

BMHAC CROSS COUNTRY INFORMATION



General Information

Overview of the Cross Country season with a focus on U14/U16

The cross country season runs from October to March. While some athletes may naturally favour the track, cross country is a fantastic development tool for building the core strength and endurance necessary to deliver stronger performances during the summer track season.

Affiliated Leagues and Club Expectations Your annual membership fee covers entry into two affiliated leagues:

- **The Basingstoke Junior Cross Country League (JXC)**
- **The Hampshire Cross Country League (HCCL)**

Active, paid membership is required to participate in all races. We expect all athletes to actively represent the club in competition, and club places may be withdrawn if members consistently choose not to compete. If your child is avoiding competition due to confidence issues, please speak to us. The coaching team has plenty of experience supporting junior athletes and will work with you to find a positive, low-pressure way forward.

Race Day Logistics & Preparation

- **Arrival Times:** Always allow ample time before your race for parking (including the walk to the venue), walking the course, registering with the event organiser or team manager, and completing a proper warm-up.
- **Clothing:** Athletes must dress in layers during both training and races. It is important to stay warm right up until the starting gun.
- **Footwear:** Trainers with a strong grip are preferable for the cross country season, and laces must be tied tightly to prevent rolled ankles. For muddier courses, cross country spikes are highly recommended, they are lightweight, prevent slipping, and actively assist performance.

Indoor Track Racing (U14+) Typically from December onwards, indoor competitions are held at specialist venues further afield (such as Sheffield, Lee Valley, and Cardiff) for U14 athletes and older.

If an athlete wishes to compete indoors, it is essential to speak to a coach first. Indoor racing requires a completely different training approach to cross country. Without careful planning, combining indoor and outdoor racing can stretch an athlete's track season on for too long, leading to fatigue and poor performance.

Questions or Support If you have any questions regarding races, footwear choices, or training plans, please speak to your coach, who will be more than happy to help.

Age Groups for 2026/2027 Cross Country Season

These age groups are as per UKA rules and the new age group year start of 1st October.

Date of birth between	School Year	Age group for cross country season
01/09/2014 – 31/08/2015	7	U14
01/09/2013 – 31/08/2014	8	U14
01/09/2012 – 31/08/2013	9	U16
01/09/2011 – 31/08/2012	10	U16
01/09/2010 – 31/08/2011	11	U18
01/09/2009 – 31/08/2010	12	U18

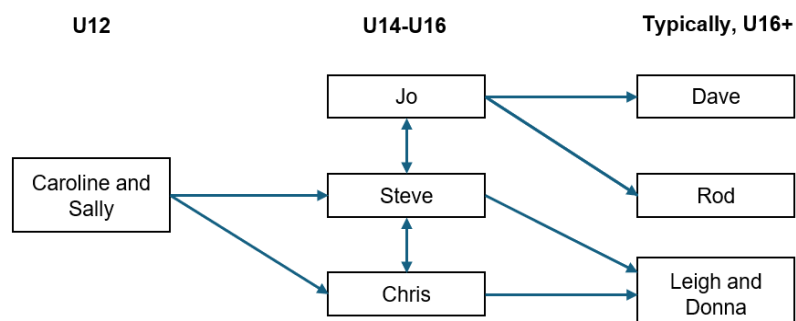
It's possible that other organisations may have differing criteria for participation age due to the age group changes made by UK Athletics at the start of April 2026.

Dates for your diaries:

Please check <https://bmhac.co.uk/events/> for further details. Coaches will send out the latest information about any changes closer to the event.

