

The early internationals - British Schools Cross-Country Internationals 1972 to 1980

The sequence of cross-country international matches, which are still held today in 'non-covid' times, was started in March of 1972, when Scottish Schools hosted a triangular Celtic countries match at Clydebank.

Although it was not badged as a 'British Schools international', it is classified as the first of the cross-country internationals in the 'Schools International Athletic Board' record produced by Mr JH Leeworthy of English Schools in the late eighties.

The senior age group fixture – eight to run and six to score for the boys and six to run with four to score for the girls – was dominated by Ireland.

English Schools competed for the first time in 1973, when the event was hosted by Welsh Schools at Newtown. The senior age group was retained but there was 'equality of opportunity' – eight to run and six to score for both boys and girls.

The senior age group was modified at Cashel, in Ireland in 1974, before changing to under 17 on the 1st of September in the year of competition when England hosted at Arrowe Park in Birkenhead in 1975, and it is still the qualification used for the Middle/Intermediate age group.

When the event returned to Wales, and Newtown, in 1977, the international was extended to include the junior/under 15 age group, and the four-race programme that we know was established. In the early days, Ireland only fielded junior teams when they hosted event but they now contest that age group every year.

Of the four international teams, the English Schools team has always been the strongest, often packing all eight runners at the head of the field and claiming the bulk of the individual awards and winning the team event - though they did suffer a surprise defeat to Ireland in the junior girls' race at Boyle in 1991!

As the 'smallest competition unit', Wales found it difficult to gain success but it did not deter our pupils from 'wanting to make the international team' and to do well. They want to test themselves against the best!

For Wales, the individual highlight of those first nine years came in 1977 when form 5/year 11 Colin Clarkson (Penyrheol CS, West Glamorgan) won the middle boys race at Newtown. Following that victory, Wales had to wait over forty years, until Dinefwr Park, Llandeilo, in 2013, for its next win in a boys' race, when another Swansea pupil, Jac Hopkins (Bishopston, Afan Nedd Tawe), was first home.

Other than Colin, no other pupil – boy or girl -representing Wales at this event managed a top three individual placing in those first nine year, though a number did figure in the top ten finishers.

In the team competitions, the middle boys placed third in 1975 and 1978 and were second in 1976 and 1977. At the first fixture in 1972, the senior girls had placed second to Ireland while the middles claimed third place in 1977 following a check of the scores having initially been placed fourth, and third again in 1978 and 1979. The best result of the junior teams came in that first year, 1977, when the girls packed six scorers from seventh to fifteenth to finish ahead of Scotland.

1981 – Welsh Schools host for a third time but not at Newtown

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For this third hosting of the international, Welsh Schools accepted the invitation from West Glamorgan county to stage the event at Singleton Park in Swansea on Saturday, April 4th. Easter weekend was very late in this year – on the weekend of April 18th/19th.

This venue was/still is arguably the best cross-country course in Wales and it had the added advantage of having Bishop Gore School next to the park, with the school's facilities being then regularly used for changing and declaration at Gwent League and other major fixtures.

Many of the pupils selected for the Welsh Schools' team had run there before and were hoping that they might be able to use local knowledge and experience in their race. Sadly, they were to be disappointed.

John Griffiths, the long serving coach and volunteer at Swansea Harriers and later treasurer of the Welsh Cross-Country Association and a Development Officer for the Athletics Association of Wales, designed the course and opted for a small area of the park, close to the school. He wanted it to be a spectator friendly course.

Sadly, no map of the actual course can be found. The distances for each race are not known but the winning times are in line with those of previous winners.

Team News

There was one late change to the Welsh Schools' middle boys team.

Sadly, Nigel Gooch (Bryn Celynnog CS, Mid Glamorgan) was injured and, sensibly, withdrew.

For Assistant team manager John Turnbull this meant that he had to bring in another pupil from his school – Bryn Celynnog – Nigel's schoolmate Mark Lawrence.

In 1977, a photograph had been taken of the whole team and the two team managers, Roy Adams and Sue Leyshon – but that was not always the practice.

