



Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R1 – Norwich – 27th April 2019

On a very cold and windy day in Norwich, Chelmsford's Senior Team got the defence of their Southern Athletics League title off to a solid start, with a second place finish. The team's score was hampered by the cancellation of both Men's and Women's Pole Vault – the match referee deciding that the wind made the event too dangerous – an event in which Chelmsford are usually very strong.

The final match score was:

1. City of Norwich – 240.5
2. Chelmsford – 198
3. Colchester Harriers – 179.5
4. Belgrave Harriers – 95

Jessica Hopkins was named as Chelmsford's 'Women of the Match, for a total points haul which included wins in the High Jump and 110mH, and PB in the Javelin, where she finished second. Jess also ran fine legs in both the 4x100m and 4x400m relays. She was well supported by training mate Mia Chantree, who won the B string High Jump, claimed second place in the B string Javelin, and also ran in both relays.

Erin Minton-Branfoot also scored plenty of points for the team, competing on her 21st birthday, and running well in the 100m, 200m and 400m.

U17 Toni Egbulefu threw a PB as she won the Discus – and then took second place in the Shot, and competed in the Hammer for the first time – while debutant Omolola Kuponiyi (also U17) recorded a PB in taking maximum points in the B string Shot, where she had to throw the Senior weight (4Kg) for the first time.

Hayley McLean and Claire Netley took maximum points in the opening Track event of the day, winning the A and B string 400mH respectively – while the 2000m Steeplechase also saw a maximum for the Women's team, as Rachel Broome (currently resident at UEA) and Hannah Bolton both claimed wins. Hannah went on to record points in the Triple Jump, and run a leg in the 4x100m – quite a feat for a middle-distance runner!

Joceline Monteiro ran an impressive race to cross the line first in the 800m, before running a superb last leg to win the 4x400m relay.

A number of other members of the team also deserve credit. Despite planning on focussing on just the 800m and 1500m this year, Hayley Pegg switched to the 3000m on the day, to ensure she could add to the team's points tally. Martha Smith and Megan Williams both claimed second place finishes in the 1500m, Ndidi Okoh competed in the Triple Jump for the first time and recorded a second place in the B string – and it was great to see Jade Harding back in action, taking second place in both the Long Jump and 100mH B strings despite suffering with a knee injury.

Finally, Dominika Czekajlo was another athlete having a busy day – competing in the 100m, 200m, Long Jump and 4x100m relay – a heavy load for an U17 in senior competition.



The Men's team were without a number of key athletes, and suffered some injuries on the day, and hence found the going difficult. However, pride of place must go to U17 Oliver Early, who won the High Jump, and took second place in the Long Jump.

Another U17 – Nathan Bushnell – also had a good day, taking second places in the B string Shot, Discus AND Hammer – events, of course, in which he had to use unfamiliar Senior weights. U17 debutant Darcy Sullivan performed very well in the 100m, 200m, Triple Jump, and 4x100m relay anchor leg.

Kevin Wilson won the Discus, and was second in the Shot, while amongst a haul of points for the constantly-in-action Luke Keteleers was a win in the B string Long Jump, along with points in the 100m, Triple Jump, 100mH, 400mH, Javelin and 4x100m relay.

On the track, Joe Wells claimed a fantastic second place in the 400m, overtaking two athletes on the home straight and recording a time which was only 0.5 sec outside his PB, in terrible conditions. He also went on to record third place in the 200m B string, won the B string High Jump, and ran in both relays, to fully deserve his Chelmsford Man of the Match award.

Joe Lane produced a fantastic finish in the 800m, overtaking three athletes in the last 50m to earn him second place in the A string, in a time only 2 seconds off his best. He then covered the 1500m A string, and ran the fastest 4x400m relay leg in 52.8.

All told, second place was a valiant performance against a very strong home team. The team will be aiming to return to winning ways – and hoping for warmer weather – in their next two SAL matches - both at home, with the first on Sunday 19th May.

The Men's team kick off their British Athletics League Division 2 campaign at Bedford on Sunday 12th May.