

## BRITISH ATHLETICS LEAGUE 07 – REPORT ON MATCH 1 AT STOKE

1. The first BAL Division 3 match of the season at a sunny Northwood Stadium produced a runaway winner with 374 points (Basingstoke), Rugby and Northampton well adrift in 8<sup>th</sup> place (174 points) and a tight match for the remaining places. In events, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Teams were only separated by 28 points. **Notts AC finished 4<sup>th</sup>** (for full result see further below).

2. This was a good performance given the overall strength of the Team, which was missing a number of first-choice athletes for a variety of reasons. Also, both long jumpers got injured early in their event, which affected the outcome of both that event and the later performances in the triple jump (in which **Adam Lyons** performed well as a last-minute substitute, having just completed the pole vault, in which he failed narrowly to set a PB of 3.40). We hope that both Mark (Lawrence), who travelled from London for his re-appearance for the Club after several years' absence, and Jamie Blowfield will be restored to full fitness soon.

3. As will be seen from the detailed results (attached), there was a consistent contribution from all present, which included a number of 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>, places. Encouragingly, too, for early season, times/distances were not too far from PBs in a number of instances. Performances deserving of special mention were as follows:

- A 1<sup>st</sup> for **Rob Careless** in the “A string” Hammer. (His distance (57.11) put him in the shortlist for the “athlete of the match”, and a £100 prize, but on this occasion he missed out to a 52.2 400M Hurdles time. Better luck next time, Rob!)
- 1<sup>st</sup> “A” string places for **Matt Ashley** (U20) in the high jump (1.95, missing a PB 1.98 narrowly), **Matt Blunden** in the 3000M SC (9.31.4) and **Bruce Raeside** in the 1500M (3.54.0).
- 1<sup>st</sup> “B” string places for **Chris Shorthouse** (U20) in the hammer (52.52), **Colin Palmer** in the 3000M SC and **Ian Boneham** in the 5000M (15.11.8). Ian’s run, and performance, is particularly encouraging because he has been returning from illness and a series of injuries. He was only 2 seconds behind Tim (Hartley). Until 10.30 on the Friday night, he had been expecting to run 1500M for the Midlands’ Team at Yate! Colin, likewise, has had a disrupted winter with injury and it was nice to see him rewarded for his battle to get back to fitness.

4. The final Team placings, and scores, were as follows: 1. Basingstoke (374), 2. Kingston and Poly (303.5), 3. Crawley (282), 4. Notts AC (273), 5. Medway and Maidstone (268), 6. City of Stoke (257), 7. Southampton (254.5), 8. Rugby and Northampton (174).

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

5. Although other Teams are also likely to be strengthened for the later matches, we had so many quality folk unavailable last Saturday – on my count 17 athletes (excluding U17s who might have competed) - that our potential to do better must give us a fighting chance of improving our league position and getting into a promotion position. But, potential is illusory if, in practice, we cannot get people to commit to the Club and to turn out for the remaining fixtures when they conceivably can. For the record, the remaining dates are:
  - 2 June (Southampton)
  - 7 July (Abingdon)
  - 4 August (Derby)
6. We must also move heaven and earth to avoid the situation at Stoke where we failed to provide two “B” string athletes and, hence, scored “nil points” in those events.
7. The more first-choice athletes that can be fielded will also have a knock-on effect for the Midlands’ Team, leaving Alan Marsh the potential luxury of fielding a much bigger squad of athletes. It is important to maintain the level of competition for these supporting team-mates.
8. Alan Marsh and I will be in touch with you all later this week, to establish the potential Teams for 2 June.
9. In the meantime, my thanks to everyone (in both Teams) who participated at the weekend.

Dave Denton  
7 May 2007