In 1981, there were separate photographs taken for the boys' and girls' teams



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In the girls' photo:

Front Row (L to R) Julie Thompson, Julie Jones, Rachel Walby, Angela Griffiths, Melanie Davies

Second Row (L to R) Marianne Jenkins, Beverley Morgan, Debbie Crowley, Fiona Harwood

Third Row Jane Thomas

No names for the girls on the back row and two on the third row.

In the boys' photo:

Front Row (L to R) Mark Griffiths, Peter Bridger, Michael Powell, Martin Jones, Brian Matthew

Second Row (L to R) ?, ?, Carl Worthington, David Morgan

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Third Row (L to R) Alwyn Ormond, Nick Comerford, Alun Phillips, ?
Back row (L to R) Scott Atkins, Rodney Keeble, Mark Lawrence

Both team managers were from Gwynedd – Ron Jones (Ysgol Friars in Bangor) and Buddug Llwyd Davies (Ysgol Twyn). John Turnbull, a useful runner in his days as a pupil at Caerffili GTS but more importantly a hugely influential figure at his school and club (Beddau AAC) was the boys' assistant manager while Sheila Hayler, who had represented Glamorgan at the nationals in the 70s and competed at the 1973 BSIAB international at Newtown, held the same role for the girls' team

Sponsorship

English Schools were the first of the four nations to obtain sponsorship. Jaffa supported the event at Birkenhead in 1975.

The local authority, Monkland District Council, backed the hosting by Scotland in 1976 while TSB Bank helped English Schools when the event was held at the Gateshead Bowl in 1978. Ezzo Youth Sport were the sponsors in Ireland and Scotland in 1979 and 1980.

Welsh Schools fixtures had been held under the 'Milk in Action' banner of the National Dairy Council since 1980, and that sponsorship also covered this British Schools' cross-country international in 1981.

It is intriguing that major companies were willing to back national schools' bodies and international fixtures forty years ago but, sadly, none of them seem willing to do so now!

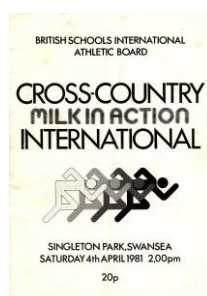
Team Kit and event badge

The one standard item of kit, which team members received, was their red vest – they provided their own shorts.

The red tracksuit could be borrowed, which sometimes resulted in size issues, or it could be bought from Seer Sports in Cardiff.

In the photograph below of the 'Barry three', Nick Comerford (on the left) is wearing a 'bought' tracksuit, with Wales down the left side and Cymru on the back, while Martin Jones and Brian Matthews both wear the borrowed version.

In addition to the international vest, pupils of all the competing teams were issued with an event programme and a special event badges, which some pupils took to sewing on the front of their tracksuit:



Accommodation

From the early days of the Welsh Schools track and field championships in 1947, the standard practice for events which moved around Wales. was for pupils to be hosted by families in the local area of the event, and this approach was usually used for international matches – although, at the British Schools cross-country international at Gateshead in 1978, the Welsh Schools team was based at a residential special school near Durham.

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It reduced the cost of staging the event, and took some pressure off team management. At that time, there were no concerns about possible safeguarding issues.

Mr Gwyn Watts of the Bishop Gore PE department was the Accommodation Officer for the event.

For the Singleton Park event, there were 6 pupils, who lived within the West Glamorgan county area. It is understood that those pupils stayed at home, rather than being hosted – a very sensible step as pupils had the comfort of sleeping in their own bed – and at least one of those 'locals' very kindly hosted a pupil from one of the other teams.

The visiting teams, and the Welsh Schools pupils from outside the Swansea area, arrived at Bishop Gore on the Friday afternoon, and were then split up, allocated to and left with their 'host family' for the evening, hoping for a quiet evening and a good night's sleep, but not always getting one. On the Saturday morning, athletes had been asked/told to report back to the school by 12 noon. Often there was an early, light lunch followed by a recovery period prior to the first race.

Weather

The weather was excellent and the going fast, the complete opposite of the National championships at Bulth Wells.

