



## British Athletics League Match 3 – Bedford – 15<sup>th</sup> Jul 2017

Chelmsford Athletic Club's Senior Men's Team were in action again last Saturday at the British Athletic League "Big" Day - so named as all thirty eight British League Clubs were competing together at the Bedford International Stadium. The importance of the fixture was evident. The whole event was streamed live on the web, and selections were to be made for the next British International in Manchester next month.

As expected for such a meeting, the standard of athletics was extremely high as all five of the British Leagues competed. Teams came from as far afield as Glasgow in the north to Newquay in the south. It was non stop action, from mid-morning to late evening. Chelmsford were competing against seven other teams in Division Three: Rugby & Northampton, Bedford & County, Notts AC, Havering AC, Derby & Mansfield, Southend AC, and Yeovil Olympiads.

First track race of the day, the 3000m, was the first of many exciting moments for Chelmsford with two talented junior athletes, Tom Keevil and Elliott Cordery represented Chelmsford. The race was extremely fast and both runners finished mid-field recording times of 8:53 and 8:58 respectively. Sensational for juniors. There will be plenty more to come from these two in the future.

The 800m was also very tense with Mark Woodley and Darren Blackwell in separate races for the A and B strings. Both athletes ran similar tactics, coming through the field strongly at the end and crossing the line in the tightest of finishes - and both were rewarded with second places.

In the 1500m U23 Callum Charleston and U20 Charlie Everest put in excellent runs to hold their own against quality opposition. There were also excellent runs from Mark Woodley, teaming up with Paul Owen this time, in the 400m. The standard in this race was incredible with no fewer than 5 athletes running sub-50 seconds in the A string. Harry Sloman, normally in the 400m, dropped down to the 200m on this occasion to help with the sprinting events where Chelmsford were struggling.

Grant Twist set yet another personal best in the 3000m steeplechase to take second place in the A string. Grant has been perfecting his technique over the barriers and continues to improve with each race. Grant was partnered by the ever reliable Ken Hoyer in this demanding event.

Chelmsford's hurdling pair of Bradley Reed and Luke Keteleers added hugely to the points tally with great runs in both 110 and 400 Hurdles. Bradley's second place in the A string of both events, combined with covering in the 100m and a significant contribution in the 4x100m gave him the Man of the Match award.

The last track race of the day, the 4x400m, is an event where the Chelmsford squad are very strong. Once again this was the case but the other teams seemed, somehow, to have found so many fast 400m runners for this match. Darren Blackwell ran a storming third leg to momentarily take the lead. It couldn't be held, however, but the team did finish an impressive fourth.

Out on the field Chelmsford had been weakened in the throws just four days before the match when one of the team's top throwers, Kevin Wilson suffered a serious achilles injury. However, with fantastic loyalty to the team, the other throwers, Mike Bartlett, Luke Keteleers, Yasha Bobash and even High Jumper Sergei Zotin all rushed to the rescue and many points were able to be recovered from these events.



Chelmsford also had the benefit of their top Javelin thrower, Chay Pollinger being available for this match. Still nursing an arm injury problem Chay threw at about 80% but still won the A string! There will be a very long throw coming from Chay soon when he can throw to his best.

The jumps were a better story with Fluke Ladphanna returning to the team for Long and Triple Jumps after a lay off due to work and exams. Terry Lucas, in the Long and Sergei Zotin in the Triple performed well when partnering Fluke. Sergei also jumped well in his specialist High Jump.

The Pole Vault was arguably the best jumping event for Chelmsford. Mike Bartlett and Jamie Allway scored heavily with Jamie winning the B string. This was a key event for Chelmsford, fought out in very difficult conditions for vaulting. Strong wind and heavy rain causing a postponement at one stage, just before Mike was about to take his first jump. Having warmed up and been mentally ready it was a credit to Mike that he could do it all again an hour later.

On the day, Chay Pollinger in the Javelin and Jamie Allway in the Pole Vault were the only two individual winners. The high number of solid second and third placings that were achieved, though, enabled the team to finish in fifth place. More importantly Chelmsford retain their third place overall in the league. With two teams to be promoted in the league, a win in the last match at Rugby, on Sunday 20th August (where the Chelmsford squad is expected to be much stronger) could see Chelmsford snatching one of those places.