

SCOTTISH WEST DISTRICT RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Kirkintilloch

TOMMY MURRAY, one of Scotland's most experienced runners, put Inverclyde into a winning lead with a lap time bettered only by fellow hill-running international Bobby Quinn in very testing conditions, Denis Shepherd reports.

Two days earlier the ground had looked like being fast as local organiser Gordon McLean had reported it was too hard to take any stakes or flags. Whether McLean's threat to do a rain-dance was carried out is uncertain, but whatever he did had the required effect: a two-day deluge resulted in bottomless going over an already stiff and hilly course, Quinn finishing with a thick layer of mud from his calves up to the back of his head.

It was marathon champion Jamie Law whose endurance carried him home six seconds ahead of Kirkintilloch's Stewart Kerr with the third fastest leg of the race on the opening leg. With Law having no team-mates, the host club found themselves in the lead but veteran Murray, whose slight frame has often excelled in such going, pulled Inverclyde up from sixth into an 18-second lead over Shettleston, whose Martin Graham had improved the same number of places. Junior Ian MacCorquodale had also improved four places with the fourth fastest leg of the day. Tom Tipping then held the lead as Kirkintilloch moved briefly back into second before being re-passed by Ronhill Cambuslang, while Quinn gained Kilbarchan four places places into fourth. Steve Conaghan was then able to coast home with a 23-second lead to regain the title lost by Inverclyde to Shettleston in 2001.

"I thoroughly enjoyed that - cross-country is my first love," said the barely recognisable Quinn, whose time was five seconds faster than Murray's. The latter's performance was of special significance: "I was diagnosed in August with a low white-cell blood count and ordered to rest - which I did for over two weeks, for the first time in my career," explained Murray. "Now I'm feeling in top form and looking forward to defending my veteran international cross-country title next month."

The women's three-stage event was a tussle between Shettleston and Kilbarchan, whose Jill Shannon had set a 36-second lead at the start with the second fastest time of the day. Dennise Smith then extended the lead to 60 seconds as Elaine McBrinn went off-course at an unmarshalled gate, but Lindsay MacNeill turned the Shettleston deficit into a 34-second victory on the anchor leg as world junior cross-country runner Collette Fagan produced the fastest leg of all, bringing City of Glasgow within 30 seconds of the

runners-up.

Men (4x4km)

1 Inverclyde 52:08 (M Pollard 13:06, T Murray 12:37, T Tipping 13:03, S Conaghan 13:22); 2 Ronhill Cambuslang 52:31 (J Brown 12:59, D Rodger 13:08, C Thomson 13:09, S Wyllie 13:15); 3 Kirkintilloch 52:54 (S Kerr 12:52, C Stewart 13:13, D Gardiner 12:56, J McLoone 13:53); 4 Shettleston 53:07 (A Callan 13:08, M Graham 12:53, J Lennox 13:54, G Wright 13:12); 5 Ronhill Cambuslang B 53:31 (J Pal 13:18, I MacCorquodale 12:50, J Kealy 13:41, J Cowan 13:42); 6 Kilbarchan 53:51 (J Snodgrass 13:27, T Hearle 13:24, R Quinn 12:32, T Anderson 14:28); 7 Victoria Park 54:15 (A Young 13:35, K McCoy 13:20, A Mace 14:04, K Forster 13:16); 8 Irvine 54:32 (L Richardson 13:16, W Richardson 13:04, G Irving 14:16, D Millar 13:56); 9 Johnnie Walker Kilmarnock 55:17 (A Ballantine 12:59, E Tonner 13:27, P MacArthur 14:40, J Tonner 14:11); 10 Shettleston B 55:49 (L Duff 13:49, A Little 13:10, D Macaulay 13:43, R Soutar 15:07); 11 Calderglen 57:18; 12 Ronhill Cambuslang C 57:33; 13 Inverclyde B 57:34; 14 Giffnock North 57:49; 15 Victoria Park B 57:58; 16 Irvine B 59:00; 17 Ronhill Cambuslang D 59:43; 18 Strathclyde University 60:01; 19 Ayr Seaforth 60:23; 20 Johnnie Walker Kilmarnock B 60:24

Fastest: 1 Quinn 12:32; 2 Murray 12:37;

3 J Reid (Law) 12:40; 4 MacCorquodale 12:50; 5 Kerr 12:52; 6 Graham 12:53; 7

Gardiner 12:56; 8 Brown 12:59; 9

Ballantine 12:59; 10 Tipping 13:03

U13/U15/U17 (3x2.5km)

1 Kilbarchan 28:40 (S McGoldrick 10:20, N Moore 9:15, C Morrison 9:05); 2 Shettleston 29:15 (C McGarrity 9:52, G Haining 9:54, J Findlay 9:29); 3 Ronhill Cambuslang 29:33 (A Black 10:17, C Semple 10:21, S Dunn 8:55); 4 Kilbarchan B 29:43; 5 Kilbarchan C 30:07; 6 Giffnock North 30:29; 7 Clydesdale 30:48; 8

Kirkintilloch 30:58; 9 Giffnock North B 31:09; 10 East Kilbride 31:12

Fastest

U13: 1 McGarrity 9:52; 2 D Fitzsimmons (Giff N) 10:13; 3 Black 10:17

U15: 1 Moore 9:15; 2 F Williams (Kilb B) 9:23; 3 R Allison (C'dale) 9:36

U17: 1 Dunn 8:55; 2 A McCall (G'nock) 9:01; 3 Morrison 9:05

Women (3x4km)

1 Shettleston 47:20 (F Florence 15:36, E McBrinn 15:39, L MacNeill 16:05); 2 Kilbarchan 47:54 (J Shannon 15:00, D Smith 15:15, H Gordon 13:39); 3 City of Glasgow 48:21 (K Baird 17:09, S Finch 16:22, C Fagan 14:50); 4 Johnnie Walker Kilmarnock 53:23 (E Munro 16:55, S Stelong 18:29, K Todd 20:18); 5 Kilbarchan B 53:47 (C Gibson 16:39, J Moore 16:50, K O'Brien 20:18); 6 Strathclyde University 54:14 (M McGill 19:58, H Stuart 17:12, C Prentice 17:04); 7 Irvine 54:29; 8

Garscube 55:15; 9 Westerlands 55:58; 10 City of Glasgow B 58:23

Fastest: 1 Fagan 14:50; 2 Shannon 15:00,

3 Smith 15:15; 4 Florence 15:36; 5

McBrinn 15:39; 6 Finch 16:22

U13/U15/U17 (3x2.5km)

1 Kilbarchan 31:57 (E Menzies 10:22, S Barres 10:56, C Sloss 10:38); 2 Giffnock North 32:59 (L Taylor 10:19, S Phoe 11:17, J Dobson 10:54); 3 City of Glasgow 33:05 (R Finch 10:59, T Smith 11:45, L MacPherson 10:21); 4 City of Glasgow B 33:23; 5 City of Glasgow C 35:15; 6

Kirkintilloch 35:50; 7 Kilbarchan B 37:05; 8

Clydesdale 37:20; 9 Law 39:10; 10

Kirkintilloch B 39:46

Fastest

U13: 1 Menzies 10:22; 2 Taylor 10:42; 3

Finch 10:59

U15: 1 Barres 10:56; 2 L Leadbetter (Glas) 11:03; 3 D Miller (G'nock) 11:13

U17: 1 MacPherson 10:21; 2 Sloss 10:38;

3 J Ennis (C'dale) 10:47