Cliff Temple, the well-known athletics journalist and coach, reported on the event for 'Athletics Weekly', and included this reference:

'the pleasant Spring conditions at Singleton Park, Swansea, contrasted sharply with the wind, rain and mud which marked most of the individual country's championships this year.'

Feedback from some of the athletes suggested that it was hot on the day!

There is no timetable or race order in the event programme but the junior races were usually held first and the middle boys' race last – with 20 to 30 minutes between race.

Race 1 – Junior Girls

From a Welsh perspective, this was the highlight of the four races.

At Coolmine in Ireland in 1980, Debbie Crowley (Glanafan CS, Port Talbot), then in form 2/year 8, had finished fifth in the junior girls' race.

This time, she was form 3/year 9 and top end of the age group.

Cliff Temple included this reference in his report:

'Wales had their deserved moment of glory at the beginning of the well-organised championships (sponsored by the National Dairy Council) when Debbie Crowley from Port Talbot won the Junior Girls race by some 80m, with a daffodil pinned to her number!'

The magazine also included a photograph of Debbie taken by John Clarkson.

The local press carried other comments:

Debbie was content to run in second place for the first half of the race, always looking comfortable and controlled, and, when she broke away on the final lap, none of the English girls, who occupied the next five places, had any answer.

Wales had to wait over twenty years for another individual winner at this fixture, until 2003 when another Swansea-based athlete, Non Stanford (St Joseph's RCHS, Port Talbot) won at Dublin. Non also won the middle race at Ayr in Scotland in 2004.

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Behind Debbie, England pupils filled the next five places. That grouping was headed by form 1/year 7 English Schools champion Sue Jordan, who finished second again at the BSIAB international in 1982 at Havant and fourth at Bray, in Ireland, in 1983.

Of the other Welsh girls, Julie Thompson, another pupil from Bryn Celynnog, finished 10th while Angela Griffiths (Holywell, Clwyd) was the third finisher, in 17th place. The team was third of the three competing teams.

Results - Junior/under 15 Girls – no distance listed

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------|-------|--|
| 1 | Debbie Crowley | Wales | 13:25 | Glanafan CS, Port Talbot |
| 2 | Susan Jordan | England | 13:38 | Cardinal Newman S, Bedfordshire |
| 3 | Helen Appleby | England | 13:39 | Winton S, Hampshire |
| 4 | Hazel Jenner | England | 13:50 | Cowplain S, Hampshire |
| 5 | Maria O'Shea | England | 14:04 | Bishop Challenor S, Hampshire |
| 6 | Elizabeth Monks | England | 14:06 | Court Moor S. Hampshire |
| 7 | Vicki Vaughan | Scotland | 14:09 | Dundee HS |
| 8 | Lorraine Docherty | Scotland | 14:11 | Notre Dame HS |
| 9 | Jo Howarth | England | 14:13 | Oriel Girls' S, Norfolk |
| 10 | Julie Thompson | Wales | 14:20 | Bryn Celynnog CS, Mid Glamorgan |
| 11 | Moira Sprang | Scotland | 14:22 | Bishopbriggs HS |
| 12 | Shona Trotter | Scotland | 14:27 | Turnbull HS |
| 13 | Frances Dunnigan | Scotland | 14:30 | St Mary's Academy |
| 14 | Janet Stewart | Scotland | 14:31 | Victoria Drive SS |
| 15 | Rachel Hughes | England | 14:33 | Calthorpe Park S, Hampshire |
| 16 | Lorraine Scobie | Scotland | 14:34 | Earlston HS |
| 17 | Angela Griffiths | Wales | 14:37 | Holywell HS, Clwyd |
| 18 | Julie Jones | Wales | 14:46 | Ferndale CS, Rhondda |
| 19 | Melanie Davies | Wales | 14:52 | Bishop Hannon RCHS, Cardiff |
| 20 | Rachel Walby | Wales | 14:58 | Bishop Hannon RCHS, Cardiff |
| 21 | Lee Lobban | Scotland | 15:04 | Inverness Royal Academy |
| 22 | Beverley Morgan | Wales | 15:38 | Dyffryn (Port Talbot) CS, West Glamorgan |
| 23 | Marianne Jenkins | Wales | 15:43 | Bryn Celynnog CS, Mid Glamorgan |
| dnf | Jacqueline Beasley | England | | Kirby School, Nottinghamshire |

| Team | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | England | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 29 |
| 2 | Scotland | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 60 |
| 3 | Wales | 1 | 10 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 85 |

Race 2 – Junior Boys

Unusually, England fielded the 1980 winner in this race in Eric Kimani from Middlesex.

