



Report on British Athletics League Match 4 – Notts – 4 Aug 2018

Chelmsford AC's Senior Men faced a tough challenge on Saturday, in the final match of their British Athletics League Division 3 season, competing in Nottingham at the Harvey Hadden Stadium. After a strong start in the first two matches of the season, the team suffered a huge setback in the third match at Bedford, where they suffered a catalogue of injuries – and a top two finish at Nottingham (and defeat of the home team) was therefore needed, to keep the dream of promotion to Division 2 alive.

However, despite the team's best efforts, with some top athletes returning to action after being out with injury, an in-form Notts AC team, gunning for promotion themselves, proved too big a challenge to overcome. A third place finish on the day, behind Notts and champions Bristol & West, meant the team finished in third place in the table – missing promotion by one place.

Training partners Mark Woodley and Darren Blackwell covered the 800m and 1500m distances - Mark taking on the A-string races after returning from injury - and securing fourth in the 800m (in a sub 2 minute time of 1:56.94) - and fifth in the 1500m with 4:12.83. Darren won the Man of the Match award for his B-string performances, which had the entire Chelmsford team on their feet. His perfectly timed sprint finish and well thought out tactics in the 800m brought him victory over the shorter distance; he also ran an excellent 1500m, taking a third-place finish at that distance.

Bradley Reed, ranked 15th himself in the UK for 110m Hurdles, battled hard against the UK's fourth-ranked athlete, from Enfield & Haringey. Brad managed a clean race, avoiding all barriers but ultimately had to be content with second place, with the consolation of the second-best time of his career at 14.70 seconds.

Also in the hurdles, Rhys Collings and Luke Keteleers took on the longer distance of 400m. Rhys took second place, with a Personal Best time of 55.66s. Luke placed fourth in the B-string race, with 59.25s.

In the other sprints, Bret Okeke and Nathaniel Sherger took on the A and B strings respectively. Bret dipped at 11.3s to take sixth place in the 100m, despite being given the same time as the fifth placed athlete from Nene Valley. Nathaniel also took sixth place, in the B-string with a respectable 11.64s. The pair improved on these finishes in their stronger event – the 200m - with Bret recording third place in the A race in a time of 22.56s, and Nathaniel finishing fifth in the B event with 23.25. The 400m was run by Lewis Thorn, taking sixth place, with 50.34s, in a very high quality race in which five athletes recorded times of sub-50 seconds. In the B-string, Harry Sloman came in fourth, with 51.64s. These two were joined by Joe Wells and Paul Owen for the 4x400m relay - an event which is usually one of Chelmsford's strongest – but despite Lewis Thorn's final leg of 49.7s, the high standard of the other teams resulted in Chelmsford finishing in fourth place. Chelmsford also placed fourth in the 4x100m – scoring one of their highest finishes of the season and showing great promise at an event where they have struggled in the past. The team, consisting of Bradley Reed, Nathaniel Sherger, Luke Keteleers and Bret Okeke, crossed the line in 44.32s.

Chris Youell and Steve Woodford took on the gruelling 5k race, and in case Chris wasn't tired enough after that, he also ran in the 3k Steeplechase in the B-string. Paul Owen ran as the team's A string athlete, on a day where the water jump probably provided welcome respite from the heat!



Over to the field. The Joe Bloomfield and Kevin Wilson partnership dominated the throws, with Joe winning maximum points in the Hammer and Discus. Joe recorded a fantastic distance of 62.67m in the Hammer, his second-best throw this year, beating second place by over 15m! B-string for the Hammer was covered by Joe Wells who claimed a respectable fourth place finish. Joe Bloomfield took victory in the Discus with a best throw of 44.68m, which is a little below his best but enough to easily see off the rest of the competition. Kevin followed this up with victory in the B-string, with 39.97m. In the Shot Put, Kevin Wilson recorded a further distance than Joe Bloomfield this time around, with 13.38m, beating Joe by 22cm and ensuring a generous return of points for the team. Kevin completed his day in the Javelin, throwing 39.20m.

In the Jumps, U20 international athlete Tom Hewes thankfully returned to the team after serious ankle and knee injuries which kept him out of the first three matches of the season. Easing his way back into competition, he strolled over 1.98m to claim the win. Although this was some way off his 2.15m PB, Tom is only just getting back into full training and will be hoping for an injury-free season in 2019, to help the team get promotion next year.

Chelmsford had their full-strength Pole-Vaulting team out for the final match with Jamie Allway equalling his PB of 4.20m. However, in an extremely high quality competition, featuring two from the top 20 in the UK, this was only good enough for fourth place. In the B-string, multi-eventer, Mike Bartlett ended the competition in second-place, reaching a very respectable height of 4.0m.

Despite not quite clinching promotion this year, Chelmsford improved on last year's finish, and if injuries stay away next year then they could be looking at a good 2019 season.

The final match of the season for the Chelmsford senior team (Men and Women) will be a Southern Athletics League match on the 18th August, at Bedford, where a win will secure a second league title in three years.