



Chelmsford Men's Team Win "Qualifier" and enter The British League!



Standing (left to right):

Ken Hoye	Grant Twist	Paul Owen	Chris Youell	Mark Woodley	James Allway	James Murrell	Alex Reynolds	Scott Flindall
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Kneeling (left to right):

Luke Keteleers	Kevin Wilson	Bradley Reed	Darren Blackwell	Stephen Woodford	Alex Cooke	Markus Hunt	Alex O'Brien
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Each year, in September, the British Athletics League (BAL) hold a Qualification Match to decide which new teams can enter the British League to replace those who have been relegated.

This year the Qualification Match was held in Derby, and Chelmsford took along a strong and experienced Men's Team. A top two finish in the meeting would give Chelmsford a place in the 2015 British League.

Seven clubs were originally entered but three, unable to field athletes of the required standard, withdrew prior to the match leaving Chelmsford to do battle with the remaining three who were undoubtedly the strongest and most dedicated teams. Namely: Brighton & Hove (2014 SAL Division 1 Champions); City of Portsmouth (SAL Division 1); and Victoria Park & Tower Hamlets (BAL, re-applying 2014).

From the start all clubs were having their ups and downs, keeping the overall points tally close, and by half way in the match only eight points separated the four teams. However, Chelmsford still had a few aces to play on the track in the latter part of the programme. As the results from these events came in Chelmsford edged out a seven point lead. But nobody was really sure of

how many events had actually been counted in the intermediate score. Going into the final events, the relays, strong rumours were beginning to circulate that Chelmsford were holding a three point lead in the match. It was absolutely nail biting! If the rumours were correct the Team had to be safe with the baton in the relays; but try telling four competitive athletes to “play it safe”! Advice inevitably fell on deaf ears and the 4x100 squad blasted around (stopping the team manager’s heart at every change-over) in 44.35 seconds to take a solid second place. This was followed by Chelmsford’s “unbeatable” 4x400 squad taking yet another win this season, with a time of 3 minutes 24.32 seconds, and securing Chelmsford as overall match winners.

Final Result was:	Chelmsford AC	273 points
	City of Portsmouth	266 points
	Victoria Park & Tower Hamlets	259 points
	Brighton & Hove AC	237 points

The Chelmsford Team were:

James Allway (U17)	Pole Vault
Darren Blackwell (U20)	800m (PB) and 4x400
Alex Cooke	100m (PB), 200m (PB) and 4x100
Scott Flindall	Javelin and Shot
Ken Hoye	3k Steeplechase
Markus Hunt	200m, 400m Long Jump (PB), 4x100 and 4x400
Luke Keteleers	100m, 110H, 400H, Discus and Long Jump
James Murrell (U17)	High Jump
Alex O’Brien (U20)	Javelin and Triple Jump
Paul Owen	Pole Vault, 400m, 4x100 and 4x400
Bradley Reed	110mH, 400mH (PB) and 4x100
Alex Reynolds (U17)	Hammer (PB) and Triple Jump
Grant Twist	5000m
Kevin Wilson	Discus, Shot and High Jump
Stephen Woodford	3k Steeplechase (PB) and 5000m
Mark Woodley	800m, 1500m and 4x400
Chris Youell	1500m

Every athlete put in a tremendous effort and overall victory was attributed to gaining valuable points in all events. Against such strong opposition individual wins were naturally difficult. However, Chelmsford did manage quite a few, with:

- Bradley Reed in the 400m hurdles;
- Mark Woodley and Darren Blackwell taking a very impressive double (A & B string) win in the 800m;
- Alex Cooke winning both A string 100m and A string 200m, in PB times;

- Markus Hunt in the A string 400m;
- Mark Woodley and Chris Youell combining forces to run a very ingenious tactical race in the 1500m and take another double win;
- Alex Reynolds, in the A string hammer with a new PB (as an under 17 throwing the senior weight hammer, this win could be regarded as performance of the match); and
- Kevin Wilson in the B string high jump. It must be noted again that another U17, James Murrell, was competing in the A string of this event.
- Similarly, James Allway was competing as an U17 in the A string pole vault.

Such was the standard and team spirit with all the athletes it was extremely difficult to select **Man of the Match**. The decision, however, went to **Mark Woodley** for his win in the 800m; tactically smart racing to help the team record maximum points when winning the 1500m; and his contribution to the 4x400m relay win.

As a result of this match victory, Chelmsford will now compete in four Men's British League fixtures in 2015. That being in addition to the current five combined Men's and Women's Southern League fixtures.