**Hampshire Cross Country Championships 2019 – Saturday 5 Jan 2019.**

Hi all, just a quick update with regards to my racing and training over the Xmas leave period. Before Christmas I clinched two Park Run records. The first being Woking park Run in a time of 18:40 on Saturday 15 Dec 18 (Was very cold!). Then on Xmas Day I ran 17:16 at Conkers Park Run (Leicestershire). I knocked off 31 secs off my previous best (Dec 17) and it was my fastest Park Run ever.

Obviously, I took great confidence from both these runs and despite a few days feeling off due to a stomach bug I had to mentally prepare ready to perform at the Country Champs. This race is a qualifier for the Inter-County XC Champs and GB trails in March. Hampshire is one of the most competitive counties for running due to the amount of prestigious running clubs it holds but I know I am in great shape and can handle the XC terrain well. There is always that anticipation after Xmas not knowing where you are at but I just had to tell myself everyone is in the same situation. I am glad I walked the course because at first glance of the course map it looked the same as last year but it was not! They had added a technical twisty part in the woods and there were a few logs across the tracks which I knew would make some interesting running.

So we got started at 1305, with two small (arena loop) laps which was great as I could see my male club mates everywhere, that support was just what I needed to ease into it. Each small lap was about 1km and by the second small lap the three of us (Louise, Me and the Southampton girl) were moving away. I knew in my head the medals were going to go to us but it what order I didn’t know (I wasn’t going to settle for anything less than silver). Starting the third lap (long loop), there was a gradual hill into the technical part and twisty section. The good thing about racing your training partner (Louise) is, you know exactly what they like and wont they don’t. I know I am strong uphill and on turns, and Louise is a little more cautious when it comes to that. Aware that Laura Brenton (Soton) was not too far behind I moved to the front to get the race going. The race was 8Km long and I didn’t want to shorten it to the delight of others that prefer a much shorter course! I figured if I made some distance up in the woods the Soton girl wouldn’t try to come back. As me and Louise left the woods we entered the open golf course. I moved behind into second as I wanted to use Louise’s strength on the open ground to pull me along. We entered the third and final lap (medium loop) and Louise was beginning to pull away. Even though I had a comfortable cushion between me and third, I kept at the pace as I wanted to ensure the gap between me and first was as small as possible. I finished the 8Km course in 30:25, just 37 seconds behind my Aldershot team mate and GB international Louise and over 30 seconds ahead of bronze. The performance by the Aldershot team earnt us a silver team medal too with both me and Louise selected to run for Hampshire at the trials in March - A positive performance to start 2019.