He had won by 19 seconds on that occasion at Coolmine in Ireland, and was 30 seconds clear of Nick Comerford, the best placed Welsh boy in fifth place. He had also won the English Schools championships in 1980 and 1981.

Cliff Temple sums up this race:

'Eric Kimani, defending the Junior Boys title, opened up an early lead and looked set for victory, until his team-mate David Ireland caught and passed him in the final mile. Ireland opened up a 10m lead, but then Kimani responded, and his strength told on the uphill finish as he won by 10m.'

England pupils completed a clean sweep of the first eight places, to easily win the team competition. Scotland also packed well. Gavin Phillip finished ninth and all eight were home by 18th place.

Schools' cross-Country Internationals 1972 to 1980

A trio of boys from Mid Glamorgan – David Morgan, Alun Phillips and Carl Worthington – had filled the top three places at Builth but only Carl made an impact here - but even he was not the first Welsh finisher!

Nigel Saunders, who had only finished fifth in the awful conditions at Builth, had the 'run of his life' to finish eleventh with Carl a further 18 seconds and four places back.

Sadly, the other Welsh boys struggled and could only finish in the last six places.

Results – Junior/under 15 Boys – no distance listed

| | | | | |
|----|------------------|----------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Eric Kimani | England | 17:26 | Christ College, Middlesex |
| 2 | David Ireland | England | 17:28 | Kent Hill S, Greater Manchester |
| 3 | James Clarke | England | 17:41 | St Albans School, Hertfordshire |
| 4 | Paul Halsey | England | 17:46 | Manshead S, Bedfordshire |
| 5 | Paul Riley | England | 17:48 | Wilfred's S, Merseyside |
| 6 | Stephen Burton | England | 17:53 | Creighton School, Middlesex |
| 7 | Dale Laughlin | England | 18:19 | Ingate Stone S, Essex |
| 8 | Neil Smith | England | 18:22 | Whitesmore GS, West Middlesex |
| 9 | Gavin Phillip | Scotland | 18:25 | Currie HS, Edinburgh |
| 10 | Thomas Hanlon | Scotland | 18:27 | St Thomas Aquinas S |
| 11 | Nigel Saunders | Wales | 18:33 | Tregib CS, Llandeilo |
| 12 | G Mason | Scotland | 18:36 | Woodlands HS, |
| 13 | P Burns | Scotland | 18:37 | Ardrossan Academy |
| 14 | Peter Morris | Scotland | 18:42 | Trinity HS |
| 15 | Carl Worthington | Wales | 18:51 | Ferndale CS, Rhondda |
| 16 | David Boyd | Scotland | 18:53 | St Columba's HS |
| 17 | G Black | Scotland | 18:54 | Bo'ness Academy, Falkirk |
| 18 | Gordon Shearer | Scotland | 19:00 | Dumbarton Academy |
| 19 | Andrew Griffiths | Wales | 19:10 | Bishop Gore CS, Swansea |
| 20 | Alun Phillips | Wales | 19:15 | Porth County CS, Rhondda |
| 21 | David Morgan | Wales | 19:19 | Heolddu CS, Mid Glamorgan |
| 22 | Peter Bridger | Wales | 19:20 | Cowbridge CS |
| 23 | Michael Powell | Wales | 19:23 | Bishop of Llandaff HS, Cardiff |
| 24 | Ian Parry | Wales | 19:54 | Cymmer Afan CS, West Glamorgan |

Team

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1 | England | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 21 |
| 2 | Scotland | 9 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 74 |
| 3 | Wales | 11 | 15 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 108 |

Race 3 – Middle Girls – also referred to as Intermediate in England.

