

SOMERSET SCHOOLS' ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
JUNIOR (UNDER-13 AND UNDER-14) CHAMPIONSHIPS

Yeovil Athletics Arena
Wednesday 6 June 2007

All eligible schools were notified after Easter with entries due by half-term. The Championships Committee of 6 then met on Tuesday 29 May to prepare the event, and final details were sent to all competing schools at the end of half-term.

Most entries were in order, with staff finding it much easier to fill in the forms accurately now that each age group is of a different colour, however, some schools completely ignored the simplest of instructions so there were still a few of the usual problems:

- a) Schools failing to return the officials' form – even though this is a condition of entry.
- b) Schools failing to include entry fees – involving more communication after the meeting at a particularly busy time of the season.
- c) One school's entries arrived late as the Finance Department had not noted the urgency for payment and forwarding of the entry forms.

We managed to overcome all those obstacles though, and glorious weather on the day, together with our group of loyal Somerset County AA officials and the tremendous enthusiasm of the athletes combined to make the event a thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

Entries were received from only 21 schools (down from 25 in 2006) with the following breakdown by age group:

Under-13 Girls – 88 (115)
Under-13 Boys – 92 (116)
Under-14 Girls - 142 (159)
Under-14 Boys – 137 (174)
Total entries - 459 (564)

Fully-automatic timing and photo-finish were in operation thanks to David Cooke, with the images on sale to the athletes.

The general standard was encouraging in most events and there were two Championship Best Performances:

Under-14 Girls' 1500m: Isla Ness (Queen's College) – 5-02.94

Under-14 Boys' Pole Vault: George Harris (Stanchester School) – 2m 25

Results were sent to all competing schools as soon as possible after the Championships, together with certificates (for the first three in each event) and County Champion badges. I included a photo-finish image of an athlete from each school (with David Cooke's permission).

I extend my thanks to all those colleagues in the Association who were involved in this meeting – surely a valuable early experience for our youngest talent.

RICHARD BOWDEN

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Report on Senior Track & Field Championships

Although the year / season was marked by much rain curtailing, I am sure, much teaching and training these championships were held in fine weather albeit at times overcast.

The entry was, not surprisingly, somewhat low, as the following statistics show:

	S	M	Y	T	Total	events	max athletes	%
JG	20	14	28	31	93	10	160	58%
JB	26	16	26	23	91	14	224	41%
IG	10	9	25	35	79	16	256	31%
IB	30	25	29	42	126	17	272	46%
SG	2	9	23	15	49	16	256	19%
SB	4	15	21	39	79	17	272	29%
	92	88	152	185	517	90	1440	36%

but the overall standard of competition was high with many athletes gaining ESAA entry standard and the following two athletes securing championship best performances, an increasingly difficult achievement.

Junior Boys Discus	45.54	L. Biddlecombe	Yeovil
Inter Girls Discus	42.75	K. Wickman	Mendip

In the team championship Taunton, with their large team, proved to be dominant.

The meeting again was a vehicle for modern technology.

- Dave Cooke again received entries and transferred these to his photo-finish equipment. We are indebted to him for this as athletes and officials benefit from the accuracy obtained.
- In the field EDM was used on one long throw. This had the very marked effect of decreasing the time needed for each event whilst providing an opportunity for officials to use new skills learnt during the winter.
- Field event officials and athletes were reminded that the first three had to report to presentation and this year Dick and myself 'lost' few athletes. Again the dialogue in this area proved to be most valuable for selection.

This championship could not take place without the help from a huge number of officials, my thanks to all for their efforts during the long day.

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SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Team Trophy Winners

		T	Y	M	S	Trophies
Junior Girls	place score	120.5	103.5	121	32	Mendip
	bonus	4	4	9	1	
	TOTAL	124.5	107.5	130	33	
Inter Girls	place score	175	132	98	36	Taunton
	bonus	4	5	9	1	
	TOTAL	179	137	107	37	
Senior Girls	place score	115	139	82	14	Yeovil
	bonus	7	4	9	2	
	TOTAL	122	143	91	16	
Relays		20	19	24	0	
Overall Girls		445.5	406.5	352	86	Taunton
Junior Boys	place score	92	155.5	111	128.5	Yeovil
	bonus	1	6	4	7	
	TOTAL	93	161.5	115	135.5	
Inter Boys	place score	177.5	95	119	158.5	Taunton
	bonus	4	3	9	6	
	TOTAL	181.5	98	128	164.5	
Senior Boys	place score	207	111	106	34	Taunton
	bonus	2	1	4	0	
	TOTAL	209	112	110	34	
Relays		22	13	22	0	
Overall Boys		505.5	384.5	375	334	Taunton
Girls Track	place score	205.5	191.5	178	36	
	bonus	4	7	8	1	
	TOTAL	209.5	198.5	186	37	
Boys Track	place score	259	177	219	125	
	bonus	3	3	13	2	
	TOTAL	262	180	232	127	
Overall Track		471.5	378.5	418	164	Taunton
Girls Field	place score	205	183	123	46	
	bonus	11	6	19	3	
	TOTAL	216	189	142	49	
Boys Field	place score	217.5	184.5	117	196	
	bonus	5	7	4	10	
	TOTAL	222.5	191.5	121	206	
Overall Field		438.5	380.5	263	255	Taunton
Overall Relays		42	32	46	0	Mendip
Overall		952	791	727	419	Taunton