Day	Date	Month	Year	Event	Age Group	Venue
Sun	4th	Oct	2026	Junior XC League (Match 1)	U10–U18	Fleet
Sat	10th	Oct	2026	Hampshire XC League	U14–Vet	Bournemouth (Kings Park)
Sun	1st	Nov	2026	Junior XC League (Match 2)	U10–U18	Down Grange
Sat	14th	Nov	2026	Hampshire XC League	U14–Vet	Reading (Prospect Park)
Sun	29th	Nov	2026	Junior XC League (Match 3)	U10–U18	Aldershot
Sat	5th	Dec	2026	Hampshire XC League	U14–Vet	Aldershot
Sat	2nd or 3rd	Jan	2027	Hampshire XC Championships	U14–Vet	TBC
Sat	16th	Jan	2027	Hampshire XC League	U14–Vet	TBC (no host yet)
Sat	30th	Jan	2027	SEAA XC Championships	U14–Vet	Beckenham Place Park
Sat	13th	Feb	2027	Hampshire XC League	U14–Vet	Bournemouth (Kings Park)
Sun	21st	Feb	2027	Junior XC League (Match 4)	U10–U18	TBC

Endurance/Middle Distance Coaching Structure:



Cross Country Leagues

Basingstoke Junior Cross Country League (JXC)

- **League Overview:** This is a local junior development league covering age groups from U10 to U16, with the option for U18s to run in the U16 races as non-scorers.
- **Travel:** All matches are hosted locally around Basingstoke and North Hampshire, so there are never long travel distances.
- **Development Focus:** JXC is designed as an accessible development league suitable for all abilities, it is an excellent, low-pressure introduction to racing.
- **County Vest Rule:** If an athlete has represented their county (achieved a county athletics association vest) for 800m or longer by 1st September prior to the season, they are not permitted to run as a scoring athlete. They are, however, very welcome to race as a guest non-scorer.
- **Participating Clubs:** Participating clubs include Basingstoke & Mid Hants, Andover, Fleet & Crookham, Wessex Wyverns, Overton Harriers, and Tadley.
- **Format:** The league consists of 4 Sunday matches across the autumn and winter seasons.

Dates for 2026/2027

Match 1: Sunday 4th October 2026 – Fleet

Match 2: Sunday 1st November 2026 – Basingstoke Down Grange

Match 3: Sunday 29th November 2026 – Aldershot

Match 4: Sunday 21st February 2027 – TBC

JXC Race Day Timetable for U14 / U16

- **U14 Girls (Years 7 & 8):** 2:05 pm (~3,500 m)
- **U14 Boys (Years 7 & 8):** 2:20 pm (~3,500 m)
- **U16 Girls & Boys (Years 9 & 10):** 2:35 pm (~5000 m)

Course distances in the table above represent the maximum official limits under league rules. The exact race distances are published on the Hampshire Athletics website prior to each match based on local site layout and race official's assessment.

Team Scoring & Season Rankings

- **Team Scoring:** The first 4 finishers in each age category score points for the club team (first 3 finishers score for U16).
- **Displacing Competitors:** Every single runner counts. Non-scoring athletes directly benefit the club team by placing ahead of rival runners and pushing up other clubs' points.
- **Individual Standings:** Season rankings are calculated using an athlete's best 3 scores across the 4 fixtures. If an athlete competes in all 4 matches, their lowest score is discarded. Athletes must complete a minimum of 3 matches to secure an end-of-season ranking.

Registration & Official Kit

- **Race Pre-Registration:** An email is sent out roughly two weeks before each match asking parents to register their athlete with Team Manager Cheryll Ragan.
- **Club Vests:** Official club vests are required for all competitors.
- **Spare Vests & Referee Discretion:** If an athlete forgets or lacks a vest, check in with the team manager upon arrival to borrow a spare. Athletes without a club vest may only race at the sole discretion of the race referee.

