

The North East Harrier League 2014/15- A beginner's guide

What's it all about?....

Over the winter season Gosforth Harriers compete in the annual cross country North East Harrier league. There are six cross country meets organised by different local clubs at different venues. Meets are on Saturdays.

There are races for all age groups (U11 (8 and over), U13, U15, U17, senior and veterans). The U11 race is mixed. The races are different distances from 1 mile (U11, U13) to 6 miles (men) dependent on age and gender and the surface is a mixture of grass and mud with the occasional stream.



Runners score points for their finishing position and clubs are ranked on the basis of their best three (juniors), four (ladies) or six (men) in each race. Although only some

runners 'count', other runners in the team can make sure runners from other teams finish further down the order so, in effect, all runners count.

The fixtures...

11th Oct NEHL#1 East Cramlington Nature Reserve, approx NE23 6XF organized by Blyth Running Club. Toilets are at Anne Welfare, NE23 6RA Approx 1 mile from start.

Nov 22nd NEHL#2 Aykley Heads recreation ground, Durham, DH1. Organized by Elvet Striders. A new course for this season.

Nov 29th NEHL #3 Wallington Hall, NE61 4AR. Organized by Morpeth Harriers. The course is in the grounds of Wallington Hall. There are toilets and a cafe!

Jan 17th NEHL#4 Bedewell Park, Monkton Lane, NE32 5NJ. This one is organized by Jarrow and Hebburn AC. Toilets and some parking at the Monkton Stadium nearby.

Feb 28th NEHL#5 Alnwick Pastures, Alnwick, NE66 1YU. Organized by Alnwick Harriers. Toilets and parking available at Alnwick Gardens a few minutes' walk from the start

March 14th NEHL#6 Wrekenton, Old Durham Rd, Wrekenton, NE9 6RZ. Organized by Saltwell Harriers. Parking and toilets are at the Cardinal Hume Catholic School. Note that there is no U11 race.

The Race timetable...

U11s (12.15 pm); U13 Boys/Girls (12:25/35 pm); U15 Boys/Girls (12:45/55 pm) U17/U20 ladies (13:05 pm); Senior/Vet Ladies (13:10 pm) U17 Men (14:00 pm) Senior/Vet Men (14:10 pm).

Note that times are approximate, listen out for the whistle calling runners to the start. You need to arrive at least 45 min before your race to have time to check out the course, warm up and be ready to race.

Other things to know...

The first time you compete you will be given a Harrier League number which you need to keep and bring with you to each race. You can only run if you are wearing your club vest with the Harrier League number pinned on the front. Gordon is the man to talk to for numbers and club vests, he also has a tin of safety pins if you forget to bring your own.

Supporters always welcome..

Parents, grandparents, and others are encouraged to come along and cheer on the athletes. If your race is early, try to stay around a bit to cheer the older ones and if your race is



later, try to come a bit early to cheer the young ones. Usually supporters can see the race at several points. Please remember to cheer all the Gosforth runners -it really does help.

The Big Green Tent..

The club has a tent where you can shelter from the weather, get changed, and leave your stuff. Look out for the big green tent and the green and white Gosforth Harriers flag which will be flying next to the tent.



There will be rain, snow, and wind...

The winter weather can be pretty bad. Bring lots of warm dry clothes to wear before and after the race. In particular you will need spare socks.

When running you may need extra layers under your vest and a hat and gloves too if it's very cold.

There will be mud...

The terrain is very variable. You may be able to run in normal trainers but cross country spikes will help you run more quickly uphill and downhill, and will stop you slithering about in the mud. Spikes are available from running shops like Start Fitness and are relatively cheap. Colin also has some second-hand spikes which runners can borrow. *When you grow out of your spikes please can you give them to Colin to lend to new runners.*