

Mendip Junior Schools Country League 2004/5

Dear Colleague,

Firstly, can we thank all of you who returned our questionnaire at the end of summer term, and for the overwhelming support you have given us. You will therefore be pleased to hear that the Mendip Junior Cross Country League is being held once again this year with the same format as last year with four separate race categories and five fixtures, with only a few small changes. It was quite clear from your feedback that this is what the vast majority of you wanted. For those of you who would like some more details of the questionnaire please see the reverse of this letter or visit our web-site.

The major change to the league is the involvement of one of the areas athletics clubs in the organisation of the events. Through Mendip AC's involvement, the league will be benefiting from the UKA insurance scheme, increased event marshalling and some much needed fund-raising. While the league has already been offered a donation to help with the end of season medals (a big thank you to Claire Blackmore for arranging this), we are still hopeful a major sponsor will be found. However, in order to ensure that the league can get underway we are having to make a small increase in monies collected in league fees. The increase to £25 per school was widely supported by the questionnaire and represents the first increase in many years. We are also introducing a small charge for any additional runners who would like to run.

Please confirm your intention to participate in this year's league by filling in the enclosed Registration and Team Declaration and sending it, together with your entry fee, to arrive no later than Friday 1st October. Please destroy any old numbers that you have – **new numbers will be available for collection at Wells** so please ensure you arrive in good time. Note that **pins will not be provided**. Please also note the following:

- Numbers must be worn only by the children named on your declaration – no substitutions will be allowed.
- Children must keep the same number throughout the league. You may find it helpful to write each child's name on the front of their number and allocate a helper to collect numbers (and pins!) after each race.
- Only the first 10 children registered may score for your team. If you have any extras they may be allowed to run as non-scoring runners if numbers allow. You **must** inform the organisers beforehand. Extra numbers will be provided for these runners. A small charge of £1 per extra number will be made.
- Lost numbers – see the results manager. Please do not make your own – They are colour coded to ensure every child competes in the appropriate race.
- Race numbers must be pinned to the **front** of the children's T-shirts. They should be fixed at each corner so that they are always visible. Please note that they are **weather** and **tear-proof** so that they should last the whole season.
- School colours should be worn – spiked shoes are allowed but not essential.
- At the end of the season we will be taking part in an inter-area match against Taunton, Minehead, Sedgemoor, Langport and Yeovil. The Mendip area team will be selected from the leading year 5&6 children from within the league. There is the possibility of a year 3&4 race this year as interest has been shown in this by some of the other areas.
- Results will be posted on the league website, at www.MendipJuniorAthletics.org.uk, generally within two days of each fixture and will (hopefully) appear in the following weeks Mid Somerset Journal.
- **Because of safety concerns following the building of the Ambulance station at Wells the course has been changed. A map is included. Please ensure that your children are aware of the change and arrive in plenty of time to walk the new course before the first race.**

May we wish you and your children every success in the League, and we look forward to seeing you all on October 5th at Wells. If you have any urgent need to contact us, Ian can be reached at (01749) 682295 during the day, or on (01749) 675100 / 0798 5160526 during the evening. Alternatively please contact Denise at St Benedict's Junior School on (01458) 831811.

Yours in sport,

Ian Humphreys & Denise Hoogesteger, Mendip Junior Schools Cross Country League Organisers.

FINDINGS OF THE MENDIP JUNIOR CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE QUESTIONNAIRE

Responses were received from 16 out of the 18 schools who participated in last years league. A summary of the responses are as follows:

1. All bar one school intends to continue supporting the Mendip Junior Cross Country League this year.
2. Most rated the organisation of the races as excellent, but everyone thought they were good / excellent.
3. Similarly, two thirds rated the organisation of the league as excellent, with the remainder rating it as good.
4. Press coverage was generally rated as good.
5. Every school indicated that their children accessed the league web-site.
6. Ninety percent rated the content and presentation of the web-site as good or excellent.
7. Everyone was happy with the suitability of the lower school races, however a quarter said that the upper school races were too long. This was qualified by several responders as being too big a jump for new year 5's, though OK for year 6's.
8. Only one school wanted fewer races, everyone else wanted to retain 5 fixtures.
9. Tuesday October 5th was the preferred opening fixture date.
10. All schools, bar one, rated the choice of dates and times as good or excellent.
11. It was clear that schools liked the variety of venues, though the poorer ratings were (rather inevitably) given to the venues that were furthest away. The least popular venue was Oakhill, still rated good or excellent by two thirds of responders. From comments made this seemed to be because of parking issues.
12. Alternative venues suggested were Tor Rugby Club (Glastonbury), Wells Blue School, and Millfield Prep School (Glastonbury).
13. Only two schools were in favour of including year 7/8 races.
14. See question 13.
15. Sixty percent of respondents were prepared to pay £25 (or more) to enter the league.
16. Eighty percent of schools did not feel it was necessary to hold a meeting to discuss the future of the league. One of those in favour qualified their answer as 'only if the league was going to fold'. Another commented that there was no need for a meeting 'As long as you guys run it'.
17. The majority responded that they would not attend a meeting if one was held.
18. Only 3 schools felt there was a need to set up a committee to oversee the organisation of the league.
19. Only two schools indicated that they had a suggestion for any alterations to the league.
20. The only suggestion included concerned the length of the upper school races, re: the new year 5's.
21. No school, bar one, felt that they were able to participate in the running of the league. However, it was quite clear from comments that this was generally because of the excellent way in which the league is organised.
22. Your comments:
 - "This is run very well, we are pleased with its success. All children enjoy it."
 - "We think you are doing a very good job. The kids love it."
 - "I think parking is the main problem with some of the venues. Otherwise it is great. I think it's very poor of the District Council to stop funding."
 - "The length of the Upper School Race is too great a jump from Year 4 Race. For Year 6 race length is fine but Year 5's find it difficult..."
 - "Perhaps we could encourage a more 'sporting' attitude to be displayed by the runners."
 - "In my 5 years of teaching, the X-C League is absolutely the best sporting event I've come across. Well organised, competitive but friendly and open to all. I'm disappointed that MDC have withdrawn support & you guys have my full support to carry on!"
 - "Works perfectly as is."

