

National Athletic League National 1 Division
Reading, 11th June 2023

You never know how the team will fare before the season starts and a certain amount of trepidation exists as the team is prepared for its first match and you don't know what the opposition has in store.

Now the dust has settled after the first match I think the team can be very optimistic about our chances for promotion in this do or die season. This National 1 division will be removed from the NAL structure at the end of the season so to maintain our presence in the NAL for 2024 we have to be promoted into the championship where the potential for better competition exists. Athletes that want that better competition and Level 2 Licensed matches need to invest some performances in our remaining two fixtures.

Match day was hot and sultry with a light wind that favoured sprint performances and our sprinter really took advantage with 6 first and 3 second places across the 100, 200 and 400 distances. Dan Brooks posted a 10.55 Pb in the 100m a new Senior club record. New Midland 400m Champion Isacc Cory took the 200m race in a new Pb, with Ben Wells taking the victory in the 'B' race. New to the team, Dominik Gordon was also very competitive in the 'B' 100m clocking a Pb of 11.37s, he will surely improve as race experience continues. Kirsty Treglown racked up more points with a 100m 5th in 12.46s and 'B' 200m 1st. Amy Pye stepped in to the vacant 200m spot and clocked 24.98s just outside her Pb, emphatically winning the 'A' race. Katie Robbins used the 'B' 100m as 400m preparation and added great team points with a 2nd place then took another 2nd place in the 400m with a seasons best 57.04s. In the men's hurdles races it was good to see some points gathered finally after a number of seasons without an athlete capable, Adam Davenport brought his multi-event talents to the team in both the 110m High hurdles and 400m hurdles where he took maximum points and achieved two new Pb's.

Sadly in the middle distance events we had no women athletes and lost a bagful of points. On a scoring system designed for an 8 club match an empty event place means you potentially lose ground on the other teams by anything between 4 and 12 points. However the picture on the mens side was far brighter. Kane Lee doubled up in 800m and 1500m and was delighted to improve his 800m Pb to 1m54.18s with a strong front running performance. Alex Wilson backed Kane in the 800m also improving his Pb to 2m02.93s. Elliott Chard took 2nd place in the 'B' 1500m just losing out to a former Reading training acquaintance in the final 100m. After his success in the 800m, Alex Wilson put his hand up for the 2000m S/C and was rewarded with a fine 6m41.46s Pb and 2nd place. If we get more competitive attitude like that the team will be a force to be reckoned with. Another debutant for the NAL team was Finn Goodhew who front ran the 3000m taking a great victory and just missing going under 9 minutes by a fraction. His 9:00.83s was a new Pb, after the race he said he just let his concentration slip a bit before making his push for the finish, but knows he can get quicker.

In the Field events we had great coverage missing just one female Triple Jumper and one male Pole Vault.

With the quality we have in Adam Brooks and Luke Ball in High Jump you wouldn't expect anything less than double victory and they duly delivered but were pushed by a couple of Reading AC jumpers. For the women Emily Kovac debuted for the team with Libby Davidson continuing her strong support and 'anything the men can do' they matched with two first places. Lucy Durham took first in her favoured Triple Jump and made a solid Long Jump pairing with Libby Davidson delivering 2nd and 1st places respectively. Under 17's are not allowed to compete in National League unless they have achieved a high standard (set by NAL) in their event and doesn't involve using equipment not appropriate for their natural age category. So it was fantastic to have U17 Jordan Iwhiwhu making his NAL debut in both Triple and Long jumps. Jordan jumped magnificently taking first place in both events, improving his Triple Jump Pb to 12.79m.

Adam Davenport slotted in to the Triple jump with Jordan and took the 'B' string first place. Another of our exceptional U17's, Arisa Burgess had a satisfying Pole Vault performance which boosted confidence after some

recent injury concerns. Sophie Hornung paired with Arisa and between them added 22 points to the team total. In the men's Pole Vault, Liam Hillier said he was pleased to get a through a competition without his recent injury niggle and looks forward to continuing the season with improving performances, his 3m40 vault gave him a third equal placing.

Our strong throwing contingent really did the team proud making sure all available places were filled. Toby Conibear and James Viner took on all the heavy throws, Hammer, Shot and Discus scoring 50 points between them. Leah Hale took 2nd place in the women's hammer while newcomer to the club and making her NAL team debut Abby Barnfield backed up with 2nd place in the 'B'. Leah also showed great team commitment by filling Javelin and Discus spaces at the 11th hour. Joanne Smerdon also showed great team commitment throwing in her favoured Javelin event and making sure Shot and Discus were covered. They also contributed another 40 points to the team total. Libby Davidson showed her multi event worth by securing a 3rd place in 'A' string Shot put (7.76m). Adam Davenport completed a busy afternoon with the Javelin pairing up with Will Taylor also making his team debut, the pair achieving solid 2nd (38.95m) and 2nd (31.05m) places.

Finally the 4x 100m relay teams had mixed experience. The women's team of Lucy Durham, Libby Davidson, Katie Robbins and Kirsty Treglown showed their rivals a clean pair of heels with Kirsty romping home well clear for a win. A strong quartet of Dominik Gordon, Isaac Cory, Ben Wells and Daniel Brooks would surely be challenging the club senior record, unfortunately an inadequately marked track and some confusion over the start point of the baton takeover zone caused a foul takeover and a DQ.

Our Officials team, who make these competitions possible, Graham Brooks , Debbie Brooks , Mike Smerdon, Charlotte Viner, John Smerdon on Field judging duties, Jason Wyatt as Track Judge and Matt Viner Timekeeping completed our team line up. Provision of a full qualified team added the maximum 45 points to our total.

Special thanks to Stephanie Brooks (side lined with injury) who slotted in to Assistant Team Manager role and lent plenty of vocal support to the team.

The heavens opened with a deluge of biblical proportions for the 4x400m relay and while we had no teams, onlookers sheltered at the back of the stand as a couple of teams splashed their way around a rapidly flooding track.

Next match is Saturday 15th July, Trafford and with exam season and other commitments over hopefully we can continue building this team to maintain momentum.