

TAC take on first McCain Cross Challenge 13 Nov. 2011 Ashton Court Bristol.

Members of the Taunton Athletics Club competed with distinction at the first race in the UK Athletics McCain Cross Challenge series held at Ashton Court estate last weekend.

Leading age group athletes from across the country came together in Bristol to compete over a tough course whilst in the U20 and Senior age groups it was also a test of form prior to the European cross-country trials at the end of the month.

Runners likened the terrain to running over a spongy mattress and the long grass and soft terrain made it hard going from the start with the added test of a long steady drag of a hill which was topped off by a small extremely steep and slippery high point of the course.

Taunton AC's top performer of the day was **Naomi**

Taschimowitz who finished second behind the in form Gemma Steel who earlier this year took victories over both Paula Radcliffe and Jo Pavey. This was Taschimowitz' first cross-country race of the season and one that should give her confidence going into the trials.



The club's other medal winner of the day was 11 year old Dan Wilde who barely fresh from finishing second the previous day in a regional schools event finished a strong 3rd place.

Joe Walton (U17) continues to improve with every race he does and ran a mature race to finish 7th in a very competitive age group against a number of top UK age group athletes. With another year remaining in this age group he looks like being one to watch for the future.

Further down the field Isaac Taschimowitz gave a confident performance in the U17 men's race. Grace Smalley acquitted herself well in the U15 girls. Dominic Taylor found the going tough in one of his first XC races, but finished with gritty determination. Rachel Langbein put in a gutsy performance that demonstrated why she is ranked amongst the top few in her age group for the killer of all track events, the steeplechase. Whilst in the Senior Men's race Luke Scott closed the gap on a number of quality national standard athletes and looked like he had plenty more to come as the season develops.

[report by Charlotte Fisher]

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