



Southern Athletics League Division 1 – Winchester – 13th Aug 2022

After a table-topping clash in their last outing, Chelmsford made the trip to Winchester on Saturday for Match 4 of their Southern Athletics League campaign, to take on Thames Valley Harriers, Southampton AC, and hosts City of Salisbury.

In blistering heat, it was set to be another crucial match, with Thames Valley sitting in third place, a point behind top-of-the-table Chelmsford, who went into the match with maximum points from their first three fixtures.

And despite missing a number of their key athletes through injury, Chelmsford pushed incredible hard throughout, before ultimately finishing in second place:

1. Thames Valley Harriers: 202
2. Chelmsford: 187
3. Southampton: 150
4. City of Salisbury: 96

On the Track, amongst the Men's team, Joe Abbott claimed an excellent victory in the 800m, whilst also taking maximum points in the 400m B race. Ben Felton again demonstrated what a great addition to the team he has been this year by winning a grueling 3000m, and also placing third in the 1500m. The team were missing both of their usual 110m Hurdlers, but Dan Botnari and Joe Wells stepped up in fine style by winning the A and B races respectively.

The Women saw some great results in the Sprints, with Kisiwaa Mensah winning both the 100m and 200m, while Erin Minton-Branfoot won both B races – and then went on to win the 400m A race. Erin's individual contributions, combined with running in both the 4x100m and 4x400m relays won her Chelmsford's Women of the Match award.

Hannah Bolton showed huge determination in the heat to take second place in both the 800m and 1500m – in the former race being joined by U17 debutante Molly Drane, who claimed second place in the B race. Molly was joined by two other U17's making their first appearance for the Senior team – Erin Curtis and Kaiyrah Williams. All three proved great assets to the team and between them covered five events and all ran in a relay.

Given the heat, the Women's planned 5000m race was shortened to a 3000m event, and V60 athlete Tracy Minton showed remarkable resilience to win points for the team in both this race AND the 1500m.

Chay Clark shrugged off a difficult journey to Winchester and consequent lack of warm-up time by claiming second place in the 400mH – a race which saw Jade Harding make a welcome return to the track – and Zion Ateba took victory in the Women's 100mH before also winning the Long Jump, and picking up valuable points in the High Jump and Javelin.

Jess and Maegan Hopkins once again combined to take maximum points in the Women's Shot, before each taking a second place in the Discus.



The Men's Field events saw Dan Botnari popping up everywhere, filling gaps left by injured team-mates, and winning both the Long Jump and the Triple Jump, as well as picking up vital points in the High Jump.

Kevin Wilson again scored extremely well in the Throws, with a win in the Shot, second place in the Discus, third in the Javelin - and a win in the B string Hammer – an event where Yasha Bobash claimed the win in the A string, with a throw just short of his 50m target for the season. Elsewhere, Oliver Early, still hampered by injury, still managed to score points in the Pole Vault, Discus and Javelin.

If confirmed, the result will mean that Thames Valley will likely take over at the top of the league, in pole position to win the Division 1 championship. Chelmsford will go to Norwich for their final match next month hoping that their rivals slip up in THEIR last match.