SOUTH-WEST SCHOOLS' AA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Yeovil Athletics Arena **Saturday 16 June 2007**

Following the Somerset Schools' AA Track and Field Championships, the selection committee met at Wellington School on Sunday 10 June to select the team for the South-West Championships. We enjoyed the customary superb hospitality and, as usual, the meeting took over five hours, even though the Championships would be on our 'home' track and there were no complicated transport arrangements to be considered. In total, 119 athletes were selected to fill the 140 places, and we covered all events this year, however, on the day, 2 events were uncontested by Somerset: Intermediate Girls' 300m Hurdles and Pole Vault. 28 schools and colleges were represented compared with 32 in 1996, 32 in 1997, 33 in 1998, 33 in 1999, 34 in 2000, 33 in 2001, 33 in 2002, 35 in 2003, 29 in 2004, 32 in 2005 and 32 in 2006. The consistency of these figures serves to re-emphasise the fact that there remains a fair number of schools and colleges which fail to take part significantly at Area or County level – invariably some pupils of potential South-West standard are not afforded even the earliest opportunity to demonstrate their ability. Schools and colleges with selected athletes were notified on the Monday morning, and their subsequent communication to pupils and students appeared to be a little better this year, so fewer had to be 'chased' for confirmation of availability on the Thursday afternoon.

Although we had requested all athletes to meet at Yeovil College Sports Hall for a team meeting at 9.30am, a few experienced competitors were given permission to arrive later and report directly to the track. This was appreciated by their parents and all turned up in good time for collection of numbers, warm-up and competition.

Administration on the day was carried out in the Sports Hall prior to the team meeting with team managers Julie Harrison, Charlotte Fisher and Tina Jones particularly helpful and efficient in the distribution of vests, ties and kit bags. I collected all the money but as usual, some athletes failed to pay by the time of competition and in fact the final cheque was received on Wednesday 3 October! In my 2006 report I suggested further discussion on our policy regarding athletes travelling on the team coach when the Championships are 'away from home'; this year's discussion point may well concern our policy in relation to the payment of fees – the Treasurer and Senior Team Manager are having to spend inordinate amounts of time in repeatedly requesting payments, even months after Championships have taken place.

Having won 8 of the 12 trophies in 1997, 4 in 1998 and 9 in 1999, I reported last year that the twenty-first century had yet to be as fruitful. Devon are invariably formidable opponents and have dominated in recent years. 2000 saw us claim 2 titles, with 3 in 2001, 2 in 2002, 2 in 2003 and the same number in 2004. Sadly, 2005 saw us slump to just a single piece of silverware, the Overall Boys' shield. We recovered a little in 2006 with 3 victories but even the most optimistic amongst us could not have predicted the wonderful team performance we were to witness at Yeovil! Somerset's 9 trophy haul was made up of the following victories: Junior Girls, Senior Girls, Overall Girls, Intermediate Boys, Senior Boys, Overall Boys, Overall Track Events, Overall Field Events and Overall Champions.

In addition, there were some sparkling individual displays, with Liam Biddlecombe leading the way with outstanding Championship Best Performances in the Junior Boys' Shot and Discus and Katie Wickman setting new figures in the Intermediate Girls' Discus.

Our 2007 South-West Champions are:

Junior Boys – 2nd – 73 points (Dorset 92)

Triple Jump	James Lelliott	(Millfield)	12m 46
Discus	Liam Biddlecombe	(Holyrood)	47m 18 CBP
Shot	Liam Biddlecombe	(Holyrood)	15m 44 CBP

Intermediate Boys – 1st – 99 points

400m	Ollie Lindsay-Hague	(Millfield)	51.90
1500m	Nathan Young	(Whitstone)	4-07.82
1500m Steeplechase	Charlie Maclean	(King's College)	4-33.31

Senior Boys – 1st – 115 points

100m	Nick Clements	(Yeovil College)	11.21
200m	Tim Sayers	(Millfield)	22.94
400m	Patrick North	(Millfield)	49.67
4 x 100m Relay			44.59