While England fielded its usual strong team there must have been a real sense of optimism in the Scotland camp because they included two athletes in Lynne MacDougall and Yvonne Murray, who had given indication of their potential by finishing second and fourth respectively in Ireland in 1980, and they had been included in the Scottish senior women's team at the World cross-country championships in Madrid on the previous weekend, March 28th, finishing 75th and 79th respectively and scoring for the team. In addition, Scotland included Alison Johnstone in their middle team. She had won the junior race in Ireland the previous year.

Cliff Temple reported:

The England duo of **Elise Lyons and Alison Hollington broke clear from the Intermediate Girls field almost immediately, and for much of the race ran side by side. Going into the last lap, Alison tried to break away, but Elise countered on a downhill section and pulled away for victory, thus denying Alison a clean sweep of Southern, National, English Schools and Schools International victories. In fact, near the end Scotland's Yvonne Murray (79th in Madrid) edged past Alison for second place.**

Although based in England, Elise was qualified to represent Scotland.

Schools' cross-Country Internationals 1972 to 1980

She gained selection for the English Schools team again in 1982 at Havant in Hampshire and again won this race.

From the change to the under 17 age group in 1975, girls representing Wales at this event had never managed at top ten placing. Experienced athletes like Debbie Lewis (&6 & 77) and Kathryn Williams (79 & 80) could only manage 11th place finishes. In mentioning Kathryn, it is also worth noting that she was the first Welsh pupil to compete four times at this BSIAB international – junior in 1977 and 1978, middle in the following two years.

Fiona Harwood and Jackie Thomas – both girls who had contested the junior race in previous years – tried their best but had to settle for 15th and 17th places.

In the team competition, the Scottish girls had a real go, finishing three in the top eight and closing by eighteenth, but their team score was still double that of England.

Results – Intermediate/Middle/under 17 Girls – no distance listed

| | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|----------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Elise Lyon | England | 14:51 | Pembroke S, Buckinghamshire |
| 2 | Yvonne Murray | Scotland | 15:00 | Musselburgh GS |
| 3 | Alison Hollington | England | 15:02 | Sherborne S, Dorset |
| 4 | Lynne McDougall | Scotland | 15:06 | King's Park SS |
| 5 | Michelle Walker | England | 15:23 | Queen's S, Hertfordshire |
| 6 | Susan Tierney | England | 15:25 | Windsor Girls' S, Berkshire |
| 7 | Sharon Jefferies | England | 15:26 | Bedfords Park S, Essex |
| 8 | Alison Johnstone | Scotland | 15:27 | St Saviour's HS |
| 9 | Sonia Vinall | England | 15:36 | Margaret Hardy S, Sussex |
| 10 | Tracy Long | England | 15:50 | Calthorpe Park S, Hampshire |
| 11 | Julie Arman | England | 15:51 | Astor S, Kent |
| 12 | Alison O'Neil | Ireland | 15:52 | Strathearn Belfast |
| 13 | Tina Moloney | Ireland | 16:06 | Mercy Waterford |
| 14 | Kirsty Husband | Scotland | 16:08 | James Gillespie's HS |
| 15 | Fiona Harwood | Wales | 16:09 | Bryn Celynnog CS, Mid Glamorgan |
| 16 | Sharon Morris | Scotland | 16:12 | Trinity HS |
| 17 | Jackie Thomas | Wales | 16:13 | Lampeter CS, Dyfed |
| 18 | Kirsten McKee | Scotland | 16:25 | Boclair Academy |
| 19 | Niamh Keane | Ireland | 16:29 | Taylor's Hill Galway |
| 20 | Marie Gormley | Ireland | 16:32 | Ennis Vocational School |
| 21 | Anne Ridley | Scotland | 16:36 | Kilmarnock Academy |
| 22 | Melissa Wylie | Scotland | 16:38 | Hermitage Academy |
| 23 | Mary English | Ireland | 16:42 | Chriost Ri Cahir |
| 24 | Caroline Mullen | Ireland | 16:46 | Loreto Mullingar |
| 25 | Jane Thomas | Wales | 16:51 | Llanedryn HS, Cardiff |
| 26 | Margaret Walsh | Ireland | 16:57 | Presentation Mitchelstown |
| 27 | Julie Jones | Wales | 16:59 | Pencoed CS, Mid Glamorgan |
| 28 | Nicola Charlton | Wales | 17:46 | Mold Alun HS, Clwyd |
| 29 | Michelle Phillips | Wales | 17:52 | Morrison CS, Swansea |
| 30 | Tracy Thomas | Wales | 18:28 | Brecon HS, Powys |
| 31 | Judith Kirk | Wales | 18:52 | Hawarden HS, Clwyd |
| dnf | Martina Brennan | Ireland | | Loreto Kilkenny |

