

IN BRIEF

Richards on his top form

ATHLETICS: The Steyning 15km Road Walk (Grade One) took place in drizzle and cold winds, making the uphill trek a formidable prospect, although the rain stopped during the race.

The competitors managed the conditions cheerfully enough and it was the officials who noticed the cold most.

The winner, World Veterans Champion Ian Richards from the home club, sped away from the start and reached the High Street finish more than ten minutes clear.

Behind him, the next four remained close, and Surrey Walking Club's Shaun Lightman was two or three minutes down by halfway after a conservative start but he accelerated and finished in a good time.

The two chasing Surrey men became isolated but still pushed on well and were rewarded with improved performances.

Lifeline grab superb result

NETBALL: Lifeline A beat Chequers B 41-24 last weekend in Division One. The first quarter was edged 12-9 in Lifeline's favour, but went on to secure the win comfortably. The sporting players of the game were Verona Clark for Chequers and Amy Bare for Lifeline, while Kelly Rowland won the players' player vote. Meanwhile, HS A beat Coombe 40 - 33.

Croham beat Selsdon A 56-27 in Division Two with a squad of only eight players available.

Sian Smith and player of the match Karen Ward stood out in particular, while Croham's attacking partnership of sisters Beverley Walford (GA) and Debra De Saullles (GS) made sure the game was won.

In Division Three, Chequers D won 38-29 over CMO's B team, with Laura Hogarth awarded the player of the match, while Portas B lost 29-23 to Demonettes C.

United B won 33-31 over Wellcome in Division Four. With the scoreline levelled at 22-22, United's defence made some key interceptions sending the ball rocketing to United's Shooters, resulting in victory. Elsewhere, HS C beat Selsdon B 55-10, while in HS D lost 60-21 to Lifeline C in Division Five.

Flanagan in season's best

ATHLETICS: Striders of Croydon faced strong opposition in their penultimate Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season at Mitcham Common last Saturday. They were led by Lee Flanagan, who produced his best run of the season to place eleventh, covering the five-mile course in 31 minutes and 33 seconds.

Earlier in the day, Striders' women finished sixth in their Division Two match.

They were led by Steph Upton, who placed 80th of the 320 finishers, recording 39 minutes and 40 seconds.

Josephine Thompson was 104th (28:02) with Debra Bourne 140th (43:13), Alice Ewen 159th (44:03) and Stephanie Moss completing the A team in 183rd (45:18).

Rising star Priest gets a taste of the big time

Netballer relishes chance at four day raining camp

By Robert Warlow
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ALIMA PRIEST says going on a four-day training camp was a "real eye-opener" for her as she looks to carve out a successful netball career.

The 17-year-old Coloma Convent Girls School pupil, who plays for Surrey Storm in the National Netball Talent League, recently attended a four-day talent camp at Loughborough University, which was organised by the Youth Sport Trust.

She joined around 90 other aspiring young athletes from several sports at the camp, which aimed to inspire the youngsters and help them learn what it takes to become an elite level sports star. And the England U19 star, who was born and bred in Croydon, said it did just that for her.

"It was a real eye opener and I thought it was really good," said the teenager, who has also played for Howard and Shirley Netball Club in Croydon.

"The speakers in particular reached out to me and made me think about my future."

Summit

One of the speakers was mountaineer Bonita Norris, the youngest British woman to ever reach the summit of Mount Everest.

And Priest said her story and courage was something that really had an impression on her, adding that she was a very brave woman.

"She had no experience of climbing mountains, she just decided she wanted to climb Everest," said Priest.

"Her determination to do it was amazing and to hear her story was really inspirational."

Meanwhile, Priest said it was great to meet such people as Team GB volleyball captain Ben Pipes and former England netball captain Olivia Murphy.

The duo were two of the adult mentors at the camp, helping the young athletes on a one-to-one basis and as a group.



FUTURE STAR: Alima Priest hopes to play for England's senior netball team in the future.

And Priest said their willingness to help was encouraging for the youngsters, particularly with early morning starts for circuit training.

"Ben Pipes was coming round and doing it with us," she said.

"He was going through the paces with us and encouraging us not to give up.

"And for an Olympian to do that, he was so humble.

"He didn't just stand around, he came down to our level and pushed us to do it."

And Priest said she would not hesitate to recommend the camp to anyone else, adding that it had

also helped her in the way she wanted it to.

"I feel like I have grown in confidence in respect of having a clear idea on my future.

"I know where I want to be - in 2018 I want to be playing at the World Championships with the senior netball team and I now feel more confident that I can get there."

For now though, Priest is focused on training hard ahead of the upcoming trials for the England U19 squad for this year's European Championships.

The trials take place in Sheffield later this month.



AIMING HIGH FOR THE FUTURE: Alima Priest in action at the camp.

Harriers close in on promotion

Athletics

CROYDON Harriers' men took a great step towards 2XU Surrey League promotion thanks to a runners-up team finish at their third division race at Cranford Park last weekend.

Croydon enjoyed the first three finishers in the race, with David White notching his first ever win at Surrey League level, completing the flat five-mile course in 26 minutes and 49 seconds.

He was chased all the way by Surrey U20 team gold medallists Mark Plackett (26:50) and Peter Chambers (28:54). Meanwhile, Harvey White, 16, finished in a non-scoring seventh in 28:12 and Brendan Murphy (28:26) was also inside the top ten in ninth.

The rest of the scoring team of ten consisted of Ian Wright (27th, 29:50), Alan Burn (34th, 30:37), Simon Loughran (46th, 31:18), Colin Oxlade (62nd, 32:02), Neil Aikman (65th, 32:13) and Martin Rowe (87th, 33:03). There were a further eight Croydon non-scorers.

The result consolidates the Harriers lead on 740 points overall, more than 100 points clear of nearest challengers Dulwich (868pts) and well ahead of Full on Triathlon (1094pts), with the top two to go up in the nine team division. The final league fixture is on the February 9 at Wimbledon Common.

Furthermore, their female colleagues were in action at Mitcham in the Surrey women's league.



FAST: Harriers' men's team

Stevie Lawrence did her Surrey selection chances no harm with a third place finish in the U17 women's race.

And in the U15 ranks, Emily Howe led the way in seventh place as the team battled their way to an impressive fourth placed finish.

Talented Foreman shines for England in Antrim run

TRINITY School pupil Sophie Foreman represented England in the combined U20 and U17 McCain Cross-Country Challenge Series in Antrim last Saturday.

She finished in sixth place having completed the 3.6k course in 13 minutes and 11 seconds, only 28 seconds behind winner Becky Straw, who was the national winner for 2012.

However, Foreman came first of the U17 runners, a comfortable 26 seconds ahead of her closest competitor.

Her next race in the McBain series will be the Inter-County Championships in Birmingham in March, where she will be starting in pole position for the Surrey team.

Foreman, who is part of Tonbridge Athletics Club, was selected to represent England after her fantastic run in Liverpool in November.

She has won numerous competitions at local and regional level, including the Surrey Schools 3000m Championships, South of England 3000m Championships, London Cross-Country Championships, and the Surrey Championships at Lloyd Park earlier this month.

On the back of representing her country, Foreman said: "Competing for England was a fantastic experience. I really enjoyed the race and we were very well looked after the whole time."