



## Southern Athletics League R1 – Chelmsford – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Chelmsford AC were back in Southern Athletics League action on Sunday at Melbourne Park – and they fully extended their 100% record for Summer 2021, with their fourth match win of the season, and their second in the SAL as they secured a comfortable victory

The final match score was:

1. Chelmsford AC – 414.7
2. Basildon AC – 283.4
3. Harlow AC – 236.5
4. Braintree & District AC – 174.0
5. Colchester Harriers AC – 157.8

As in the first match last month, it was U17 Onyeka Okoh, fresh from an outstanding performance at the national English Schools Championships in Manchester, who set the standard early on, cruising to victory in the Men's 400m Hurdles. With Rhys Collings taking the win in the B race, Chelmsford were off to a strong start.

Joe Abbott and Finlay Staff then scored maximum points in the Men's 800m, before Cara Duncan and Nneka Okoh did likewise in the Women's 100m.

In the Field Ndidi Okoh was adding to the Okoh family's contribution to Chelmsford's score by taking second place in the Women's Hammer, where veteran Shirley Quinn (who currently holds a World leading position in the V65 Discus) won the B event. Jess Hopkins won the Women's Javelin – an event where she was well supported by Jess Whiley, who was clearly enjoying her first appearance for team since 2019.

Back on the track, Joe Wells ran powerfully in the 400m, only narrowly missing out on victory in a race where U17 Will Steadman claimed the B event win.

Bradley Reed and Luke Keteleers took their customary 1-2 in the Men's 110m Hurdles, before the Duncan sisters – Leah and Cara – did the same in the Women's 100m – Leah signing off in style before her imminent departure across the Atlantic, to take up an athletics scholarship in the United States.

Megan Williams and Sophie McCallum won the A and B races in the Women's 1500m (both claiming PB's) – and then Zach Bridgeland and Ethan Reilly repeated the feat in the Men's races. Martha Smith and Hannah Bolton showed that they are both returning to good form in the 800m – an event where Rebecca Quinlan recorded an excellent PB.

Meanwhile, Chelmsford's field eventers were keeping the team score accumulating. Kevin Wilson and Nathan Bushnell won the Men's Shot A and B events – and then repeated that achievement in the Discus - while Yasha Bobash continued to, as he has all season, threaten the 50m mark in the Men's Hammer. He will surely achieve that mark by the end of this season.



Lola Kuponiyi was another young athlete who had rushed back from the English Schools Championships to compete for the club, and she threw further than her Silver-medal winning performance in Manchester as she won the Women's Shot – with Jess Hopkins ensuring Chelmsford's dominance in the event.

The ever-improving Johnson Alo won both the Men's Long Jump and Triple Jump – the latter by just 1cm – while another of Chelmsford's excellent junior athletes – Sam Tremelling, won the Pole Vault, and the B High Jump. Jaimee Smith took the honours in the Women's Pole Vault.

Emma Rattle claimed a fine win in the Women's High Jump, where she was ably supported by Rosie Townley, who was later awarded Chelmsford's Woman of the Match award. Team Manager Shirley Quin explained "Rosie arrived at the track expecting to run a non-scoring 100m, whilst also covering Long Jump, High Jump and the 4x100m Relay. This is a heavy load for an U17 athlete who was running in the English Schools Championships only a day or so before. But then she was greeted by me (team manager) and asked if she would be prepared to drop the non-scoring 100m and run a 400m instead. Although this was the first time she had raced over this punishing distance she didn't hesitate in taking up the challenge - a real team player!"

Chelmsford's Senior team are next in action in a National Athletics League match, at Melbourne Park on 7<sup>th</sup> August, before making the short trip to Braintree for the next SAL match a week later.