



Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R4 – Chelmsford - 9th July 2016

The Chelmsford AC Senior Men and Women's team were celebrating on Saturday evening, as victory in their fourth match of the season saw them confirmed as Southern Athletics League Champions, for the first time in the club's history!

Competing at home, against Belgrave Harriers, Harrow AC (who started the day in second place in the league) and Basingstoke & Mid Hants AC, the team seized the initiative from the start, and ended the day with victory by the huge margin of 32 points!

What was particularly pleasing about Saturday's result was that the team's points were equally shared between the Men's and Women's athletes – and also that, as has been the case for the whole season, it was achieved with a very high proportion of the team being made up by U17 and U20 athletes. Winning the title is a testament to both the breadth and depth of talent in the club – and hence also to the hard work put in by coaches and all other members of the support team.

On Saturday, the Women's team were also boosted by a return to club action by two athletes who have competed in their national teams – Louise Wood, and Nicole McKechnie. Louise celebrated her return to the 'Green and Gold' of Chelmsford by breaking a club record, leaping to 5.75m to win the Long Jump! She also managed to win the 100m and High Jump – AND anchored the 4x100m relay team to a superb victory! It was quite a return!

Nicole, meanwhile, showed her class by easing to victory in the 400m, before helping the 4x400m relay team score maximum points too.

Louise and Nicole were backed up superbly by the rest of the Women's team: In the High Jump, U17 Hannah Badger won the B string, to ensure maximum points, whilst in the Long Jump, Louise teamed up with Jade Harding for another A and B string double. On the track, Caroline Hill matched Nicole's achievement by winning the B string 400m, while Emma Perks and Rebecca Wade scored another double - in the 800m.

U17 Beatriz Melo convincingly won the B string 200m (as well as running a superb leg in the 4x400m), while U20 Lydia Callan ran an excellent race to win the 1500m, supporting Rebecca Luxton.

Veteran Wendy King, who just came along to spectate, after training in the morning, found herself drafted into the team at short notice, and joined Hayley Pegg to score valuable points in the 5000m!

An excellent double second place came from two more U17 athletes – Jess Whiley and Hannah Badger - in the Javelin. Jess also competed very well in both the 100m and 400m hurdle races.

Caroline Hill and Amy Hoyer showed extreme dedication to the cause by both competing in the Pole Vault for the first time – and both came second (A and B string)!

V60 Shirley Quinn turned out, despite illness, to record vital points in the Hammer – and fellow Thrower Rebecca Healey took the Chelmsford Women of the Match award for rolling up her sleeves and competing in the Hammer, Shot, Discus AND Triple Jump!



For the Men's team competing for the first time in the Seniors, U17 Nyakey Duwai won both the 100m and 200m B strings, whilst team regular team member and fellow U17 athlete Nathaniel Sherger ran strongly in the A race. Another U17, Tom Keevil ran very intelligently against older opposition and took a second in the 1500m - and yet two more U17's, Tom Hewes and Robert Runciman teamed up to compete well in the Long and High Jumps. Harry Sloman, now an U20, won the 400m whilst competing alongside U17 Andrew Hill, who also ran a great race to take second place in the B string. Later in the day Harry went on to run an incredible 49.19 second split in the 4x400m. In comparison to the U17's, Chelmsford also have Geoff Tyler at the other end of the age scale. Now in his mid-sixties, and still competing, Geoff won the discus!

Steve Woodford made a valuable contribution to team points by finishing second in the 1500m A race with a seasons best, then continued around to track to immediately start the 3k Steeplechase B string! The A string Steeplechaser on the day was track coach Ken Hoye, who found himself at the front on the first lap and stayed there to show the opposition the way home!

It was Luke Keteleers though who took the Man of the Match award. Luke is capable of tackling almost any event and this time he took valuable second places in the Shot, 110m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles and also threw the Hammer. If that wasn't enough, he then ran a solid third leg in the 4x100m relay, in which Bradley Reed started, with Nyakey responsible for the important back straight changes. Nathaniel Sherger held off the other teams down the home straight for a fantastic sprint win.

Chelmsford's fourth successive win of the season made the Southern League title a virtual certainty, but once the results from other matches filtered through, the accolade of Champions was confirmed – with a match to spare!