| Team | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1 | England | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 31 |
| 2 | Scotland | 2 | 4 | 8 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 62 |
| 3 | Ireland | 12 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 23 | 24 | 111 |
| 4 | Wales | 15 | 17 | 25 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 141 |

Race 4 – Middle Boys – also referred to as Intermediate in England.

There was a major surprise at the front end of the field!

Schools' cross-Country Internationals 1972 to 1980

Cliff Temple reported:

In the Intermediate Boys race there was an echo of the confusion from Madrid the previous week when Adrian Passey (fifth in the ESAA championships) seemed a likely winner but mistook the number of laps round the Park and made his finishing effort too soon. Scotland's Colin Wallace closed a 20m gap on what was the last lap (although he admitted that he was confused too) and won by three seconds as Passey just held on to second place on the steep uphill finish.

In fact, Passey was very lucky to hang on to second place as he finished only 1 second ahead of another Scot – David Russell.

Although England packed seven runners in the first ten, Scotland produced arguably one of their best ever team performances to close with 56 points, better even than their girls!

For the Welsh boys, the spearhead was the Barry trio of champion Brian Matthews, Martin Jones and Nick Comerford, who had finished fifth in the junior race in Ireland in 1980. All three 'wanted to make their mark' but Brian and Martin probably went too fast, too soon. Martin paid the price and could only finish 29th while Brian was pulled back by Nick and, in a sprint up the final hill, it was Nick who claimed 17th place with Brian 18th, separated by a second. Both had ambitions of a higher finishing position.

Team manager Ron Jones commented:

Although the middles finished in last team place all the runners had the satisfaction of having been 'in the race' and showed a spirit of determination. The first home were Nicholas Comerford and Brian Mathews, who fought out a personal battle.



The photograph on the left shows the early stages of the middle boys' race with the red vests of Brian Matthews and Martin Jones up with the leading English Schools' runners.

On the right is the finishing straight battle between Nick Comerford (on the left) and Brian Matthews with Enda Fitzpatrick close behind.

Results – Intermediate/Middle/under 17 Boys – no distance listed

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Colin Wallace | Scotland | 21:21 | Port Glasgow HS |
| 2 | Adrian Passey | England | 21:24 | Leys HS, Hereford & Worcester |
| 3 | David Russell | Scotland | 21:25 | Biggar HS |
| 4 | Douglas Stones | England | 21:31 | Baysgarth S, Humberside |
| 5 | Bashir Hussain | England | 21:36 | Goyt Bank S, Greater Manchester |

