NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

 ABINGTON PARK, NORTHAMPTON, JAN. 7TH

 Northampton AC played host to the Northamptonshire Cross Country Championships held at Abington Park on a wet and soggy day over a testing parkland course. The host club provided the only clean sweep of the day in the U17 Women’s race over 6k when Thea Oakey romped home to victory with a time of 28:03 and was backed up by Sophie Wood (2nd in 28:52) and Hazel Dalley (3rd in 29:12) for an easy team title. Rugby & Northampton AC claimed second through Jemima Lambert (5th), Marni Walker (8th) and Lily Isaac (10th). In the U17 Men’s event over the same distance Louis Starr of R&N clinched the title by one second from clubmate Malachy Collins with 22:03 while Banbury’s Ruben Snelson took bronze (22:29). With Arthur Tilt in fourth (22:37) it was a team win for Rugby & Northampton. Following them home were Ollie Buchan (5th), Freddie Cushing (7th) and Joshua Robson (9th), which gave Northampton AC the silver. Kettering Town Harriers with Lucas Rogers (8th), Dylan White (10th) and Ellis Johnson (13th) took bronze. The Senior and U20 Women also took in the same 6k course and Alice Belcher of Wellingborough & District won her first Senior title by 30 seconds from R&N’s U20 athlete Megan Stenhouse in 23:44. Lucy Stevens (R&N) in third took Senior silver with 24:27, but it was Wellingborough that won their first ever ladies title with Kelly Barnett 4th (Senior bronze in 25:58) and Francesca Molossi-Murphy (5th in 26:55). Amy Rule of Corby AC in 6th (27:00) won silver in the U20 section and clubmate Ashleigh Walters was one place and 12 seconds behind for Junior bronze. R&N’s Lorna Hession in 8th spot on 27:34 gave their club the team silver medals and Junior athlete Erin Treacy in 9th (27:40) gave Corby third position. The longest race of the day was the 10k for Senior and U20 Men over four large laps of the park. It proved to be a battle between the top two from last year Haydn Arnall of R&N and Fynn Batkin of Kettering along with U20 athlete Skip Snelson of Banbury. Batkin held a lead approaching the finish, but he was overhauled by Arnall with one final sprint to the line to defend his title in a time of 35:04. Batkin was four seconds adrift with Snelson in third (35:30) claiming the Junior gold. Senior bronze went to Jack Bond in fourth (36:07) and this helped Rugby & Northampton AC to win the Senior Mens team trophy for the 6th consecutive time. The scoring six was completed by Phil Melling (5th), William Gardner (6th), Duncan Birtwistle (8th) and Matthew Everett (9th). Lucas Mansell of Kettering in 7th won the U20 silver medal with 38:11 while Everett took bronze (39:03). Corby AC won the silver medals with Junior Harrison Thompson leading them home in 11th place on 39:26. He had backing from Jacob Akers (13th), Adam Brooks (16th), Chris Curtis (20th), Jack Green (21st) and John Treacy (49th). Northampton AC clinched third spot and were led by Matthew Howes in 10th (39:07). Two U20 clubmates followed him with Stirling Green in 17th and Thomas Bishton 23rd. The team was completed by Adil Zbirou (27th), Paul Wood (33rd) and James Adams (37th). The U15 Boys competed over 5k and R&N’s Ollie Walls won the title by eight seconds from his clubmate Nathan Lamb in 18:44 with Daventry AC’s Joshua Orchard taking bronze in 18:56. With Dylan Mander in fourth for R&N (18:58) this gave them team gold while Kettering just pipped Northampton by one point to win silver with the team of Dylan Ransom (9th), Zachary Scott (10th) and Evan Willis (12th). Arlo Bamford led home Northampton in 6th with Jack Twining (11th) and Daniel Wood (15th). Over the same distance Olivia McGhee had a convincing win for R&N in the U15 Girls race on 20:27.

Evie Brooker of Daventry came second in 22:03 and Kettering’s Iona Ellwood in third (22:32). R&N took the team title with help from Jemima Cooper (4th in 23:02) and Grace Cota (7th in 29:21). Northampton AC had an individual winner in the U13 Girls event over 3k when Imogen Bennetts took gold in 10:32. The next three places were all taken by R&N athletes who won the team event with Elsie Bennett ( 2nd in 11:01), Jess Lamb (3rd in 11:13) and Peyton Almond (4th in 11:17). Northampton were second with Eve Taylor (6th in 12:19) and Bella Fontenla (11th in 14:44) completing the squad. The U13 Boys race was won by R&N’s Laike Favier when he covered the 3k in 10:31 and was followed by two Kettering Town Harriers with Harlee Hooker (10:48) and Oliver Smith (10:57). It was another team victory for Rugby & Northampton which was completed by Charlie Gercs (6th in 11:35) and Harrison Kane (7th in 11:42). The first race of the day was the U11’s over 2k and R&N’s Bella Lamb helped her club to the team title when she took individual gold in the girls race with 6:47. Corby’s Kirrily Dubois won silver in 7:14. Backing up Lamb in the team was bronze medal winner Christabella Reitel (7:26) and Taya Young (5th in 7:48). Banbury Harriers had a winner in the boys race with Reuben Gray recording 6:36. Oliver Groves of Northampton clinched second spot in 6:45 and Rugby & Northampton’s Freddie Hinton the bronze in 6:51, which helped them to win gold in the team event supported by Jan Hemmington (5th in 7:02) and Ernie Windrum (6th in 7:05). Backing up Groves for Northampton AC to win silver were Leonard Melczynska (7th) and Riley Billingham (11th).