

McGrady Financial Services Junior XC Series 2019/2020

Race 1

Sunday the 22nd of September saw the return of the ever popular McGrady Financial Services Junior Cross Country Series. Race 1 of 5 takes place at Castlewellan Forest Park in the area opposite the Spring Gardens. After a wet night, the weather forecast suggested we may get more rain, but that did not deter 104 keen athletes from toeing the start line.

This year we welcome new club Murlough AC to the series. Murlough AC's young athletes join those of Newcastle AC, Burren AC, 3 Ways AC, East Down AC and Dromore AC in competing over various distances at 5 different race locations over the series.

The competition began with the largest race of the day. No less than 15 P4 and Under Girls navigated their way around the undulating course. For many boys and girls in this age group, it is their first experience of cross country running, and they all did a fantastic job. Maria Devine from 3 Ways AC was first home in 2.27, with Newcastle AC's Mary Houston in 2nd 2.33, closely followed by team mate Lily McMurray in 3rd place 2.35.

In the P4 and Under Boys race it was a 1, 2, 3 for Newcastle AC with Harry McVeigh in 1st place in a time of 2.14, closely followed by Joseph Uhomobi 2,16 and Connaire Óg McVeigh 2.31.

As the age groups go up, the distances increase, and so from P5 upwards, Boys and Girls ran together. In the P5 Girls, Murlough AC's Maisie McVeigh had a great run to finish first girl in a time of 2.49, Maisie Nicholl of Dromore AC took 2nd place in 3.07 with Niamh Watson of Newcastle AC coming 3rd in 3.29.

The P5 Boys race was won by Darragh Ruddle from Newcastle AC in 2.39, followed by team mate Darragh Kerr in 2.47. Jarlath Kearney from East Down AC was 3rd in 2.56.

In the combined P6 race it was a 1, 2, 3 for Newcastle AC in both the Boys and Girls race. Erin Easton was first in for the girls in 4.27, with teammate Sarah Uhomoihi in second 4.40, and Helen Barbour third in 4.50.

In the Boys race Henry Houston stormed home in a time of 4.00, with Jamie O'Flaherty 2nd in 4.35. Ryan McCabe took third place in a time of 4.44.

In the combined P7 race, first girl home was Ava McArdle from Burren AC in 5.11, followed by teammate Farrah May Morgan in second place 5.22. East Down AC's Cara Napier was 3rd in 5.41.

In the Boys race Alexander Robinson from East Down AC was first home in 4.57, Daniel Irwin from Burren AC in second in 5.14, and Matthew McKernan from Dromore AC in third.

In the year 8 girls race Lily Rimmer from Dromore AC had a comfortable win in 5.19 ahead of teammate Sophie Stevenson in 5.44. Alene Butterfield from Burren AC was third in 6.06.

For the Year 8 Boys it was an exciting sprint finish that seen Aaron Lennon of East Down AC come first in 5.45 just ahead of Euan McIntosh from Newcastle AC in 5.46. Robbie Nicholl from Dromore AC took the third spot in 5.55.

In the year 9 girls race Emily Burns of East Down AC had a comfortable win in 6.28. Amy McCartan from Dromore AC was second in 7.04 followed by Anna Kearney from East Down AC in 7.09.

In the Year 9 Boys race it was East Down AC's Oliver Robinson in first place 6.11, followed by Oliver Corrigan from Newcastle AC in 7.15.

Year 10 Girls saw Lauren Madine of East Down AC finish first in a time of 6.53, ahead of teammate Kara Trainor in 7.19. Anna McKernan was third in 7.37.

For the year 10 Boys it was a 1, 2, 3 for Newcastle AC with Ethan McMullan first in a time of 7.27, followed by Yasin Brannigan in 7.44. Patrick McDaid made up the trio in a time of 8.06.

The final race of the day sees the Year 11+ Boys and Girls set out on a number of laps of the track, and is a true test of endurance.

For the girls it was Dromore AC's Kate McCartan in 8.27 and teammate Lucy Bradshaw 8.48 who took first and second place.

In the Boys race, Mackenzie Murray from East Down AC had a great run to win in 7.13, ahead of teammate Thomas Brown in 8.18. Newcastle AC's Rory Corrigan took 3rd place in 8.23, ahead of East Down AC's Declan Hampton and Ben Carson.

Well done to all who participated in the race and many thanks to all the organisers who make it happen. Our thanks to the Rangers and staff of Castlewellan Forest Park, and to all the volunteers on the day. Thanks also to McGrady Financial Services for sponsorship of the series.

Registration (for those who have not registered previously) is now open for race 2 of the series which is on Sunday 13th October at Kilbroney Forest Park, Rostrevor.