	978th	Matt Allen	1:06:12
841st	Bill Nock	59:51	984th	Andy Nock	1:06:53
929th	Andy Carruthers	1:03:28	1000th	Mo Cusworth-Yafai	1:09:40
943rd	Rick Cudworth	1:04:02	1014th	David Jackson	1:11:43

Jessica Dale was 69th in the 6k Junior Women's race in 26:21 and Alex Taylor was 91st in the 10k Junior Men's race in 37:32.

Most of the 'Owen team stayed over on Saturday night thanks to Phil Scarr's expertise in Travelodge room booking and "minibus Mo" Cusworth-Yafai.



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An enjoyable Sunday long run kept the legs fresh for the long drive home.

The National was the final event in the Halesowen Cross Country Cup and congratulations goes to the 2025-26 winners Jess Dale and Alex Taylor.

WOMEN'S

- 🥇 Jess Dale
- 🥈 Louise Collins
- 🥉 Mel Hepke

MEN'S

- 🥇 Alex Taylor
- 🥈 Mark Hadley
- 🥉 Matt Wilkinson Jr

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pole vaulter James Robinson won Male Vets 45 gold at the British Masters Indoor Championships at Lee Valley in London with a leap of 4.08 metres.

Kian Hazelwood set a new 800m PB of 2:04.64 in finishing third at the In Motion Open indoor meeting at the Utilita Arena in Birmingham.

Poppy Oliarnyk placed sixth in the Long Jump with a best effort of 5.06 metres.

At the Stourbridge Stagger 10 mile race, David Lewis was 38th in 1:20:26 and Ben Dunlop was 142nd in 1:34:42

In the 7k race, Eilish James was 19th and sixth female in 41:48 and Kathryn Williets was 79th in 57:14.

Louise Collins set a new Half Marathon PB of 1:23:57 and was first W45 in 125th at the Run Media City Half Marathon in Salford.

Jamie Sircom placed 267th in the Battersea Park Chase the Moon 10k in 53:20.



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PARKRUN

In possibly the most international item ever featured in this newsletter, Harry Law was first finisher at Queenstown event #355 on the South Island of New Zealand.

Adding to the international parkrun glory this month was Milly Allen, who was first female at Bushy parkrun event #379 in Dublin.

Milly also placed first female at Worcester Pitchcroft event #336.

A little closer to home, Michelle Dale was first female finisher at Dudley event #359 and Isabelle Wilkinson took first female honours a week later at event #360.

TY CAREG 2026!

With bags barely unpacked and shoes yet to be fully demudded, the Newsround newsletter is proud to bring you a report on the club's winter training weekend from our favourite Welsh winter hangout of Ty Careg.

The Friday evening arrivees were soon thrown into the early rounds of the pool, darts and table football tournaments, with the club's skilled cuesmen expertly re-felting the two pool tables to ensure the highest competition standards Ty Careg is renowned for!

Meanwhile, the Jenga bricks made an appearance with your editor's special skill and ability at the game once again unchallenged.

Saturday morning saw 15 Halesowen athletes putting their sore heads behind them with a trip to Groe parkrun in Builth Wells.



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Alex Taylor was the clear first finisher of the run, coming in over a minute ahead of the second-placed runner in 17:14.

Jess Dale and Paul Allen picked up age category wins and Adrian Dale ran a parkrun PB of 25:02, which received widespread acclaim especially from Ian Priest!

Run director Lee Jarvis was also a hit with his singing through the event, and BUILT WELLS' rival to James Hoults' Mr Entertainment crown almost got an invite to the planned Saturday evening karaoke.

But before the mics were drawn in anger, the whole HACC crew set out on a hilly and muddy six mile walk from Ty Careg to Painscastle.



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There were a few tumbles, most notably from the family Guest with Tom followed by Richard in taking on the ultra-stylish muddy trousers look.

All safely reached the final destination of the Ox Inn at Painscastle who opened especially for the Halesowen party.

The pub truly delivered with excellent quality food and friendly hospitality.

Back at base on Saturday evening, the games tournaments continued and the karaoke was in full swing until the early hours.

Keith, Ade, Peter and Adam Parsons were the star singers, with the entertainment continuing unabashed despite another Jamie incident.