Awards & League Information

- **Individual & Team Trophies:** Medals are awarded to the top 6 overall individual finishers in the season rankings (top 4 for U16), alongside team trophies for the winning club in each age group.
- **League Updates:** Fixtures, standings, and results are updated throughout the sea

Hampshire Cross Country League (HCCL)

- **Overview & Eligibility:** Open to athletes from Under 14 through to Seniors and Veterans (age 40+ for both men and women). All competitors must wear official club colours and be registered with England Athletics—guest runners are strictly not permitted.
- **Scoring & Individual Standings:** Individual rankings and team results are calculated using an athlete's best 4 out of 5 fixtures. A scoring team for U14 and U16 consists of the first 3 finishers for the club.
- **Finish Process:** Athletes do not wear fixed bib numbers. Upon crossing the finish line, runners receive a position ticket in the funnel, which must be immediately handed to the Team Manager alongside their name.
- **County Team Selection:** Finishing positions and performances throughout the Hampshire League season are used by County Team Managers as a key part of the selection process for the Hampshire team competing at the Inter County Cross Country Championships.
- **Awards:** Medals are awarded at the end of the season to the top 6 overall individual finishers in the U14 and U16 categories, as well as team trophies for winning clubs.

Dates for 2026/2027

Day	Date	Month	Year	Match	Venue / Host
Saturday	10th	October	2026	Match 1	Bournemouth AC (Kings Park)
Saturday	14th	November	2026	Match 2	Reading AC (Prospect Park)
Saturday	5th	December	2026	Match 3	Aldershot, Farnham & District AC
Saturday	16th	January	2027	Match 4	TBC (Host pending)
Saturday	13th	February	2027	Match 5	Bournemouth AC (Kings Park)

Race Day Timetable for U14 / U16

Start Time	Age Category	Maximum Course Distance
12:00	Under 14 Girls	3.5km
12:15	Under 14 Boys	3.5km
12:30	Under 16 Girls	5.0km
12:50	Under 16 Boys	5.0km

Course distances in the table above represent the maximum official limits under league rules. The exact race distances are published on the Hampshire Athletics website prior to each match based on local site layout and race official's assessment.

Area and National Cross-Country Championships

Hampshire County Cross Country Championships – Saturday 2nd or 3rd January 2027 (TBC)

- **Overview & Suitability:** Open to all club members across age categories (U14, U16, U18, and Seniors/Veterans aged 40+). This event is appropriate for athletes of all ability levels, not just elite runners.
- **County Qualification Criteria:** Competitors **must** either currently reside in Hampshire or have been born in Hampshire.
- **Inter-County Selection:** This championship is a vital selection fixture for athletes seeking to earn a Hampshire County vest and represent the county at the Inter County Cross Country Championships.
- **Entries & Deadlines:** Registrations must be completed and paid for directly by parents/athletes. Official entry links and details will be circulated closer to the event, with entries typically closing in early December.
- **Awards:** Individual and team medals are awarded across all official age groups.
- **Venue & Schedule:** The event traditionally takes place in early January at Fairthorne Manor (Curdrige, SO30 2GH), with final date and venue confirmation published on the Hampshire Athletics website each season.

South of England Cross Country Championships – 30th January 2027

- **Eligibility & Age Groups:** Open to all club members from Under 14 through to Seniors and Veterans (age 40+ for both men and women). There is no minimum entry standard required, all athletes are welcome to enter and compete against top regional talent.
- **Entry Process & Fees:** Entries are collated centrally by coaches and the club coordinator. Individual entry fees apply and must be paid by parents/athletes to the club organiser prior to the deadline.
- **Venue:** The championship traditionally takes place at Beckenham Place Park.
- **Event Details:** Official updates, timetables, and course maps are available on the [SEAA Cross Country Page](#).

National Cross-Country Championships – TBC

- **Eligibility & Age Groups:** Open to all club members from Under 14 through to Seniors and Veterans (age 40+ for both men and women)
- **Open Entry Standard:** There is no minimum entry standard required to compete. All athletes are encouraged to enter, represent BMHAC, and test themselves against runners from across the nation.
- **Entry Process & Fees:** Registrations are collated centrally by coaches and the club coordinator. Individual entry fees apply and must be paid to the club organiser/coaches prior to the entry deadline.
- **Information & Sign-Up:** Keep an eye out for club communications detailing entry deadlines and specifying who to supply names to if your athlete wishes to compete.
- **Event Details:** Official updates, venue announcements, and schedules are available on the ECCA National Cross Country Championships Page.

