



## British Athletics League Division 3 Match 2 – Chelmsford – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Chelmsford AC played hosts in the second match of their first season in Division 3 of the British Athletics League on Saturday. With very strong teams fielded by Southend AC, Havering AC, Nene Valley Harriers, Bournemouth AC, Yeovil AC, Newquay & Par AC and Trafford AC, it was an afternoon of athletics that represented the highest quality seen at Melbourne Park for many decades.

With a number of their own star men unavailable, Chelmsford fielded by far the youngest team, with 11 of their line-up of 24 aged under 20 – and it was hence no surprise that they found the going tough – but it was to their huge credit that they challenged well for top spot on the day, before being edged into a sixth place finish in the final analysis. It was a result that in many ways did not reflect the extent of their efforts however, which included a host of Personal Bests and Season's Bests.

A demonstration of the quality of competition was seen early on in the 100m, where every runner finished in a time of under 11 seconds! Chelmsford's Alex Cooke, despite finishing further down the field than usual was still delighted with his PB of 10.85s. U20 Harry Sloman stepped in a short notice to run in a B race that was of similar quality, and also crossed the line with an excellent PB.

It was a similar story in the 200m, where Alex also recorded a PB – as did Bradley Reed, who deputized in the B race. Bradley then returned to his usual hurdles events, where he registered Season's Bests in both the 400mH (where he finished second), and the 110mH (third). U20 Rhys Collings took maximum points in the B string 400mH.

Paul Owen and Darren Blackwell found the competition equally challenging in the 800m, where 14 of the runners recorded times of under 2 minutes – and both pushed themselves hard, to their own Season's Best (SB) times – and more valuable points for the team.

Elsewhere on the track, the rapidly improving Owen Thomas (U20) recorded a PB in the Steeplechase – a race in which seasoned campaigner Ken Hoyer crossed the line with his fastest time since 2001! Another U20 – Callum Charleston registered a SB in securing fifth place in a highly competitive 1500m, in which Steve Woodford also ran an SB.

The team's greatest successes of the day were in the vertical jumps, where they took maximum points. U17 Thomas Hewes fought off an experienced field to win the High Jump, with Serg Zotin taking first place in the B event. U20 James Allway then put in one of the performances of the day, equaling his 4.20m PB in winning the Pole Vault – with Mike Bartlett also clearing 4m, to win the B string.

Alex O'Brien also came home with a PB, in the Javelin.

Paul Owen was awarded Chelmsford's man of the match, having been close to a PB in the 800m, standing in for a tough 400m, and then running the anchor leg in the 4x400m relay. Harry Sloman was also in contention for the award, with good performances in the 400m, the 4x400m and also standing in for missing athletes in the 100m and 4x100m.



Despite what was ultimately a disappointing result on the day, Chelmsford still sit in third place in the Division 3 table. With key men set to return for the next match at Bournemouth, the team remain confident that a promotion place could still be theirs come the end of the season!