The tournament finals played out with Ade Dale champion pool hustler, Sam Pugh becoming king of the table football and Keith Taylor ruling the darts roost.

Sunday morning proved too much for many, and only Peter Dear and Carl Follows were brave enough to preserve the tradition of the Begwyns nine mile run.

A few others took on a gentle two mile walk up to "the roundabout", although Ty Careg veteran Matt Allen had to rely on a friendly local for a tow after getting his car stuck in the mud.

One final breakfast fry-up brought the weekend to a close and ended another enjoyable and memorable visit to Ty Careg.

Special thanks go to Peter Dear for his excellent work in organising another top weekend in Wales and keep an eye across all the usual channels for details of more social events at the club in the coming months.



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GREEN BAIZE BULLETIN!

With just five matches of the season remaining, the HACC A team are in a promotion battle in the Halesowen & District Snooker League Division Two.

There were 4-1 wins at home over Langley Bowling Club B and away at Cradley Sports & Social Club A, with wins in both matches for Peter Dear, Ian Priest, Stuart Towlson and George Whitehouse.

The only defeat was a narrow 3-2 loss at Stourbridge Institute C with Peter Dear and Matt Pugh the match winners.

Halesowen A are third in the table on 69 points, just four points behind second placed Stourbridge Institute C.

The Halesowen B team remain at the bottom of the table, but they started the month with a 5-0 shutout of Thimblemill Recreation Club A.

Peter Smith, Rob Weaver, Adrian Dale, James Ludlow and Carl Beresford were the Halesowen formidable five.

That was followed by a 3-2 home defeat to Stourbridge Institute C and a 4-1 loss at home to Netherton Conservative Club A.

Finally, news of some individual success for A team player Richard Whitehouse, who has reached the semi-finals of the Division 2 Singles Knockout competition.

Richard beat Jon Dawson of Thimblemill Recreation Club A 2-0 in the quarter-finals and will now face Jason Dear from Hasbury Club A in the last four.



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PODCAST CORNER!

A quick profile of two podcasts produced by Halesowen club members.



Ben Russell is part of the Couch To Coached podcast team, which is available across Acast, Apple, Amazon and Spotify.

Ben is joined by co-presenters Rob Sillito and Emma Brydges who document their personal running journeys, combining expert coaching advice with relatable, real-life experiences.

You can also catch a live video version on YouTube every Monday at 8.30 pm.

And a weekly Halesowen Athletic Club round-up is featured on the Sports Report podcast from Radio Halesowen Town, presented by Jamie Sircom.

The programme features highlights and interviews from Halesowen Town FC, but also covers the rest of the local sports scene with updates on hockey, rugby, tennis, cricket, snooker and darts.

New episodes drop on Friday evenings at 9.00 pm across Apple, Amazon and Spotify.

The programme is also broadcast live on Radio Halesowen Town on Friday evenings at 6.00 and 9.00 pm on an hour-long loop.

Repeat broadcasts are on Saturday at 10.00 am and again at 1.30 pm, ahead of the station's live Halesowen Town football commentary.



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RACE CALENDAR

Sat 7 Mar	Inter Counties XC, Nottingham
Sat 14 Mar	English Schools XC, Liverpool
Sat 21 Mar	West Midlands London Mini Marathon Trials, Stourport
Sat 28 Mar	Midland 12/6 Stage Road Relays & Young Athletes 5k, Sutton Park

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

On Sunday 8th March, four Halesowen runners will be following in the footsteps of club founder Jack Price.

Louise Collins, Mark Hadley, David Lewis and Alex Morgan will be running in the Original Marathon IX race from Windsor to London.

The route closely follows that of the 1908 London Olympic Marathon which Jack Price led for fourteen miles and that led to the standardisation of the marathon distance to 26 miles and 365 yards.

The cream of the 'Owen cross country crop have one final muddy meander this season at the Inter Counties Championships in Nottingham and there's the Midland 12/6 stage Road Relays at Sutton Park which is open to all club members,

All the latest results and club news will be updated across the month via HACCentral on WhatsApp along with the club Facebook page and website.

Up Owen!

JAMIE SIRCOM

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