

Hampshire League Cross Country Match Report, 13 Nov 2021, Bournemouth

Reading's lads competed well in the season's first Hampshire Cross Country League fixture, held at Bournemouth on Saturday. Both the U13 and U15 teams finished fifth, while the U17s unfortunately were unable to field a complete team due to the clash with the regional finals of the English Schools Cup.

In the U13 boys' 3km race over the fast and mostly flat King's Park course, Sam Weeks was soon well placed, and he continued to run strongly to lead the team home in 14th position in a time of 11.55, with Noah Tyers also running well for 22nd place in 12.14. Seb Clark was Reading's third runner for much of the race, but despite his best efforts lost out to William Kent, who came through to 30th in the closing stages to finish as Reading's final scorer in 12.42, just two places and four seconds ahead of Seb. Meanwhile Harrison Kent, like brother William in his debut race for Reading, despite having to give ground after a strong start, kept going well for 43rd place in 13.47. Reading's points total of 66 gave them a respectable fifth place in the team competition.

For the U15 team in their 4km race there were excellent runs from both James Titmas and Maddox Gillas, who mostly ran together until James was able to pull ahead towards the end to finish 10th in a time of 14.12, with Maddox 12th in 14.16. The Reading team was completed by Ollie Shears, with a fine effort for 34th position in 15.41, giving a team total of 56 points, which in another tight team race gave them fifth place.

Team captain Ollie Craggs was Reading's only competitor in the U17 6km race, and he understandably started conservatively after recent injury, but was able to move through the field for a very encouraging eighth-place finish in a time of 20.00. Reading did however have two other U17 runners in action on the day, with Chris Parker and Nick Haldane forming half of the senior Blue Coat team that recorded an impressive victory in the Schools Cup south-west regional final at Taunton, with Chris finishing 6th and Nick 15th.

Last but not least, young Leo Lightstone achieved an excellent 55th place in running against much older lads in the U11 2km boys race held in conjunction with the league races, recording 10.02.

Let's hope that Reading can build on these results in the next league fixture at Aldershot on 4th December.

Keith Whyte