



Report on Southern Athletics League Match 2 – Chelmsford – 22nd May 2016

Chelmsford Athletic Club's combined Senior Men and Women's team claimed yet another impressive victory in the Southern Athletics League (SAL) last Sunday. This time, in a home fixture, Chelmsford faced opposition from Crawley, Colchester and Norwich.

After the early events Crawley and Chelmsford had already begun to pull away, and it soon became obvious that the final outcome would be decided between these two teams. The lead changed hands several times as the meeting progressed, with sometimes only one or two points separating the two leaders. However, in a nail biting finish, it was Chelmsford's strength in depth that enabled them to ease away as the final events were completed.

The final points tally was: Chelmsford 218, Crawley 205, Colchester 176 and Norwich on 122.

This was a particularly satisfying result as the Chelmsford team had many key athletes unavailable. Fortunately, the team were able to call upon a number of their emerging Under 17 and Under 20 talents who, having been given the opportunity to compete at Senior level, soon showed that they could more than hold their own with the higher standard in the older age group.

Individual winners in the Men's Team were: Alex Cooke in the 100m and 200m (who also ran a storming leg to anchor the 4x100m relay), Paul Owen (400m B string with Harry Sloman third in the A string), and Callum Charleston and Nathan Brearley taking maximum points in the 1500m. Rhys Collings won the 400m Hurdles, while Lee Pickering won the 3000m Steeplechase B string, and junior athlete Owen Thomas excelled with second place in a personal best time in the A string event). Under 17 Tom Hewes won the A string High Jump in the face of strong opposition from Senior athletes - and went on to also win the B string Long Jump, where he was well supported by Under 20 Fluke Ladphanna who took a commendable second place in the A string. Jamie Allway and Mike Bartlett totally dominated the Pole Vault, where Jamie achieved a superb 4.20m PB. All-rounder Mike also won the Discus with a personal best distance; and Alex Reynolds, with a near 50m throw, won the Hammer. The final men's event of the day, the 4x400m relay brought yet another first place.

Chelmsford's Man of the Match award went to Alex Cooke (with Darren Blackwell and Jamie Allway in close contention).

In the Ladies events individual winners were: Wendy King (5000m B), supported by a great run from junior Madeleine Henderson who took second in the A string. Similarly, Alexandria Leslie won the B string 400mH, with U17 Connie Forman in second place in the A string. In the Long Jump Jade Harding won the B string event, whilst U17 Abbie Grigg was in second place in the A string. Another Under 17 - Rachel Broome ran a very strong 1500m Steeplechase to win by over 20 seconds and the women's Discus was another clean sweep for Chelmsford as yet another U17, Gabrielle Quigley paired up with veteran Shirley Quinn to take maximum points.

The Woman of the Match award went to Amy Hoyer who came intending to run just a Steeplechase but also competed on the day in the 1500m and the 100m hurdles, scoring valuable points for the team.

There were many great performances from all of the Chelmsford athletes, and the overall win was not just due to individual event winners but also the packing of second and third places which gave such a solid scoring rate throughout the afternoon. The victory was also testament to the wealth of Junior talent that the club are nurturing, and bringing through to Senior level.

Having now won both of their first two SAL fixtures Chelmsford continue to top the 16 teams in the Division 1 table. The next match will be held at the West London Stadium on Saturday 18th June.