



Report on British Athletics League Match 1 – Yeovil – 6th May 2017

Chelmsford Athletic Club's Senior Men's Team made a sensational start to their season in the British Athletic League Division Three last Saturday by winning the first round match at Yeovil. It was an extremely tough match and Chelmsford had to come from behind as they edged passed their seven opponents to finish in grand style.

The opposition, teams from all around the country, were always going to be strong at this level of athletics, and the competition was to be really close. However, the Chelmsford team, after making the long journey to the south coast with 20 athletes, always believed that at least a top four place was possible.

The match, inexplicably, did start badly though, with the early scores showing Chelmsford seventh despite some good results. Obviously the other teams were getting even better early results! Luckily the trend didn't continue and, as the day unfolded, Chelmsford crept up the leader board to take the win, although only in the last few events as the final points were included.

Such was the standard that the team only managed four individual wins. Serg Zotin was first to shine in the High Jump, then Kevin Wilson in the Discus taking the honours. Bradley Reed totally dominated his 110m Hurdles, leaving the others, as is often the case from this athlete, floundering in his wake. The fourth winner was Callum Charleston who took a B string win (third overall in the race) after being involved in the most exciting race of the day with team mate Steve Woodford.

It was the 1500m on this occasion which got everyone off their feet. The leading pack stuck close together for the first few laps before Callum moved to the front for the last 400m. The race was on. Callum was closely followed by an athlete from Rugby & Northampton with Steve some 10m adrift. Going into the home straight it was Steve who was the fastest finisher, passing Callum and only being beaten into second place by the narrowest of margins with a time of 4 minutes 3 seconds. Steve's gritty running on the day won him Chelmsford's Man of the Match.

Despite just four winners from 36 events, it was Chelmsford's strength in depth which enabled the overall team win. There were many second and third places recorded. Luke Keteleers took a second place in the 110 Hurdles and 3rd in the 400m Hurdles B strings. Young (under 17) Elliot Cordery ran with such maturity in a Senior competition to be third in the A string 3000m. Elliot was backed up by Grant Twist who was second in the B string - and that was after Grant had achieved another third place in the A string 3000m Steeplechase, where he set a Personal Best time. Grant was supported in the Steeplechase by ever-reliable Ken Hoye who was second in the B string.

Mark Woodley was back for Chelmsford after not competing last season and, along with Darren Blackwell scored heavily in the 800m. These two athletes now train together and both should improve rapidly this year.

In the field events. It was great to see Terry Lucas back jumping again after a two year break from athletics. Terry's long jump of 6.57m gave him a third place but it's obvious that there is also much more to come from him this season.

Chelmsford's two pole vaulters, Mike Bartlett and Jamie Allway, once again scored highly, adding to the points total.



In the throwing events, the Hammer has, in the past, been one of Chelmsford's weaker events. However, Yasha Bobash is putting that record straight this year with a throw of 41.19 metres. It was down slightly on his best but, again, he will be improving as the season progresses.

As it came to the closing events three teams were in very close contention; Yeovil as hosts, Notts and Chelmsford. The match result was going to the wire with the relays. The final event of the day involved Chelmsford's rarely beaten 4x400m team, so with an expected good performance the match outcome looked promising. The squad on this occasion was to be Harry Sloman, Mark Woodley, Paul Owen and Marcus Hunt. However, against this level of competition it was never going to be easy and there were some concerns. Harry was running with an ankle injury and Marcus was running with a broken wrist (both showing their dedication to the team). The concerns proved unjustified and the 4x400 squad were able to finish a close second!

Thankfully 2nd was enough for Chelmsford not to be denied overall victory!