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Bedford and County AC Newsletter

September 2022

About the Newsletter

This is the second edition of a new quarterly Bedford and County newsletter. If you have something you'd like to contribute to the next edition, please email webmaster@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk. This could be an outstanding individual or team performance, a write up of a favourite training session, a memorable performance from years gone by (see the 'Blast from the Past' section), or something else that might be interesting or informative.

News From the Teams

Seniors

Craig Emmerson writes, "After a season of what ifs, near misses and a lot of frustration, Bedford & County's senior squad finally had reason to celebrate (and they certainly did!) with victory in the National Athletics League Championship plate.

After narrowly missing out on qualification for the cup competition, featuring the top 8 teams after the first three round of regular league matches, Bedford went into the match with high hopes of victory. Hopes were further heightened when Bournemouth, on equal league points going into the match, declared a much weaker team than expected. However, a one-off match can spring many a surprise, league form went out of the window and Bedford were met with an unlikely challenge from Herne Hill Harriers.

Despite some early setbacks in the form of some unfortunate no shows, which were crucially covered at the last minute, it was Bedford who took an early lead, with a string of strong performances, including 800m victory for Jamie Webster and pole vault victories for Frankie Johnson (A) and Ed Foy (B). By the half-way point, Bedford held a lead of 33 points point over Herne Hill. Some may have called the match for Bedford there. However, it was only just beginning and the team managers knew it. This was a match where every point counted and Gaps in events would be punished. It was no time for complacency or miscalculation. With no results update for nearly 2 and a half hours, confidence was replaced with tension. The tension only increased when a series of results updates saw rivals Herne Hill move to within 7 points, before briefly taking the lead after the sprint relays. Bedford were eventually able to shake off the challenge of Herne Hill, in part due to 1500m victories for Sam Knee-Robinson (A), Ben Davies (B) and Lauren Nicholls.

With Herne Hill finally vanquished, a new challenger emerged for the home team, old foes Peterborough & Nene Valley, who had crept back into the fight with a series of impressive results in the throws. With fewer than 5 events to be scored, they had closed the gap to less than 10 points.

With only the 4x400 relays left to run on the track, Bedford would need some luck and solid performances in the field to secure victory. Bedford's luck came in the form of men's team manager, Craig Emmerson, allowing first leg runner, Ed Foy, to miss the race in order to finish the javelin. The gamble paid off with Ed taking the B string win and a crucial 10 points. Ed was replaced in the 4x400 by Joe Strange- who is no stranger when it comes to stepping



*The NAL Team celebrate
winning the Plate*

into relay squads at the last minute! Strong performances continued as top-ranked UK 17 high jumper, Gracie Wall, took victory with a third-time clearance at 1.73m - Gracie finishes the NAL season with a clean sweep of victories. Another performance of note came from Belinda Sergeant, who had two 11.70m triple jump leaps - one with no wind and one with an excess! Despite Peterborough's best efforts, Bedford weathered the storm and emerged victorious after 39 scoring events (including official's points). The celebrations could now begin. Team managers Craig Emmerson and Jemma Eastwood collected the trophy together, before the obligatory team photo, only to find themselves being thrown into the water jump (though they were quickly joined by the rest of the team!).

Though some may downplay the significance of a plate final win, this was far from a secondary achievement. The day saw Bedford's athletes pull together with a real team spirit that has been needing to emerge for a number of years and will hopefully be the catalyst to more team success.

This is what happens when a squad of athletes pull together and work as a team!"

Young Athletes

Jodi Henderson writes, "It has been a pleasure being Boys' Team Manager for summer 2022. We have seen plenty of fantastic performances on the track and personal bests broken. I've watched the team develop and grow in confidence over the summer, so was disappointed that we didn't get a final opportunity to compete due to the extreme heat. A big thank you to the athletes who, over the course of the season, supported the team by entering events they normally wouldn't. This has helped the team scores in both the EYAL and YDL – great teamwork!

In the EYAL, we finished in 2nd in the North division with 1158 points. Unfortunately, we didn't qualify for the final, but I am very hopeful for a great 2023 season with a solid team of athletes.

In the YDL, we finished on 766 points and in 5th place in our division. This does mean that Team Bedfordshire will be relegated to division 2, but we will keep our fingers crossed that our fixtures next year are closer to home.

