

The Chelmsford AC Senior Team made the trip to Basingstoke on Saturday, for the final match in the Southern Athletics League season, where they competed against the hosts, Colchester Harriers, and Brighton & Hove.

As usual, there were some fine performances from both the Men's and Women's teams, but there were two clear highlights on the day, as two of the team broke records very early on. First to take the plaudits was Bradley Reed, breaking a Club Record set in 1979 in the 400mH, with a time of 54.89secs! And Bradley had barely left the track when Chelmsford's Portuguese international Joceline Monteiro stepped up to set a new Southern Athletics League record of 2:08.17 in the 800m – breaking her own record, set only last year!

Bradley went on to record a PB and National Selection time of 14.8 in the 110mH, came second in the 100m B race, AND was part of the 4x100m team that won the Men's sprint relay, so it was little wonder that he was selected as Chelmsford's Man of the Match!

After setting her new record in the 800m, Joceline also strode to a classy victory in the 400m – AND ran a superb anchor leg in the Women's 4x400m relay win, so again there could be little dispute as to Chelmsford's Women of the Match!

On another day, Chris Youell could have laid justifiable claim on the match awards, as he won the 400m in impressive style, came home second in the 800m, and registered a PB in the Javelin, before running a sensational leg in the 4x400m, moving the team up from third place to the lead, and setting up yet another relay victory.

Another member of the team who ran his heart out for the team was Steve Woodford. Steve came first in the 800m B race; second in the 1500m B event, and second in the 5000m B race, before also contributing to the winning 4x400m team, to rack up a significant contribution to the team's points score.

Thomas Hewes again belied his 15 years in equalling the 2.0m outdoor High Jump PB that he set only last weekend, before grabbing an excellent second place in the Long Jump too.

At the other end of the age scale, V45 athlete Tony Roberts rounded off his first season for Chelmsford AC in great style by setting new PB's in the 800m and 2000m SC.

In the Men's relays, Chelmsford scored a double. After the 4x100m team roared to a superb victory, the 4x400m team (Rhys Collings 54.70, Steve Woodford 53.20, Chris Youell 50.40, and Darren Blackwell 50.30) made it a victorious end to the day.

The Women's 4x400m team (Caroline Hill 61.90, Jade Harding 64.50, Erin Minton-Branfoot 59.70, and Joceline Monteiro 57.40) matched their male counterparts by also winning their final event of the day.

Earlier in the match, Sophie Johnstone won the 1500m, and Chay Clark secured maximum points in the 100mH (as well as coming second in the 400mH).

Hayley Pegg had a great day, registering season bests in the 800m, 2000m SC AND 3000m – while Rachael Stark recorded a PB in the Triple Jump.

Overall, a relatively small team of 11 Senior Women showed superb commitment in covering virtually all of their events, with many literally going the extra mile! In addition to those mentioned already, the following athletes pushed themselves to the limits on behalf of the team - many achieving PB's and SB's:

- Caroline Hill: Pole Vault, 400m, 200m, Discus and both relays
- Jade Harding: 400mH, High Jump, Long Jump, Javelin and 4x400m
- Chay Clark: 400mH, 100mH, High Jump, Javelin and 4x100m
- Erin Minton-Branfoot: 100m, 200m, and both relays
- Rachael Stark: 100m, Long Jump, Triple Jump and 4x100m
- Shirley Quinn: Hammer, Shot and Discus
- Rebecca Healy: Hammer, Shot and Triple Jump
- Sophie Johnstone: 1500m and Steeplechase

Tracey Minton (V50) filled in the 3K for Rebecca Rowley, who was stuck in traffic - and when Rebecca arrived after a 3hr 15mins journey, she filled an unexpected gap in the B string 1500m.

As has so often been the case this season, the final outcome of the match saw Chelmsford pipped by a very narrow margin (just 3.5 points this time, behind a host team battling hard to avoid relegation), but a provisional third place finish in Division 1 of the SAL is an excellent return from a season which has seen some outstanding performances from across the team, and with several young athletes coming through the ranks, the prospects for next year look extremely promising.