The first Kent league cross country fixture of the winter took place this weekend at Swanley Park and what a fantastic turnout from our young athletes with 65 Blackheath and Bromley  athletes taking part.

Amongst those were four boys making their BBHAC debuts with another seven running their club debuts over the country.

BBHAC contested seven age categories, finishing 1st in five of them and 2nd and 3rd in the overall team positions. Great team results.

The day started early with newly appointed team captains Niamh Bridson Hubbard and Marco Arcuri taking their roles seriously as they led the teams on a walk about around the course to familiarise the youngsters with the course and task ahead.

Especially good to see Niamh at Swanley, despite not being able to compete herself, at present.

The U13 girls were the first off and it was great to see Morgan Squibb and Jessica Neal (both a year young) at the front of the field. Morgan crossed the line in a fine 4th, (but was disappointed not to have held onto 3rd!), Jessica was 5th and Emilie Penlington in 8th secured the team victory. With massive strength and depth our black vests dominated the next few positions with Imogen Meers 10th, Alice Prentice 11th, Lily Tappenden (carrying a nasty training incident wound to her knee!) 12th, the much improved Gracie Horton in 13th and Hanna O'Flynne in 15th. Niamh Milmo on her BBHAC winter debut finished 24th, with Isabelle Bridge 31st and Zoe Austridge 33rd. Lauren Goddard only just  back from  injury unfortunately had to pull out near the end but we hope to see Lauren fit and on the starting line again very soon.

The U13 boys were next up and with 11 BBHAC on the starting line it looked an impressive sight. The finish was even more impressive as it read 1,2,3 BB, easily winning the team race. Rowan Fuss , despite playing rugby in the morning and having to stop during the race to ask a marshall the way, still managed a victory with in form Peter Guy only a few seconds behind 2nd. Joseph Georgiadis, fresh from winning his National bronze relay medal, had a cat and mouse fight with a Dartford boy contesting 3rd and 4th place.

The look of sheer determination on Joseph's face as he turned into the finish straight ensured he won his private battle to cross the line in 3rd and complete the clean sweep. Ben Gardiner had another great run coming 9th with fast moving through the field Kier Lundy 11th. Following in older brother Ross'  footsteps Leo Braden made his  BB debut finishing 21st, a great performance especially in trainers! Robert Suckling had a good strong run in 24th and just behind with a late decision to run from Billy Keene in 25th.

Jake Leng making his BBHAC debut had a good run finishing 27th followed by Cameron Swatton 33rd and Matthew Proctor on his winter debut 42nd.

The U15 girls having won the National Road relay title last weekend were once again in fine form and won the team race having four girls in the top 10. Naomi Kingston was 4th, Yasmin Austridge 5th  followed by first year in the age group Millie Smith 6th and Kelsi Cornish 9th. Grace Scopes had a great run, possible spurred on by her german shepard Leo, proudly wearing his Blackheath vest, finishing 14th and  Stephanie Taylor 15th. It was good to see Tammy Falshaw back competing and finishing 21st and Amy Leach completed the strong squad in 26th.

Twelve U15 boys stood on the start line ready for their race and interesting to note that 75% of them are first year U15s. It was a determined Henry Cowie who crossed the line in a fantastic 3rd, complaining about blisters to anyone who would listen! Michael Eagling had a solid run in 8th followed by the ever improving Callum Myatt in 23rd. The team finished 3rd but equal on points with second place. Oscar Hussey, having not run much lately due to other sporting commitments, went off bravely and finished well in 25th with George Pope, despite doing a roly poly at the start, just behind in 26th. Lewis Stickings, helped or hindered by having his dad and brother by his side on their mountain bikes finished in 29th. Coleman Corry spent his morning playing rugby for Whitgift before his dad Nic broke some traffic laws getting him to Swanley in time for his race and finished 33rd. Lewis Warren had a good run in 42nd, while Frankie Scrivener finished 49th. Charlie Andrews, not only made his BBHAC debut having only just joined the club but also did well crossing the line in 53rd considering he had never heard of the Kent League cross counrty until last Thursday. Good to have Charlie in the team. Ever present Harrison Parker continues to improve and finished 57th and Charlie Scrivener cross the line in 62nd in obvious discomfort, hopefully nothing too serious.

The morning had been very autumnal with bright sunshine right up to the start of the U17 girls race but with the girls all lining up waiting for the gun the sky darkened and then the heavens opened. Heavy rain and large hail stones had all other athletes and spectators running for cover while the girls began their arduous 3.5k race. The rain was so heavy Jessica  Keene was seen running with her hands over her face whilst others were running with head tucked in against the elements.

This didn't stop a great race from being run and proves what a strong bunch of athletes cross country runners really are. The race was won by Cambridge Harriers National Champion Sabrina Sinha with Jess Keene 2nd, Kelsey Fuss 3rd and Charlotte Rhule 37th.

It was great to see Georgina Taylor out competing again and ran a solid run in 9th , followed by  Shannon Riskey in 12th, Joanne Clowes in 14th, Mary Guy in 17th, Jenny Sheasby 22nd and Francesca Pickup in 27th.

The U17 boys team, all first year in the age group, finished in a great 2nd position. Joss Barber continued his fine early season form powering around the two lap course and finishing 5th followed by boys team captain Marco Arcuri. Charlie Davis, who has been trouble by injuries over recent months is clearly returning to form with a great 11th place finish. Alex Leggatt and James Crawley both making their winter debuts (James making his BB debut) posted fine runs crossing the line in 25th and 29th respectively. The full squad was completed with Will Pope 31st and great to see Scott Bulmer back running for the club again , in 32nd.

Our U20 girls dominated their age category winning comfortable and saw Anna Myers 1st, Janae Galley 3rd, Pole vaulter Sonia Woolhouse 4th, Emma Rowland 6th and Chloe Haffenden 7th.

The only U20 man running, Thomas Desborough decided to run the 10K senior race rather than half that distance in the U20 race. However, this didn't stop Thomas having a great run finishing 9th BBHAC senior in 39th place running 38.11. A great run.

This weeks team managers awards go to **Grace Scopes** for her great run at Swanley and to **Charlie Davis** for his great run despite injury troubles over the last few weeks.

Looking forward to seeing many of you running at the next three meetings which are Saturday 18th October, South of England Cross country relays, Wormwood Scrubs; Saturday 25th Kent league, Tonbridge and Saturday 1st November National cross country relays, Mansfield.