Well done to the following athletes who have been selected to represent Bedfordshire in the Inter-counties in Oxford on 10 September – great job and good luck to you:

- Bejay Moseray – 80m Hurdles and Long Jump
- Zaphaniah Bryan – High Jump
- Oliver Wilson – 1500m
- Dane Robertshaw – Shot Put
- Quadri Orunsolu – 100m
- Euan Supple – 1500m

For now, the baton for the boys' team will be passed over for the road relays and cross country season. See you in 2023! Jodi"

Masters

Jim Keech writes, "Sunday 4th September saw the final of the Eastern Masters League take place at Bedford with a full programme of events for Men and Women, covering the ages of 35 to over 70.

Injuries and availability for Bedford made the task of wrestling the trophy from Milton Keynes AC difficult, but with athletes doubling and trebling up and more, and some racing out of age group, the overall result was in doubt right up to the final relays.

Great efforts throughout the day resulted in two M50 league records for Simon Coombes (2:11.76 for 800m and 4:24.00 in the 1500m – these both also Bedford and County M50 club records), and to round off the day Dave Folgate M70 with a leap of 8.87m in the triple jump won the award for Best Field Performance (81.8% Age related), and Andrew Leach M55 took the Best Track Performance (92.4% Age related) with his 9:42.17 in the 3000m.



*The Men's Masters
Team Took Silver in
the EMAC League
Final*

One of the notable performances of the day was in the 2k walk where Adam Hills and John Borgas repeated the age group triumphs from 2021.

Across the field programme Bedford athletes managed to cover all the events. Well done to Simon Eastwood M50, Graeme Packman M60, James Danobrega M45, Gavin Fordham M40, and Roy Chambers M35 in the throwing events, and James, Gavin & Simon, Philip Bowers M50, Richard Phelan M60, Dave Folgate M70, who combined to cover all the vaults & jumps.

On the track Pete Webster, Steve Bass, Richard Phelan and Jim Keech covered admirably in the sprints, supporting the middle distance runners Ewan Wilson, who ran out of age group all afternoon, Simon Coombes, Charlie Palmer and Andrew Leach who all took either first or second place in their events.

Special note should be made of the efforts of John Borgas M75, who not only took first place in the M60 2K walk, but also covered the M60 800m and 3000m at short notice, and those points together with Jim Keech's M50 hammer result meant that Bedford secured the silver medal place for the second consecutive year in a close ran competition."

FINAL RESULTS

TEAM	POINTS
Milton Keynes AC	226
Bedford & County AC	221
Peterborough /Nene Valley AC	219
Chelmsford AC	216.5
Thurrock AC	214
Southend AC	198.5
Cambridge & Coleridge AC	112
Ryston Runners AC	106

Male Masters Road & Cross Country

If you are interested in representing the club in Cross Country or Road events in the various Male Vet (M40, M50, M55, M60) categories, please contact Jim Black, who has taken on the team manager role. You can contact Jim Black by emailing vetmenscountryandroadmanager@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk.

Wheelchair Section

Howard Darbon writes, "After a quiet start to the season, the club's Wheelchair Athletes have been involved in a number of races since the end of July.

Competing at Sandy on 28th July 2022 were Katie Connolly and Sean Chigumba.

Both athletes set season opening times in the 100m and 800m. For Sean, times of 25.1 seconds and 3:02.8 were his first experiences of competition in a racing chair. Katie set a personal best in the 100m of 27.6 seconds, and her time of 4:13.8 in the 800m was her first attempt at the 2 lap distance.

Two weeks later, the club took 4 athletes to Stoke Mandeville Stadium for the BWAA grand prix series. Sean and Katie were joined by Varun Bandi and Hugo Cracknell. All athletes competed over 100m, 200m and 400m with Sean and Katie also taking on the 800m for the second time. Personal bests tumbled. Notable performances were Sean's 1st place in the 200m (38.97) Katie's 200m (44.58) and 800m (3:10.15) which was 1 min 3 seconds quicker than at Sandy just 2 weeks earlier. Other impressive times came in the 100m from Hugo (23.47) and Varun (18.67), the latter being Varun's first race since a leg-break left him unable to train or compete in his racing chair.

All four athletes will return to Stoke for the final BWAA competition of the season on Saturday 10th September.



Sean Chigumba won two medals at the England Athletics U15 & U17 National Championships

Sean Chigumba also competed at our home track as part of England Athletics Under 15 & 17 National Championships, improving his personal bests in both the 100m (21.42) and 800m, collecting two bronze and one silver medal.

