



Report on British Athletics League Match 3 – Bedford – 7 Jul 2018

The Chelmsford AC Senior Men's team competed last Saturday, 7th July, at the British Athletic League (BAL) "Big Day" where all five leagues compete together at the same venue and the standard of athletics is extremely high.

Unfortunately, the team were hit by many injuries not only just before the match but also during the match over the course of a very long and hot day. Consequently they had a poor result which means that they have now lost their lead at the top of Division 3.

Holding a three point advantage in the league going into the match, the team sheet showed they could be strong enough to finish at least in fourth place, which would have been good enough to maintain a strong promotion chance. However, the day could not have started worse as Sergei Zotin broke his foot warming up for the High Jump and is now out for the season.

Hope returned as Joe Bloomfield won the Hammer with a close to 60m throw. Joe then set a new club record of 51.23m in the Discus, beating a distance set by Andy Vince in 1981! He then added another second place in the Shot to his tally and took the Man of the Match award.

Kevin Wilson provided fantastic support to Joe by winning both the B Discus and the B shot. Joe Wells, in one of his many covering roles, also produced a very creditable throw for third place in the B Hammer.

Darren Blackwell was the star on the track, determined to get every point possible for the team. Following a second place in his specialist 800m, Darren went on to take points in the 1500m and the 3k Steeplechase. Equally, Ken Hoye doubled in the 3000m flat race and the 3k Steeplechase. Bearing in mind the temperatures were above 30 deg C all day, Darren and Ken's performances were amazing achievements, and it kept team spirit high.

Harry Sloman, who was a doubtful starter because of a badly blistered foot, was fortunately able to run. Obviously in some pain, he managed to cover the 400m Hurdles in addition to his usual 400m and 4x400 events.

In both of the hurdles events - the 110m and the 400m - Luke Keteleers had to step up to the A string, where not only did he hold his own in those events, but also had to compete in the High, Long and Triple jumps, the Javelin and the 4x100m!

However, despite all the effort by the team, injuries were still ongoing throughout the day and points were slipping away all over the programme. Both Chelmsford's HCA sprinters crossed the line clutching muscle pulls. Mike Bartlett and Jamie Allway shone by both clearing 4m in the Pole Vault - but then Mike pulled his Achilles in a Javelin throw.

While all this was happening Joe Wells, only just back from injury himself, was filling in everywhere for the growing list of injured athletes.

It was just one of those days in athletics. One single extra A string win would have given Chelmsford the required points for fourth place, but it wasn't to be, and the team finished seventh - their worst result since joining the BAL in 2014.



Chelmsford are now fourth in Division 3 but only one and a half point behind second (a promotion spot). The chance of promotion has been reduced but is still a possibility. A lot depends on where the other teams finish in the last match at Nottingham. A third place for Chelmsford may still be enough to clinch promotion.

The team can take some hope going into the fourth round from the fact that just three key athletes back from injury would make the required difference. Surely there cannot be as many injuries for the last match! It's not over yet!