

Saturday's BAL match at the Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre (CSAC) saw both the club's heritage and future on display, as a number of the stars from the 'glory years' of the 1950's and 60's returned to Melbourne Park to cast their eye over the Chelmsford Men's team (and stadium) of 2015 – and they were duly impressed – not just by the talent on the track, but by the professionalism of the event, and the team spirit in evidence amongst both the athletes and the support team. As the sun shone on a glorious day, the CSAC staff worked in seamless partnership with the Club members and the visiting officials to put on a high quality athletics match which one senior member, with many years' service, described as the best he had ever seen in Chelmsford.

As the action started, it wasn't long before some of Chelmsford's up and coming talents were making their mark in Senior competition. Four of the club's U17's were included in Chelmsford's line-up – a higher number of Juniors than featured in any of the visiting teams from Newquay, Portsmouth, Reading and Havering – and within the first hour three of them had recorded PB's, and two of them had won their events! 16 year old Alex Reynolds was immediately into action in the Hammer – launching a new best of 49.25m with the Senior Men's weight, and taking maximum points as he underlined why he is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the UK in his age group.

15 year old High Jumper Thomas Hewes was next to take centre stage, as he saw off the Seniors in his event with a new outdoor PB of 2.0m. His attempts at going on to clear 2.05m – a height which would have seen him leap to an equal No.1 ranking in the UK – had the watching crowd on the edge of their seats as he came agonisingly close to an overall PB, and won him the Chelmsford Man-of-the-Match award.

Meanwhile, 16 year old Triple Jumper Fluke Ladphanna was leaping into the UK top 10 in the Long Jump, with a PB of 6.56m which saw him take third place in the event!

Kevin Wilson launched a new PB of 39.57m as he won the Discus, before going on to grabbing more valuable points in coming second in the Shot.

On the track, Bradley Reed was showing why he was selected for Essex at the previous weekend's AAA Championships, as he won the 110m Hurdles, before recording a PB of 55.42sec in coming home second in a high quality 400m Hurdles field – with Rhys Collings grabbing maximum points in the 400mH B race.

Darren Blackwell – ran sub 2 minutes to secure third place in the 800m, before Senior athlete Chris Youell produced a storming finish to win the B race.

Alex Cooke ran an 11 sec 100m, just missing out on victory by 0.04 of a second, before Markus Hunt secured second place in a similarly close finish to an exceptional 400m.

Will Wright, personally demonstrating the team spirit at the club, responded to a very late call-up to run the 3000m, and grab second place, with team mate Ryan Prout recording maximum points in the B race.

The track events concluded as always with the excitement of the Relays. The 4x100m team were narrowly edged into second place, before the 4x400m team of Chris Youell (51.40), Mark Woodley (50.50), Paul Owen (51.10) and Markus Hunt (48.50) roared home to victory in the final event of the day, setting a team PB in the process, to bring the house down!

In the final analysis, after a post-match correction to the scoring, Havering AC won the match by the narrowest of margins – just one point – and we completed our first BAL season in third place in Division 4 – a placing which could yet see us promoted to Division 3 once the League have

completed a review of an arising situation in Division 2. Whatever the outcome, team manager Miv Owen and the team have acquitted themselves with enormous credit, and firmly established the club as serious contenders in the BAL.

A set of photos from the day can be found in the Photo Galleries section of this web site.