

After last years successful Southern Promotional final in the National Junior Athletic League, the first event of the 2011 season took place at Eton, the home of Thames Valley Harriers. As usual, the competition was top class, featuring several junior England internationals including our own Matti Mortimer. There was a strong representation from Ipswich which included some who had represented Harriers the day before at Wycombe. Unfortunately there were several call offs due to the Essex Championships being held that weekend and late sickness.

As expected there were a lot of Season Bests recorded this early, but some Personal bests were exceeded and the best of the day went to Matti Mortimer team mate Paul Dowding, who extended his PB in the javelin by over 7 metres to 60.38 winning the B event. Mortimer came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the A with a throw of 61.24 and also throwing well in the discus and hammer despite a back injury. The other male thrower Andrew Castle gained two PBs, one in the hammer with 32.26 and 29.63 in the discus. Evie Castle, Georgina Howe, Alice Robinson and Chelsea Coker threw well for the female team. Coker got PB in the hammer with 49.31 and got valuable 2<sup>nd</sup> places in the shot and discus. Howe won the B Hammer and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in her discus event. Robinson won the B Javelin while the impressive Castle not only won the B shot, but gained points in the Javelin and Triple Jump before powering to 17.75 in the 100m hurdles.

The male sprint team of Thomas Powell, Leon Holmes and Michael Sturgeon proved they were up to the mark with good performances despite the strong head wind, -5.5 recorded when Holmes got 11.88 in the 100m. Sturgeon and Powell also supported the team by participating in the Long and High Jumps respectively. They were joined in the 4x100 relay by Rene Driver the hurdler. Driver and Bradley Reed performed in both the sprint and 400 hurdles, Reed coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110m hurdles with 15.98 before getting 61.89 in the 400. Reed also came 4<sup>th</sup> in triple jump.

The sprinters, Emily Lambert and Enya Moore made their NJAL debuts this weekend, with Lambert getting 5<sup>th</sup> in the 200 with 28.86, Moore 5<sup>th</sup> in the 100. Hayley Maclean was 5<sup>th</sup> in the 200m and 4<sup>th</sup> in Long jump. Jessica Crissell got 5<sup>th</sup> in the Long Jump and Triple Jump and together with Caroline Hill, Moore and Lambert formed the 4x100 team finishing well in 5<sup>th</sup> against much older and more experienced teams. Hill also ran well in the 400 with 61.37 before joining Alex Leigh-Pearson, Alice and Emily Robinson in the 4x400 relay. Emily Robinson earlier recorded a pb of 29.92 in the 200m.

A young Max Paulin, did very well in achieving 1.85 in the High Jump despite the swirling wind. Ben Clark also turned in excellent performances in the Pole Vault (3<sup>rd</sup>) and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Long Jump with 6.71.

As a team we did not have sufficient middle distance runners to fill all the races despite the two large groups in existence at Ipswich. Ross Fawcett did really well in the 1500 with 4.38 but got injured in the steeplechase, waiting his turn patiently for the first aid team to arrive. Emma Burroughs got valuable points from the 800 and 1500 despite running the previous day. Katie-Ann Tuttlebury put in two good performances in the 800 (2.25) and 3000m (12.00.1).

Overall the team came 6<sup>th</sup> on the day ahead of Basildon and Norwich, a considerable improvement on last years start. With the next round at home, those involved in the Essex Champs will be available and we may be able to persuade others that there is nothing to worry about and they can benefit from the high standard of competition.