

South West Championships – Bicton – Sunday 6th January 2008

A THRILLING sprint finish in the senior men's race provided a highlight for the large crowd to savour at the South West Cross Country Championships on Sunday.

Bideford athlete Kevin Heywood produced a season's best run to guide Devon to the team title at the Bicton College event. But he had to settle for second place in the individual honours after an absorbing duel with Cornish rival Robbie Bugden. Roared on by home support, Heywood carried the fight over the last of four laps on the 7.5k undulating course. The 29-year-old held a 10 metre lead as the front pair dug in over the final strength-sapping hill. However, Bugden, who has been in great shape this season, mounted a final flat-out effort to pinch the title by a single second. Heywood, who lives over the Cornish border in Morwenstow but represents Devon as member of Bideford Blues, was also part of Bristol & West AC's club triumph.

Bideford's Mark Jenkin (7th) and fast-improving youngster Steve Gallienne (13th and 4th U20) meanwhile, joined him in the victorious Devon squad. The Devon team was equally successful in the senior women's race thanks to a great run from Torrington's Marilyn Blair. She powered around the course to finish seventh overall, first among the Devon squad and first Vet 45.

The winning county effort was supported by Bideford's Kirsty Hamilton who came 13th (3rd U20) as she continued her return to full fitness. There were also some promising displays from the Blues' junior athletes, notably from one of the youngest competitors Ned Oliver, who finished 33rd in the Boys U13s just weeks after his 11th birthday.

South West Cross Country Championships

Senior Men: 2 Kevin Heywood (Devon & Bristol & West AC); 7 Mark Jenkin (Devon & Bideford AAC) 3rd Devon; 13 Steve Gallienne (Devon & Bideford AAC) 4th U20; 24 Wayne Stephens (Devon & Bideford AAC); 26 Phil Norman (Devon & North Devon AC) 11th U20; 31 Nicholas Daniel (North Devon AC); 41 Matthew Hill (Devon & North Devon AC) 18th U20; 45 Dan Mapp (Devon & Bideford AAC) 21st U20; 57 Jamie McLaren (Bideford AAC); 67 Jim Jennings (Torrington AAC) 1st Vet 50; 94 Luke Rigler (Devon & North Devon AC) 31st U20; 96 Nigel Cornish (Torrington AAC) 8th Vet 50. Senior Women: 7 Marylin Blair (Devon & Torrington AAC) 1st Vet 45; 13 Kirsty Hamilton (Devon & Bideford AAC) 3rd U20; 24 Steph Olliffe (Torrington AAC) 4th Vet 35; 35 Ellie Grant (Devon & North Devon AC) 8th U20; 42 Sally Edney (Bideford AAC) 7th Vet 45; 44 Kay Eastwood (Bideford AAC) 4th Vet 55. U17 Men: 6 Davey Platt (Devon & North Devon AC); 19 Sam Petty (North Devon AC); 22 Scott Williams (North Devon AC); 28 Ben Grant (Devon & North Devon AC); 49 Jack Oliver (Bideford AAC); 50 Jack Blight (Bideford AAC). U17 Women: 27 Erica Woolgar (Devon & Bideford AAC); 38 Sarah Turner (Devon & Bideford AAC). U15 Boys: 21 Robert Overney (Devon & North Devon AC); 37 Oliver Cornish (Devon & Torrington AAC); 55 Tom Cawsey (Bideford AAC); 56 Harry Edney (Bideford AAC); 60 Kieran Wreford (Bideford AAC). U15 Girls: 10 Megan Andrew (Devon & North Devon AC); 45 Natalie Taylor (Devon & North Devon AC); 46 Chelsea Crawshaw (Devon & Bideford AAC). U13 Boys: 14 Matthew Bull (Devon & North Devon AC); 28 Jordan Blair (Devon & Torrington AAC); 33 Ned Oliver (Bideford AAC); 49 George Lundy (Devon & North Devon AC); 58 Drew Sullivan (Torrington AAC); 59 Scott Cartwright (Bideford AAC); 60 Louis Cornish (Torrington AAC); 61 Luke Snetzler (Bideford AAC); DNF Taren Stacey (Devon & Torrington AAC). U13 Girls: 35 Anela Butler (Bideford AAC); 39 Jessica Bennett (Devon & North Devon AC).

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