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| | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----------|-------|------------------------------------|
| 6 | Anthony Leach | England | 21:37 | Thrybergh GS, South Yorkshire |
| 7 | David Miles | England | 21:43 | Royal GS, Northumberland |
| 8 | Brian Hayes | Ireland | 21:51 | Ard Scoil Ris Dublin |
| 9 | David Clarke | England | 21:54 | Great Ball S, West Midlands |
| 10 | Lindon Taylor | England | 22:06 | Soar Valley S, Leicestershire |
| 11 | David McShane | Scotland | 22:13 | Trinity HS |
| 12 | P McManus | Scotland | 22:18 | Cardinal Newman HS |
| 13 | Sean McKivergan | Ireland | 22:24 | Tralee Vocational S |
| 14 | Mark Taggart | Scotland | 22:27 | St Andrew's HS |
| 15 | Steven Marshall | Scotland | 22:32 | Dalziel HS |
| 16 | Alan Wheatley | England | 22:33 | Court Moor S, Hampshire |
| 17 | Nicholas Comerford | Wales | 22:35 | St Cadoc's RCS, Barry |
| 18 | Brian Matthews | Wales | 22:36 | Barry Boys' CS |
| 19 | Enda Fitzpatrick | Ireland | 22:37 | St. Mel's Longford |
| 20 | Richard McKirdy | Scotland | 22:45 | St Aloysius C |
| 21 | Frank Boyne | Scotland | 22:51 | Harlaw Academy |
| 22 | Mark Griffiths | Wales | 22:59 | Penyrheol CS, Swansea |
| 23 | Martin Kearney | Ireland | 23:09 | Drimnagh Castle Dublin |
| 24 | Scott Atkins | Wales | 23:11 | Radyr CS, Cardiff |
| 25 | Brian Caffrey | Ireland | 23:12 | St. Aidan's C.B.S. Dublin |
| 26 | Thomas McCarthy | Ireland | 23:17 | St. Mary's Belfast |
| 27 | Alwyn Ormond | Wales | 23:23 | Croesyceiliog CS, Cwmbran |
| 28 | Rodney Keeble | Wales | 23:49 | Chepstow CS |
| 29 | Martin Jones | Wales | 23:49 | Barry Boys' CS |
| 30 | Stephen Gharbaoui | Ireland | 24:39 | Royal Belfast Academical Institute |
| 31 | Christopher Murray | Ireland | 25:10 | Tralee C.B.S. |
| 32 | Mark Lawrence | Wales | 25:31 | Bryn Celynnog CS, Mid Glamorgan |

Team

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1 | England | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 33 |
| 2 | Scotland | 1 | 3 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 56 |
| 3 | Ireland | 8 | 13 | 19 | 23 | 25 | 26 | 114 |
| 4 | Wales | 17 | 18 | 22 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 136 |

Footnote – Adrian Passey gained revenge over Colin Wallace at the BSIAB track & field international in Ireland in the summer. In the 3000 metres, Passey won in 8:37.4 to Wallace's 8:40.6.

Footnote 2 – Mark Griffiths became the second Welsh Schools pupils – and the first boy – to compete four times at this international – 78, 79, 80 and 81.

Post Races Activities

After the races had been completed, there was a meal for the athletes at Bishop Gore, giving an opportunity for certificates to be awarded. After that some of the members of the Welsh Schools moved to the Swansea Leisure Centre.



How do you sum up the 1981 BSIAB from a Welsh perspective?

Socially, it was a great success.

Competitively, apart from Debbie's win in the junior girls' race, there was not much to cheer. All four teams finished last in their section.

Julie Thompson was the only other pupil to claim a top ten place.

Nigel Saunders was the highest placed boy – 11th in the juniors.

Not good, but our pool of talent is not huge and sometimes you need to look on these internationals as part of a longer-term development process.

Of the pupils representing Welsh Schools at this event:

- Brian Matthews and Alwyn Ormond (plus the injured Nigel Gooch, who should have competed here) represented Wales in the junior men's race at the World cross-country championships in 1983.
- Alun Phillips and Carl Worthington represented Wales at the junior men's World cross-country championships in 1985.
- Fiona Harwood represented Wales twice at the World cross-country championships
- For Nicky Comerford, this was his third BSIAB cross-country international. He contested his fourth at Havant in 1982, where he finished 10th and led the middle team to third place. He also competed in two BSIAB track & field internationals plus three senior age group Inter Association matches. As a senior athlete, he went on to gain GB honours and won the Welsh senior men's cross-country title.

A new endurance structure has been put in place in recent years.

Sadly, the coronavirus has brought nearly everything to a standstill for much of the last year.

We will get through the current situation and then we will have an opportunity to see what benefits that new endurance structure brings for our talented, young endurance athletes.