



Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R4 – Chelmsford – 8th July 2017

Chelmsford Athletic Club's combined senior men's and women's team were once again competing on their home track last Saturday against Southampton, Colchester Harriers and Bedford, in the Southern Athletics League.

Having won the previous fixture, hopes were running high for another victory. However, the ladies team were lacking athletes due to the holiday period and after a very close and exciting match Chelmsford could only manage third place, the final points totals being 207 Southampton, 197 Bedford, Chelmsford 187 and Colchester 180.

There were, however, many positives that Chelmsford could take away. A number of Juniors coming through the ranks were competing in the Senior team (some for the first time) and all put in very creditably performances. The highlight of the day was the Men's 800m. Four athletes quickly pulled away from the rest and going into the home straight it was Chelmsford's Under 23 Darren Blackwell who had the finishing speed and strength to cross the line ahead, in personal best time of 1:54.5. Tom Keevil, still in the under 17 age group, chased all the way and was rewarded with a very fast 1:57.1 - another personal best.

Darren followed up on his 800m success with a win in the B string 400m, coming through from third to first in the last few metres and snatching the victory - Marcus Hunt having previously won the A string. Darren then made a significant contribution to the winning Men's 4x400m team, and was awarded Man of the Match.

Two other juniors in action were Elliot Cordery (U17) who ran the 1500m in preparation for next week's British League match. Elliot finished second but only being beaten by one of Southampton's international runners.

Callum Charleston ran away from the field to record 9.00.9 minutes in the 3km, as Grant Twist did similarly in the 3km Steeplechase, setting a new personal best of 9:39.2. Again, both of these athletes were running in preparation for the British League match.

It was pleasing to see, once again, Chelmsford's formidable trio of hurdlers, Luke Keteleers, Rhys Collings and Bradley Reed take maximum points from the 110m and 400m hurdles. Similarly, in the High Jump Sergei Zotin and Mike Bartlett took another double win. Kevin Wilson was the backbone of the throws for Chelmsford, with wins in both Shot and Hammer.

Running for the ladies, Erin Minton Branfoot was Woman of the Match. As the temperature soared during the course of the afternoon Erin ran herself to exhaustion, with wins in the 100m and 200m and numerous placings in other events when covering for missing athletes.

Erin was partnered by Caroline Hill in many events. Caroline took a win in her specialist 400m, which was just reward as she was also covering a significant number of events.

Although the ladies team were down in overall strength, the 1500m was their race of the day as Megan Evans and Rebecca Luxton totally dominated the event. An A string win for Megan in 4:56.9 and maximum



points competed with Rebecca winning the B string in 5:01.1 (and a taking a very satisfying second place to Megan overall in the race!).

With just one Southern League match remaining at Dartford, Chelmsford (who were champions last year) are likely to finish mid-table of the sixteen teams in the League. The focus will now have to become rebuilding to regain the League Trophy in 2018.