Conclusions:

From the answers given to the questionnaire it is clear that any meeting held to further discuss the league would attract only a small minority of those who participate in the league. It is quite plain that you all think Denise and I do a good job of running the league and many of you have expressed your strong opinions that we should continue to run things. We think the questionnaire, polling the views of all those concerned in a way a meeting never would, gives a clear mandate for Denise and I to continue running the league as-is. We will be addressing the small number of concerns raised, for example by shortening the length of the upper school race in at least the first fixture to give the new year 5's an easier transition. We will also be looking at ways to improve the car parking at several of the venues.

While some positive moves have been made to securing a sponsor for the league, we are currently faced with the position of starting the league with no external funding. Therefore the league fees are being raised to £25 for this year. We are fortunate to have secured the support and backing of Mendip Athletics Club officials, coaches and parent members and look forward to their involvement throughout the coming season.

Mendip Junior Schools Country League 2004/5

- **First three to score from each team.**
- **Best four race positions out of 5 (individual and team) decide awards.**
- **Prizes/trophies to overall league winners.**
- **Trophies for best overall “Small School” and “Large School”.**
- **Four race categories:**
 - Lower school girls (years 3&4)
 - Lower school boys (years 3&4)
 - Upper school girls (years 5&6)
 - Upper school boys (years 5&6)
- **Fixture Dates:**
 - Tuesday 5th October 2004 - Wells Leisure Centre
 - Tuesday 2nd November 2004 - Oakhill
 - Tuesday 1st February 2005 - Collett Park, Shepton Mallet
 - Tuesday 1st March 2005 - Millfield School, Street
 - Tuesday 22nd March 2005 - Tor Leisure, Glastonbury

 - Tuesday 15th March 2005 - Montacute (Yeovil) Inter-Area Match
- **League web-site:** www.MendipJuniorAthletics.org.uk

MENDIP ATHLETICS CLUB – WINTER TRAINING

Mendip AC is rapidly becoming Somerset's leading Junior Athletic Club. Since forming 18 months ago the club has expanded to over 130 members and has around 15 UKA qualified coaches taking sessions on a regular basis.

This winter we will become the only club in the area with organised club training FIVE days a week – so there should be plenty of opportunity to get involved with a choice of activities throughout the winter, catering for children from the age of 8 upwards.

FITNESS / INDOOR TRAINING

These sessions are designed for year 7 upwards but may be suitable for some year 6 children and take place TUESDAY evenings, from 5.45pm – 7.15pm, at St Dunstons Leisure Centre. Training consists of 30 minutes of endurance based work followed by 45 minutes circuit training in the school Gymnasium. Cost for this session is £5 per month.

SPORTSHALL ATHLETICS

This year Sportshall takes place on WEDNESDAY evenings, from 4.30pm – 6.00pm, at St Dunstons Leisure Centre. Cost for this session is £2 per session. Numbers will be limited so please register early. The sessions are being run by Graham Norris. Sportshall may also be provided at other Leisure Centres – please contact them for details.

In addition to training, there will be the opportunity to compete in the new Somerset Sportshall League, which has regular Friday evening fixtures.

OUTDOOR ATHLETICS

Mendip Athletics Club have use of Millfield's Floodlit Track on THURSDAY evenings, from 5.45pm – 7.00pm. A full range of activities will be on offer throughout the winter. Training for club members costs £1 per session, £2 for non-members.

CROSS COUNTRY

This winter Mendip Athletics Club are expanding on last year's popular junior cross country sessions, with SATURDAY sessions in Wells (meet Ian Humphreys at Tor Woods, 10.30am – 11.30am) and SUNDAY sessions in Glastonbury (meet Tom Morgan at Tor Leisure, 10.30am – 11.30am). Cross Country Training costs £1 per session.

The weekend sessions will occasionally be replaced by races. Mendip AC will be running teams in the Wessex XC League, which has races for U11s and U13s. These are taking place on the following Sundays: 10 October, 14 November, 12 December, 9 January, 13 February and 13 March.

For further information on Mendip AC or Sportshall Athletics please contact Graham Norris, on (01749) 689141 or Ian Humphreys, on (01749) 675100 or visit our club web-site at www.MendipAC.org.uk.