



## Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R1 – Peterbro - 15<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Reigning Senior Southern Athletics League Division 1 Champions, Chelmsford AC, started the defence of their title last weekend at Peterborough. The host club Nene Valley Harriers, on their home track, were going to be tough to beat and that proved to be the case as the day unfolded. Chelmsford were never able to take the lead but did eventually finish second with newly promoted Herts-Phoenix AC and Harrow AC in third and fourth places respectively.

Although not able to take the win, the result was seen as a positive start to the season. The combined men's and women's team were missing a number of key athletes but those who were able to compete did make a great start with some fantastic performances.

Competing for the men was Luke Keteleers who was awarded Man of the Match after winning B string 110m and 400m hurdles, Long Jump, third place in the Discus, and making a significant contribution in the 4x100m and 4x400m relays. Fellow Decathlete Mike Bartlett also competed in six events, to score valuable points with one win in the Javelin and many high placings in his other events.

One of the gripping races of the day was the Men's 5000m. Grant Twist took the early lead but was overhauled after 2km. The leader opened up a 40m gap but Grant used all of his experience to maintain his composure, stick to his race plan, wait until around 3 laps remained, before fighting back to retake the lead and pull away strongly over the last lap.

In the Field events, new Chelmsford AC athlete Chay Pollinger was making his mark in the team. Chay demonstrated why he is currently ranked U20 No.2 in the UK, throwing a massive 59.38m PB in winning the Javelin. This showed great promise for the rest of the season as he was, himself, frustrated at not breaking 60m! Also new to Chelmsford this season was Yasha Bobash who took second place in the Hammer and again showed that there is a lot more to come over the summer!

Other wins on the Men's side came from Jamie Allway in the A string Pole Vault, Bradley Reed in the A string 110m Hurdles and Thomas Hewes pairing up with Sergei Zotin to win respectively both A and B string High Jump.

Two juniors working their way into the Senior ranks and worthy of mention are John Boyle in the High Jump and Charlie Everest in the 1500m. Both held their own at this higher level of competition and we will see much more from both these athletes in the future.

There were also a number of commendable performances in the Women's events. In the 3000m race, Woman of the Match, Sally Judd took the early lead and despite being tracked for most of the race, was able to pull well clear in the last 800m. Sally also took another great win in the 2000m steeplechase, coming from behind in that event, and set a PB in the 800m that took her to third in the V40 UK rankings!

One of the most impressive races of the day was the complete domination in the Women's 1500m by junior Khai Mhlanga, who stormed away from the field from the start and won by a huge margin. Even the timekeepers commented on the very fast and consistent pace judgement showed by this young and very talented athlete.



Another junior to start the season well was Gabby Quigley. Gabby won the A string Discus very convincingly with 37.12m (more than 10 metres further than the opposition!). Gabby was supported in this event by Shirley Quinn who won B string with a throw that placed her second overall! Shirley, now in the V60 age group, also threw the Hammer to within a metre of her life time best!

Caroline Hill and, new to the Chelmsford Women's team athlete Claire Netley, took on the 400m and almost took maximum points. Caroline was narrowly pushed into second in the A string with 61.0 secs but this allowed Claire to clean up with a win in the B string in 62.8 secs.

Chelmsford's international athlete, Hayley McLean was also in good form with a solid win in the 200m and a second place in the High Jump. It was hard to believe that Hayley had not competed in the latter event since 2013!

Rebecca Healy and Hayley Pegg, both worked hard throughout the afternoon. In addition to their own specialist events they picked up many points by filling in other events where the team had been unable to field an athlete. Hayley took wins in the B string 800m and 2000m Steeplechase.

The ladies topped off their day with a fantastic win from Caroline Hill, Claire Netley, Hayley McLean and Khai Mhlanga in the 4x400m.

It was an impressive start to the season from the whole team and only one place off perfect! The team are, however, confident that they will have a stronger team at the next match and can go that one better on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May at Basingstoke.