Junior Girls – 1st – 60 points

High Jump	Alex Macleod	(Millfield)	1m 58
Discus	Sidi Duke	(Queen's College)	27m 95
Shot	Charlotte Kanini-Parsons	(Millfield)	9m 89
Javelin	Charlotte Kanini-Parsons	(Millfield)	32m 01

Intermediare Girls – 2nd – 91 points (Devon 101)

100m	Kitty Eleyae	(Millfield)	12.18
1500m	Catherine Blew	(Castle)	4-43.48
3000m	Rachel Heard	(Kingsmead)	11-24.7
Discus	Katie Wickman	(Millfield)	42m 05 CBP

Senior Girls – 1st – 95 points

1500m	Laura Parker	(West Somerset)	4-40.29
High Jump	Hatty Scaramanga	(Millfield)	1m 72
Shot	Sophie Thomas	(Millfield)	11m 33
Javelin	Sophie Thomas	(Millfield)	38m 70

22 event wins lifted the whole team and bettered our 'normal' performance of around 17 in 2001, 2004 and 2006. None of this would have been possible without the excellent work of a dedicated, loyal group of team managers and the athletes would wish to thank them most sincerely, I am sure.

A large number of our officials were on duty, together with presentation, scoring and announcing teams, and we can be proud of the contribution made by Somerset personnel to ensure the smooth running of what is a huge meeting, superbly organised by Brian Baker.

RICHARD BOWDEN

E.S.A.A. SAINSBURY'S TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham Friday/Saturday 13/14 July 2007

Following Somerset's tremendous performance at South-West level, we felt we had every reason to be optimistic as we set about selecting the best 25 athletes for the ESAA Championships.

61 athletes at or around the required standard were considered in 65 events in 2004, whereas in 2005 we found ourselves considering 'only' 39 across 48 events. The 2006 'cast' consisted of 39 athletes once again, across 45 events, but our strength in depth was reflected this year in that we considered 51 athletes over 59 events. The usual meticulous selection process was carried out at Wellington School where we enjoyed superb hospitality, as always.

Despite losing a National Standard athlete to the World Youth Championships and two of National Entry Standard through injury and holiday commitments, we were able to select what was potentially our strongest team in almost 20 years, and for only the second time in five years we arrived at the Championships with a full team of 25. A measure of our strength is that the athlete who replaced the World Youth competitor finished 6th with a National Standard!

Transport arrangements ran smoothly with Berry's Coaches, as usual, with pick-up points at Wellington, Taunton and Puriton. A number of athletes travelled independently and met the team in Birmingham.

Accommodation was at the Apollo Hotel on Hagley Road (where we stayed in 2005) with athletes in twin rooms. The food was very good and we were pleased to find ourselves in accommodation with fellow 'country cousins' Cumbria and Devon.

The table below indicates the performance of this year's team and clearly shows the excellent quality of our top athletes who secured a fine crop of National Standards. Over half the team finished in the top eight, almost two-thirds scored points and almost a third peaked at precisely the right time to gain a Personal Best. Our overall score was by some margin our best-ever total.

Our overall performance is analysed below:

	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Personal Bests	9	8	7	8	7	5	12	9	10	12	3	12	8	8	6	9	7
Entry Standard	13	10	9	7	7	11	11	9	9	6	7	6	8	6	6	7	7
National Standard	7	6	2	7	4	2	6	6	8	6	2	8	3	5	4	7	8
Top 6 (8 from '94)	17	8	5	13	11	12	12	12	12	13	7	11	9	11	11	12	13
Scorers	21	15	13	15	13	15	19	16	17	15	11	17	12	14	12	14	16
Total Score	88.8	54	30	66	62	59	75	85	78	87	44	68	40	78	57	83	98
Trophies	SB	SB	-	SG	-	-	SG	SG	-	SB	-	JB	-	SG	-	JB	IG
	O'all						SB			IG		SB				SG	O'all

The team scores and positions for each age group were:

Junior Boys	5 =	16 points	(28)
Intermediate Boys	3	20 points	(30)
Senior Boys		No score	(38)
Junior Girls	4	11 points	(18)
Intermediate Girls	1	31 points	
Senior Girls	3	20 points	(29)
Aggregate Total	1	98 points	

Although it is impossible to measure the contribution of the team managers in scientific terms, I certainly feel that all the athletes would agree that they were prepared as thoroughly as possible throughout the week-end, and particularly in the lead-up to competition. Having taken 7 team managers to Gateshead in 2006, this year we took 8, rather than our stipulated 5, and this says a tremendous amount about the loyalty and reliability of those members of staff who want to be part of our set-up. We welcomed Tina Jones and Gary Jennings (both competitors at this level not too long ago) and both played key roles in our resounding success. I trust they enjoyed their involvement with a truly talented, determined, pleasant group of youngsters.

RICHARD BOWDEN