

Bracey stars as Sussex Alliance take NCL title

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The Sussex Alliance Boys team of Marcus Bracey, William Goodstone and George Hazell carried all before them in National Cadet League (South)

Marcus Bracey went through the season unbeaten to help the Sussex Alliance Boys team complete victory as the NCL (S) season came to a close at Cippenham.

Bracey and his team-mates George Hazell and William Goodstone steamrollered all opposition on the day, although they got involved in plenty of tough individual battles along the way, showing an impressive ability to give ground and rally from deep.

A total of 88 players took part in the final round of matches, with all 24 teams which started the season still going strong at the end.

Below Sussex Alliance, there was a fierce battle for places two, three and four between Oxford A, Wembley & Harrow and Crusaders. Oxford's 5-1 win over newly promoted Chiltern A gave them a narrow lead, but they failed to capitalise on their chances, going down 4-2 to Wembley & Harrow's Siddant Rawal and Zaiim Premji, and then 6-0 to Sussex Alliance. Even then, they could have finished second by beating Crusaders in their final match but, although Oscar Williamson was having an indifferent day for Crusaders, team-mates Yasith Senanayake and Alex Lane swept to a resounding 5-1 victory. This was enough to smash and grab second place, as Wembley & Harrow went down 5-1 to Sussex.



The Crusaders' trio of Yasith Senanayake, Oscar Williamson and Alex Lane took the silver medal position



Wembley & Harrow's Zaiim Premji and Siddant Rawal with their bronze medals

In fifth place were Cippenham, for whom Ben Naylor-Smith excelled (he had, on an earlier occasion, deprived George Hazell of his 100 per cent record), and Megan Ashfield competed extremely well against the boys. Sixth were Chiltern, featuring talented newcomer, 10-year-old Shae Thakker.

The Division Two title went to Hillingdon A (Manraj Soor, Ryan Taylor and Rahul Kumar) by one point over Kingfisher A, represented by Kieran Warre, Alex Squire and Bertie Coombes.

Division Three was equally close, with Warren Spring A (Lukas Wait, Charlie Shepherd and Jaimin Shah) just failing at the death to match the winners, Chiltern B (Peter Illing, Laurence Pennant-Jones and Ani Krishna).

Meanwhile, Kingfisher B (Jamie Lomax, Felix Thomis, Johnny Coombes and Zak Squire) prevailed over Chiltern D (Cameron Conroy, Adam Perkins and Jonny Carr) at the top of Division Four.

An admirable aspect of the whole season was the good spirit of the players, with lots of camaraderie in evidence. Girls competing against boys on an equal footing was a fine feature, and Sussex Alliance Girls progressed to Division Two, where Joelle Bennett, Amelia Long, Lisbette Dubois and Alice Hazell were able to keep their heads above water.



Cippenham's Ben Naylor-Smith and Megan Ashfield held their own against the best in Division One



A youthful Oxford contingent (average age 12).

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