Inter County Cross Country Championships –TBC

- Entry is **invite** only (U14-senior) to run for the county (Hampshire)
- Selection for the team is carried out by the County Team Manager, 12 athletes are selected for each race, with 8 running on the day and 4 reserves. The first finishing 4 athletes per county score for the team.

Schools' Cross country

- **District Trials & Selection:** Hampshire schools are organized into administrative districts (such as Basingstoke, Aldershot, Andover, or Winchester). Each district typically holds trial races during November and December.
- **Hampshire Schools Championships:** Top qualifiers from district trials are selected to represent their district at the Hampshire Schools Cross Country Championships in mid-to-late January.
- **Checking School District:** Because BMHAC members attend schools right across North Hampshire and neighboring borders, please check directly with your child's school PE department to confirm which district they belong to and how their trial entries are handled.
- **Berkshire-based Athletes:** Athletes who attend schools located in Berkshire also have the opportunity to take part in the schools' cross country pathway via the Berkshire Schools Athletic Association (BSAA) and its county framework.

Schools' Age Group Classifications (Hampshire Schools AA / ESAA)

Schools' cross country competitions governed by the English Schools' Athletics Association (ESAA) and Hampshire Schools Athletics Association categorise athletes strictly by School Year, with age cutoffs calculated at the start of the academic year:

- **Junior (Under 14):** School Years 7 & 8
- **Intermediate / Inters (Under 16):** School Years 9 & 10
- **Senior (Under 19):** School Years 11, 12 & 13
- **Age Cutoff Date:** Ages are calculated as of 31st August 2026 (prior to the start of the 2026/2027 school year).

Club vs. School Categories

Because UK Athletics (club level) and ESAA (school level) align on these school-year pairings, your athletes will race in corresponding groups across both frameworks:

- **Years 7 & 8:** Compete as **Junior** for school trials/championships and **U14** for BMHAC club races.
- **Years 9 & 10:** Compete as **Intermediate** for school trials/championships and **U16** for BMHAC club races.

Contacts for Schools: [Hampshire Schools District Contacts](#) | [Hampshire Athletics](#)

Basingstoke Schools – Howell Reed, Costello

Aldershot – Kerrie Evans, Robert Mays

Eastleigh and Winchester – Rorie Whybro, Perins

Andover – Nicky Chewins, Testbourne

New Year's Eve Relays

An event organised by your club for U10 through to our senior runners, everyone (including parents) can be involved. Runners arrive for 10am and are seeded into teams, typically consisting of an U10, U14-U18, senior and veteran, by our seeding team.

Each runner runs a 2km leg and the winning team receive one of our coveted club batons.

We also try and organise a free raffle for all the runners with donations of chocolate, sweets etc gratefully received to aid this.

The event is held at the Basingstoke Memorial Park, Crossborough Hill.

Useful Links

- [**UK Athletics \(UKA\)**](#): The national governing body for athletics in the United Kingdom
- [**England Athletics**](#): Governance, athlete registration, coaching resources, and competition guidelines
- [**South of England Athletics Association \(SEAA\)**](#): Regional governing body hosting area championships and regional fixtures
- [**English Schools Athletics Association \(ESAA\)**](#): Official information for schools' athletics competitions, rules, and national pathways
- [**The Power of 10**](#): Official national athletics database for searching individual athlete race results, official rankings, and club profiles
- [**BMHAC Official Website**](#): Official club site for news, schedules, fixture information, and club policies
- [**BMHAC Club Kit Shop**](#): Official online store to order club vests and official apparel
- [**BMHAC Facebook Page**](#): Official Facebook page for live updates, event photos, and club announcements