



## Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R4 – Bracknell – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Chelmsford Athletic Club's combined senior men and women's team were in action recently for the fourth round of the Southern Athletic League. A win would have almost certainly secured the Division 1 title but they were narrowly beaten into second place. This was the first defeat of the year but fortunately the other title challengers also faltered and the Chelmsford team still remain one point clear at the top with just one match remaining.

The overall result from match four was

- Bracknell: 217.5
- Chelmsford: 212.5
- City of Norwich: 200
- Reading 130

A very hot and dry day made the conditions difficult for all the athletes - the field eventers suffering as much as the track runners on this occasion in the heat. However, there were some fantastic performances. The top performance coming from the ladies in the 4x400m. After already competing in many events throughout the day Claire Netley, Joceline Monteiro, Rosa Prideaux and Hayley McLean teamed up to win the penultimate race of the meeting, in a time of 3 minutes 49.2 seconds, taking over three seconds off the Chelmsford club record which has stood since 1985.

International Hayley MacLean also claimed a number of wins including the 100m and 200m and, of course, her specialist 400m Hurdles, which she won by nearly the length of the home straight. The time of 58.69 took the Southern Athletic League record and won the SAL performance of the day award!

Emulating Hayley's 400m Hurdle performance, Jessica Whiley won the B string by a similar distance. Jess also won the A string 110m Hurdles later in the day.

Erin Minton-Branfoot was Woman of the Match with a 400m win and scoring valuable points in the 100m, 200m, the High Jump and 4x100m. With significant PB's in the 400m and 200m, Erin was the team manager's choice for the club's Woman of the Match.

In fact, it was the ladies in general who were producing the wins in many events. Joceline Monteiro took a win in the 400m this time, leaving her specialist 800m to up and coming Under 17's Faye Sweeting and Georgia Tombs. It was also another U17, Martha Smith who ran very confidently in the 1500m to win the B string while Rosa Prideaux was second after a very tight race in the A string.

Liz Davies took on the 5000m and cruised away from the field to win by over one and a half minutes. However, due to the intense heat of the afternoon Liz herself took some time to recover and only two others finished the race – both in a state of total exhaustion.

The ladies Steeplechase was a great result for the team as Rachel Broome controlled the race from the front to win the A string. Faye Sweeting stepped in at the last moment to run in the B string and finished in a commendable second place.



In the Ladies throws it was Georgina Howe, Marleen Avontuur, Jess Whiley and Shirley Quinn who dominated, by only dropping four of the thirty two points available. This was an incredible achievement against strong opposition. The best in the jumps came from junior Ndidi Okoh, who took the win in the A string High Jump and a second in the B Long Jump against her senior opposition.

The men's side of the team, usually so strong, have been hit by a spate of injuries lately and it showed. However, there were still some great performances - the highlight being Bradley Reed in the 110m Hurdles, taking the club's Man of the Match award with his performance. Having been injured since the British Championships, and unable to train for two weeks, Bradley wanted to prove himself again and stormed down the track in a phenomenal 14.56 seconds - a time which ranks him fourteenth in the UK this year.

Once again most of Chelmsford's points scored by the men's team came from the Joe Bloomfield and Kevin Wilson partnership who won both A and B string Shot and Discus. Joe was unusually second in the Hammer, beaten on this occasion by an athlete from Norwich who is ranked ninth in the UK.

Junior Joe Lane had a good day personally, setting personal bests with sensible running in the 800m and 1500m and then an excellent leg in the 4x400m. Luke Keteleers also set a personal best in the 400m Hurdles with a B string win, after Rhys Collings had taken second in the A string. Luke then went on to support the team effort by competing in 110m Hurdles, 100m, and Triple Jump – and take a B win in the Javelin. The distance events were filled by Chris Youell who is currently off form but put in enough to add to the points tally.

In other track events, the injury story was to continue. Paul Owen and Harry Tullet scored well in the 400m, with a second and first in A and B strings respectively. However, Harry then stopped sharply in the 200m with a pulled hamstring. Darren Blackwell, after running so well in the 800m, stepped up to help the team, yet again, in the 3000m Steeplechase. A fantastic second place was tarnished with the recurrence of an old knee injury. Adam Bernard's second place in the B string Steeplechase also deserves a mention as he noticed minutes before the start that the Chelmsford runner was missing and immediately lined up to take the place - this after Adam had already competed in other events including the 400m and 3000m flat race!

In the competition on track and field Chelmsford drew with Bracknell. However, some points are scored for supply of officials and Chelmsford were unable to find a track judge on this occasion and lost the five points needed for the win. Chelmsford also took another blow when the Pole Vault was also cancelled due to a broken upright. This is a strong event for the men who normally take a double win, having three vaulters capable of four metres. That's the way it goes sometimes in athletics!

Chelmsford must win our last match on 18th August to be league champions. A second place and it will be snatched away by one of the three chasing teams who have superior match points. It's down to the wire!