



Southern Athletics League Division 1 – R2 – Chelmsford – 19th May 2019

With news of the passing of club stalwart Miv Owen breaking only days before, Chelmsford's Senior team went into their Southern Athletics League match at Melbourne Park on Sunday determined to put on a performance of which their Senior Men's Team Manager would be proud. And they did just that – taking on the substantial challenge of last year's league runners-up, Blackheath & Bromley, and ultimately coming out clear winners on the day.

The final match score was:

1. Chelmsford AC – 245 points
2. Bracknell AC – 193
3. Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC – 191
4. Reading AC – 128

The team's victory was all the more pleasing for the fact that with several key senior athletes out with injury, the club demonstrated their strength in depth and excellent youth development, as the course of the match was undoubtedly decided by the performance of both new recruits and rising stars from the Junior ranks – all of whom achieved impressive Personal Best performances during the day.

In the heavy throw events (Shot, Discus and Hammer) the team of Kevin Wilson, Samuel Alexander, Yasha Bobash and Nathan Bushell ended the day unbeaten, not dropping a single point. Under 17 athlete Nathan Bushnell recorded an amazing THREE PB's with the Senior weights, deservedly earning him the Chelmsford Man of the Match award.

Another U17 - Ethan Reilly – recorded a PB in the 3,000m, timing at 9:29.3, and only marginally missing out on second place in the A string race – while veteran Ken Hoye defied the years to take maximum points in the B string.

Zach Bridgeland (U20) ran a 4:09 PB in the 1500m 4:09, coming in second in the A string race, with a fantastic final 200m where he made up over 20m, to overtake the athlete ahead of him just before the finish line. Johnson Alo (U17) added half a metre to his best in the Triple Jump, jumping 13.00m and winning the A string competition ahead of more seasoned competitors.

Darcy Sullivan was a close contender for Man of the Match, for his performances in the 100m and 200m events – timed at 11.1sec and 22.4sec respectively. Both were PB's, and outstanding for a 15 year old athlete. Both times are sufficiently fast to now allow him to compete with the Senior team for Chelmsford in the British Athletics League, which ordinarily would not allow Under 17 athletes to compete. U17 Oliver Early also fought off senior competition, winning the Long Jump in 6.30m – a distance very close to his best.

Joe Lane broke two-minute barrier for the first time in the 800m, and claimed a very close second place, before running the fastest Relay split of the day in the 4x400m, in 51.3 seconds.



Three B string wins for multi-eventer Luke Keteleers, in the 110mH, 400mH and Long jump – and valuable contributions in the 200m and 4x100m relay bolstered the team's total considerably.

As has become usual, Bradley Reed won the 110mH in 15.3 seconds, before also achieving a long overdue best time in the 100m (11.5sec).

For the Ladies, team captain Claire Netley won the Woman of the Match award. Her highlight was winning the 400mH in a personal best time – but she also claimed a win in the 100mH B race, was second in the 400m B race, and played a huge part in helping two relay teams to victory.

International athlete Hayley McLean put in a tremendous amount of work during the match, running the 100m, 200m, 400m, 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay, gaining one first place, and two second place finishes – as well as providing strong support to the relay teams.

As with the men, there were a remarkable number of Personal Best performances – many of them coming from the younger members of the team. U17 Lily Parris bettered her previous best marks in both the 100m and 200m, Emma Rattle did likewise in the High Jump, Ndidi Okoh PB'd in the Triple Jump, and Toni Egbulefu set a PB in the Hammer (as well as winning the Shot Put). It was so pleasing to see the hard work these young athletes have put in over the past few years, coming to fruition in the Senior team – especially on a day when, with exams looming, so many had to take a quick break from their studies to compete.

Jess Hopkins has only just stepped up into the U20 age group, but she cruised to a dominant victory in the 100mH, before also winning the Javelin, and starring in the High Jump, Long Jump – AND the 4x100m relay!

Not to be out-done, some of the older member of the team scored PB's too, including Tina Quinliven in the Pole Vault, and Jade Harding in the Shot Put.

The day ended with an innovation this year in the Southern Athletics League – mixed 4x400m relays. Opinions were varied about whether this is a good idea – but Chelmsford certainly rose to the challenge, winning both the A and B races!

Overall, 19 Personal Bests were recorded by Chelmsford athletes during the match – the highest number in memory – and this, combined with the margin of victory for the team, was a fitting tribute to Miv Owen, who was remembered during an emotional minutes' silence during the match. He would have been rightly proud of the display that the team put on.