We have just received notice that Varun has been selected for the 2022 to 2024 England Athletics Youth Talent Programme. This is fantastic news and demonstrates the progress that both Varun and Bedford Wheelchair Racing has made since its formation nearly 3 years ago. It is also a big pat on the back for the section's three coaches - Zoe Luscombe, Michael Blunt and Sharmula Harman. Well done all!"

Outstanding Individual Performances

Seniors

Raph Bojou broke the club's 27 year-old 100m record at the Dutch Championships with a time of 10.27 seconds on 24th June. The previous record of 10.33 seconds was set by former European Junior Champion, Danny Joyce, and had stood since 1995. Raph has since starred at the European championships, anchoring home the Dutch team which finished 4th in the 4 x 100 metres relay, an event that was won by Great Britain. You can watch the race on YouTube: https://youtu.be/lK63-oh2y_8. The Netherlands are in lane 3, in orange vests.

There was also success for our sprinters closer to home, with Aston Lockwood winning the 100m at the Eastern Championships (11.19), and finishing second in the 200m (22.96).

Since the last newsletter, there have been some fine middle distance performances from the seniors. Sam Winters and Alfie Yabsley set excellent 1500m PBs of 3:47.65 and 3:49.10 respectively, whilst Sam Knee-Robinson set a new 1500m PB of 3:51.52, and Jamie Webster managed a six-second 1500m improvement with a 3:54.01 mark. Ben Davies was near to his 800m best with a 1:54.84 clocking at Watford. In the 5000m, Jack Goodwin competed in the British Championships, Harry Brodie set a PB of 14:31.78, and Craig Emmerson got agonizingly close to breaking the 15 minute barrier whilst clocking a PB of 15:00.16. On the roads, Craig won the Bedfordshire 5k Championship in a PB of 15:39, whilst the men's team won the team event, with Craig, Alan Turnbull (17:07) and Henry Bambrick (17:08) as the scorers.



Sam on his way to a 1500m PB at Watford

Juniors

Gracie Wall's summer was full of medals. The Under 17 High Jumper claimed silver at the English Schools Championships, silver again representing England at the Schools International, gold in the Southern Championships, and then rounded off her season with gold again at the UK School Games in Loughborough. Gracie finishes the outdoor season top of the UK Under 17 High Jump rankings with 1.76 metres.

Alex Alston also enjoyed a successful summer on the national stage. Alex won the English Schools Under 20 Men's 2000m Steeplechase in a new PB of 5:51.26, and he broke his own club Under 20 3000m Steeplechase record twice—the second time was at the UK Senior Championships in Manchester on 25th June, where he ran 9:00.35. Alex is now off to university in America – good luck Stateside Alex!

Our third English Schools medalist was Euan Supple, who took bronze in the U17 Men's 1500m Steeplechase with a PB of 4:31.68. Euan then followed this up with another bronze medal in the same event at the England Athletics U15 and U17 Championships.

Our other English Schools Championships competitors were:

- DJ Agbenu: U20M 100m - made the semi-final - 11.36
- Lyla Danobrega: U17W - 7th in her heat - 4:43.75 (PB)
- Milly Dunger: U17W 3000m - 8th - 10:07.28
- Sadie Werrett: U17W Javelin - 5th - 38.52m



Gracie in action at the Schools International



Euan

Supple claimed 1500m SC bronze at the EA U17 Championships



*Milly Dunger
won gold in the
Southern U17 3000m*



*Tenny James claimed a
silver at the British
Masters Championships*

Milly won the Under 17 3000m at the Southern Championships in a new PB of 10:05.56, whilst Lyla set a new club Under 17 and Senior Women's record of 5:22.8 for the 1500m Steeplechase with a win in the Southern Athletics League in what was her event debut!

At the Eastern Championships, there were wins for Ben Moseray in the Under 20 100m (11.29), and Jessica Frost in the Under 17 Long Jump (5.02 metres, which was a PB).

Masters

Congratulations to Jemma Eastwood, who became World Masters W40 Pole Vault champion, with a vault of 3.20 metres in Tampere, Finland in July. Tenny James won gold as part of the British M60 4 x 400m relay team who set a new national M60 record of 3:56.85. Alek Swiecicki won Team Gold in the M70 Cross County.

At the British Masters Championships, there were further medals for Jemma (a win in the W40 Pole Vault), Tenny (second in the M60 100m Hurdles), and Graeme Packman (third in the M65 Discus).

Ellie Garraway finished the outdoor season ranked in the top 10 for her age group in both the 800m (2:31.62), and the 1500m (5:13.50) – well done Ellie!

