

McGrady Financial Services Junior Cross Country Series

First Race of 2017/18 – Rising Stars

The first race in the McGrady Financial Junior Cross Country Series was held at Springhill Gardens in Castlewellan Forest Park on Sunday 24th September 2016 at 1pm. Newcastle Athletics Club hosted Race 1 out of 5 and as usual the day began with rain. For many of the runners this would be their first race ever in the McGrady Junior Cross-country Series, and we hope it will lead to many more.

The Junior McGrady athletes were taken on their pre-race warm up, by Newcastle's own junior coach Ian Brannigan.

The day started out with the P4 girls lining up, eager to start their 500 metre lap around the gardens and climb the last hill, to sprint downhill to the finish, with their family and friends cheering every runner.

P4 and Under Girls race saw 13 runners of all sizes with 6 from East Down, 6 from Newcastle and 1 from 3Ways taking part. It was 2 Newcastle runners in the top 2, with Erin Easton who had a sprint finish to win in 1.15, ahead of Helen Barbour and Lily Foster of East Down. The biggest cheer came for a very young runner Lily McMurray of Newcastle who finished gallantly in 2.08.

P4 Boys race was a very close race with 1 second between each of the top 4 racers. It was won by Darragh Crimmins of 3 Ways, followed closely by Cillian McCarthy in 2nd (Burren) and Charlie Small of Burren in 3rd. 10 Newcastle runners took part in this the youngest race including Niall McGrady, Jamie O'Flaherty & brothers Ronan & Aedan Hodge. This was the biggest race of the day with 17 competitors enjoying the fun, and 4 clubs competing.

The P5 girls race: Kari Foster of East Down, started the series with her first win of the series in a time of 2.07 mins, and in a close second was Erin Moore also of East Down, with Blaithin Carragher from 3 Ways was third.

Kieran Trainor (East Down AC) won the P5 boys race, Alexander Robinson (ED) was second in 2.03 and 3 Newcastle runners, of Ryan Stevens, Daniel McGeown and Daire O'Gorman sprinted behind.

P6 girls race was won by Jodi Foster of East Down, won in 2.33 minutes, with Lily Rimmer (Dromore) in second after a strong run, in the soft ground, and third placed runner was Lindsay Kelly of 3 Ways.

P6 Boys: Daniel Carr (3 ways) finished first in 2.35mins, closely followed by Ryan McGrady of Newcastle in 2.48 and Robbie Nicholl of Dromore.

P7 Girls was dominated and won by Ava Mehaffey (Dromore) in 3.18 minutes. Closely followed by Emily Burns who was 2nd in 3.23 mins and a strong Laura Hanna of Newcastle AC in 3rd.

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P7 Boys race seen Oliver Robinson of East Down winning the first race of the series in 3.09 min. This race seen Tiernan O'hare (3 ways) dominating, until the last 20 metres before the finishing line, when Oliver Robinson sprinted like 'Usain Bolt' on the last hill, to clinch first place. Also having a good run on this course, coming in third, 2 seconds behind the winner, was Alex Watson (Dromore) in third.

Year 8 Girls race saw Laura Madine take her first win of the series in 3.59 and Lucy Foster (both East Down) was in 2nd, followed by Aoibheann Mynes of Burren.

Year 8 Boys race had a 1st & 3rd from Newcastle's Daniel Sheil and Patrick McDaid, and 2nd was Daniel Reid of Dromore in 4.14.

Year 9 Girls was a led by Kirsti Foster with her 1st win of the series in 5.29, and then Anna Byrne in 2nd of 3 ways, followed by Ciara Savage & Rosie Torney, both from Newcastle.

Year 9 Boys saw 3 Ways dominate with Caolan O'Hare & Brian Watters take 1st & 2nd respectively, followed by East Downs MacKenzie Murray in 5.25.

Year 10 Girls saw Newcastle's ladies Lora Stevens & Alea Brannigan of Newcastle take 1st & 2nd position.

Ronan McVeigh of Newcastle AC had a strong finish to take pole position and win in 5.55min. Ronan has had a great season following the 5k Race through Ballynahinch town and Montalto Estate in 18m 36s, which was a PB – finishing 3rd overall, as well as, being the 1st U16 Male Athlete winning the Richard Scott Shield.

Year 10 Boys saw a gallant Callum McDonagh of Burren in second, and Luka Kendall also of Newcastle in third.

Year 11 Girls seen Edie Carroll of East Down took her first win of the series in 8.38, ahead of her ED team mate Aoife Cochrane, and Rebecca Magee (Dromore) in third. The winners sister Ella Carroll of East Down was also competing in this race.

Year 11 Boys saw East Down dominate again with their first 4 runners taking podium places – Matthew McGrattan won in this 2km in 7.58 minutes, with Owen Edwards in 2nd and Malachy McGrady in 3rd and Andrew McGrattan in fourth.

Well done to all who participated in this race and many thanks especially to **all** the organisers who without them it all would not happen. We hope you all enjoyed your first race at Castlewellan Forest Park.

The second race of the 2017/18 series is on Sunday 15th October 2017 at Kilbroney Forest, Rostrevor. Check out the website <http://www.newcastleac.org> for the junior race calendar.