



National Athletics League Match 2 – Manchester – 4 June 2022

Chelmsford AC's senior team travelled to Bournemouth on Saturday, for the third of their four matches in the 2022 National Athletics League. Chelmsford went into the match in second place in the Championship table, two points behind leaders Crawley AC – one of the seven teams against whom they were competing on the day.

Once again, Chelmsford's overall score was buoyed by the number of athletes showing their commitment to the team by stepping up to compete in multiple events – including those outside of their speciality – and once such athlete – Ndidi Okoh was busy right from the off, supporting Kirsty Ronald in securing points in the Women's Long Jump, before turning her attention to the Hammer, where she and Josephine Larkins scored 12 important early points. Later, she re-combined with Kirsty in the Triple Jump, where Kirsty took an excellent second place.

Field events dominated the early proceedings – and Kevin Wilson dominated the Men's Discus, with a winning throw 5m further than his nearest rival – with Oliver Early, carrying an injury that kept him out of his usual events, weighing in with 6 points in support. Kevin returned later, to take second place in the Shot.

Chelmsford were without their star 400m Hurdler, Onyeka Okoh, but Joe Wells and Luke Keteleers stepped in to grab a valuable 14 points for the team in the event, as their team spirit paid dividends.

In the Men's 800m, M40 veteran Paul Grange claimed an excellent third place in the A string, while at the other end of the age spectrum, U17 Will Steadman took a superb second position in the B string race. The Women's 800m saw TWO veterans scoring more vital points, with W50 Wendy King and W60 Tracy Minton taking to the track in the Green and Gold. Incredibly, Wendy and Tracy returned not long later, to join forces in the Women's 3000m too – and, showing amazing stamina, Tracy later completed the Women's Steeplechase, alongside Ndidi Okoh! Tracy's efforts, on top of her amazing points total in Manchester, won her Chelmsford's Woman of the Match award.

Yasha Bobash was left still searching for the elusive 50m throw in the Men's Hammer, but nevertheless can look back with immense satisfaction at winning the event for Chelmsford and hence scoring maximum points.

Jess Hopkins scored points in the Women's High Jump, before returning to her more usual throwing events, with fifth place in the Discus, and second place in the Shot. Lily Brand took third place in another throwing event – the Women's Javelin.

Back on the Track, the Men were lining up for the 100m, and Lee Dollard took a fine second place in a very close race, with Kristian Brown fourth in the B race. Kisiwaa Mensah went one better than Lee in the Women's 100m by taking a fantastic victory in the A race. Later in the day, Lee returned to the track to win the 200m, and Kisiwaa Mensah made it a personal double by winning the Women's 200m.

Nick Hardy (A) and Ethan Reilly (B) both recorded second places in the Men's 3000m Steeplechase, to keep Chelmsford's points tally building well – before Bradley Reed (A) and Kristian Brown (B) did exactly the same in the Men's 110mH, and at the half way stage, the team were sitting in a healthy second place.



Lily Parris was victorious in the Women's 100mH – where Ndidi Okoh weighed in with yet more points for the team in the B race. Lily later took second place in the Women's 200m B race.

Kristian Brown (A) and Marcus Hunt (B) both recorded fourth place finishes in the Men's 400m, before Nneka Okoh and Teegan Rayner combined to match their points score in the Women's 400m. Zach Bridgeland and Luke Oliver then teamed up to return a handsome 16 points in the Men's 1500m.

Back in the Field, Dan Botnari showed again what a valuable addition to the team he has been this season by taking second place in his specialist event, the Triple Jump, before claiming second place in the High Jump B string. His versatility, and willingness to step in wherever the team needed him won him Chelmsford's Man of the Match award.

Kristian Brown made the transition from Track to Field, to claim a vital win the Men's Javelin – an event where Sam Tremelling added to a personal points tally which included points in the High Jump and Pole Vault.

There was then a nail-biting wait for the final points tallies to be added up – and once Chelmsford's maximum points for fielding a full team of Officials had been added, the team were able to celebrate a very hard fought win, pushing league leaders Crawley into second place on the day!

Final match score:

1. Chelmsford – 521
2. Crawley – 512
3. Basingstoke & Mid Hants – 489
4. Bournemouth – 448
5. Liverpool – 362.5
6. Kingston & Poly – 283
7. Herne Hill – 257
8. Reading – 249.5

Going into the final match, the top of the Championship table provisionally looks like this:

1. Crawley – 23
2. Chelmsford – 22
3. Sale – 21
4. Tonbridge – 20
5. Havering – 19

With three places available for automatic promotion to the Premiership, Chelmsford will head to Bedford on Sunday 21st August feeling very confident that with hopefully a full strength team on the day, they could be celebrating a place in the top tier of the National Athletics League for next season. It certainly promises to be an exciting day in Bedford, at an event to be streamed live on the web by Vinco.