On the roads, Alan Turnbull has been in record-breaking form: between 1st May and 4th September, he set club M55 records for 5K (17:07), 5 miles (28:15), 10k (34:41), 10 miles (57:20), Half-Marathon (76:35) and 20 Miles (2hrs 10m 21 secs). Perhaps that is a club record for setting records???

Steve Horton and Andy Blair enjoyed success at the Bedfordshire AAA 10k Championships: Steve was the first M40 home (36:34), and Andy was the first M55 (38:26).

Club Development Plan

The Committee continue to work on various aspects of the Club Development Plan. Club officers recently met with Kirsty Fardell, from England Athletics (EA), to discuss a range of issues including EA Club Standards and the Club Development Plan.

Much of the work to date has been to ensure club governance, policies and procedures are put in place. This will enable the Club to function efficiently and meet EA Club Standard requirements.

- Version 7 of the Development Plan can be seen under the “About Us” tab on the Club website, www.bedfordandcountyac.org.uk. The RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating indicates the progress being made.
- Also visit the newly updated Club Website (under the Governance tab) to see the Safeguarding Policies and procedures, Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, Privacy Notice and Timetable for Review of club policies. The Welfare Officer’s role description can also be seen here.
- Other policies such as Inclusion, and Health and Safety, and the Volunteer Co-ordinator Role Description will be approved and uploaded soon.
- Proposed changes to the Club Articles of Association will be discussed at the Club EGM on Tuesday 27th September.
- The “Get Involved” section on the website appeals to volunteers for their help. Further sessions to recruit parents and members will be held during the autumn.

Volunteering – Be Part of the Team!

Athletic clubs can only function because of the support we get from volunteers – parents, carers, supporters, ex-athletes....in fact anyone with an interest in the sport and wanting to help athletes to perform. Everyone at Bedford and County athletics club is a volunteer – could this be you too?

The amount of time required can be as little as an hour, we are always willing to liaise and be flexible around people’s availability.

How can you get involved and keep our club running?

We have lots of openings for volunteers and provide support and fully fund training for all roles that require specific skills. We are always looking for:

- Officials to help on match days
- Volunteers to help with events, particularly when we have home matches
- Coaches and assistants

Athletics competitions are a great opportunity for our volunteers and parents to enjoy being part of the club and contribute to our performance at them. This could be as a qualified official (for which there is a simple entry level course that the club would pay for), or as a parent helper (raking sand pits, collecting throwing equipment, etc). Being an official earns points for the team and being a parent helper is being part of the team!

Coaching is possibly one of the most rewarding roles within the club. This is your chance to develop the athletes of the future and instil in them a love of a great sport. To see athletes of all ages and ability learn a new skill is truly rewarding. You can decide the level of your involvement and the level of qualification you want to attain. The club also welcomes interest from qualified coaches.

If you are interested in either coaching or officiating or feel that you have a specific skill that you can offer, please contact us at committee@bedfordandcountyac.org.uk and someone will get back to you to discuss further. Please also check out our current volunteer opportunities at [Volunteering at Bedford and County AC](#).

Come along and offer your help, give it a go!

We are committed to providing an environment that is welcoming to all, is a fun, positive environment for athletes, volunteers and parents and we support the physical, emotional and social development of all our members.

Blast from the Past

On 12 August 1979, Ann-Marie Devally made a huge breakthrough. She won in UK Women's High Jump in a personal best and UK Championships record of 1.86M. It was also a UK 19 year old record, placed her 2nd on the UK all time senior list, and equalled the qualifying standard for the 1980 Moscow Olympics. She was the first member of Bedford and County to become a Senior National Champion.

The following week, representing England, she won the Edinburgh Highland Games, again with 1.86 metres, to set a Scottish All Comers record. Later in her career she set a British Indoor record of 1.91 metres.

Upcoming Fixtures

League Matches and Championships

No matter what age you are, there are opportunities to compete for the club in league matches, and county, area and national championships over the next few months. For details, see the fixture list on the Bedford and County AC website:

<https://www.bedfordandcountyac.org.uk/index.php/fixtures>.

Open Meetings

There are too many open meetings out there to list on the club website, but one good way to find an open meeting, is to use the fixture lookup facility on the Power of Ten website:

<https://www.thepowerof10.info/fixtures/fixtureslookup.aspx?datefr>

(you will also be able to see national and regional rankings on the Power of Ten website, and all your results – try searching for your name!)