

Southern Athletics League R1 2016 – Milton Keynes – 16th April 2016

In very cold but thankfully dry conditions last Saturday, Chelmsford Athletic Club competed at Milton Keynes in their first Southern Athletic Match of the season.

The result final was a resounding win for Chelmsford with 221.5 points, followed by the home club Milton Keynes on 181.5, Tonbridge AC on 176 points and Southampton on 131 points.

Chelmsford's win was achieved with some great performances from the athletes, combined with everyone pulling together and creating a fantastic team atmosphere. In the early events of the day double (A and B string) wins in many events gave Chelmsford a dream start. The pattern continued throughout the day, leaving the other teams chasing in their wake for the whole match.

In the Men's Team, there were two new Under-20's competing in their first Senior races. Nathan Brearley in the 1500 gave a good account of himself only outsprinted at the end after leading for much of a very tactical race. Also, Owen Thomas who ran both the 5000m and the 2000m Steeplechase. He set Personal Best's in both races - and won Man of the Match.

Two Under-17's also competed. Robert Runciman, also in his first Senior competition, won the B string High Jump whilst Senior Team regular Nathaniel Sherger scored valuable points in the 200m, and ran strongly on second leg of the 4x100m relay.

Individual wins were plentiful with, on the track, Alex Cooke and Marcus Hunt (100m), Chris Youell (400m), Paul Owen and Darren Blackwell (800m). Bradley Reed and Luke Keteleers, between them, took 15 of the 16 points available in the 110mH and 400mH. Lastly, Chelmsford's almost unbeatable 4x400m Men's squad again dominated.

Mens 4x400m split times were: Marcus Hunt 49.8s; Darren Blackwell 51.1; Paul Owen 50.3s; and Christopher Youell 51.2s.

In the Field, Kevin Wilson and veteran Geoff Tyler did their usual double act and cleaned up in the Shot. Kevin then combined with Mike Bartlett to take another double in the Discus whilst Geoff won the B string Hammer. Kevin's second place in the A string Hammer was a new Personal Best.

Serg Zotin made a fine return to the Chelmsford team with second place in the High Jump – and also scored points by filling a space in the Triple Jump.

From the Ladies Team wins also came thick and fast. International Hayley McLean taking the 400m, which turned out to be a close race such was the standard on the day. Joceline Monteiro had wins in the 200m and her specialist 800m. In the 800m Joceline was supported by Under-20 Jodie Judd who, in winning the B string, also beat all the other Team A strings!

Sophie Johnstone finished in an excellent second place in the 1500m, whilst also scoring valuable team points by filling in on the 2000m Steeplechase.

Woman of the Match was Sally Judd with wins in the 1500m and 3000m. The latter race being cleverly run to catch and pass the leader close to the end. Sally also showed superb commitment by running in the 2000m Steeplechase – a race of such quality that the British record was broken!

Chay Clark and Under-20 Alex Leslie between them scored maximum points in the 100mH and 400mH. Then, in the final event on the track, the Ladies 4x400m squad came within 4 seconds of the club record in 3mins 56.62 seconds, to win by over a hundred metres!

Women's 4x400m split times were: Joceline Monteiro 58.3s; Caroline Hill 62.3s; Hayley McLean 57.6; and Khai Mhlanga 58.5s.

There were yet more wins in the Ladies field events. Ellie Besford cleared 2.80m to take the win in the Pole Vault and Chay Clark took the Long Jump.

Two Under 17-athletes also competed for the Ladies Team. Specialist thrower Gabrielle Quigley scored a high number of points by taking second place in Shot, Discus and Hammer. Whilst middle-distance star Khai Mhlanga was second in the A string 3000m then anchored the 4x400m to victory.

With five Southern League matches over the summer, Chelmsford have made a very encouraging start and with two home matches scheduled, expectations are already high for a table-topping season.