

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

**Yeovil Athletics Arena  
Wednesday 10 June 2009**

All eligible schools were notified after Easter with entries due by half-term. The Championships Committee of 5 then met on Thursday 28 May to prepare the event, and final details were sent to all competing schools on Tuesday 2 June.

Most entries were in order, with staff once again 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) Two schools ignored the official entry forms and chose to construct their own. The result was that athletes were entered in events which were not offered in that particular age group. Thus, further (avoidable) communication was required prior to the event.
- d) Three schools entered a number of athletes in three events (one for a second consecutive year), causing enormous confusion and frustration.
- e) One school provided its own numbers despite clear instructions not to do so. Therefore the organisers were unaware the team had arrived and the staff failed to collect the revised officials' duty sheet enclosed with the numbers.
- f) One school's entries arrived twelve days late as the Finance Department had not noted the urgency for payment and forwarding of the entry forms. These entries were refused with the forms and fees returned.

A note included in the initial information reminding staff that entries could only be made through athletes' schools alleviated the problem of coaches and parents feeling the need to contact us with pleas to enter pupils whose talent had not been noted (or had been ignored) by their teachers.

Warm 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 26 schools (the same number as last year, but up from 25 in 2006 and 21 in 2007) with the following breakdown by age group:

**Under-13 Girls** – 137 (115 in 2006, 88 in 2007, 127 in 2008)

**Under-13 Boys** – 113 (116 in 2006, 92 in 2007, 135 in 2008)

**Under-14 Girls** – 183 (159 in 2006, 142 in 2007, 127 in 2008)

**Under-14 Boys** – 173 (174 in 2006, 137 in 2007, 159 in 2008)

**Total entries** - 606 (564 in 2006, 459 in 2007, 548 in 2008)

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 with one Championship Best Performance:

**Under-14 Boys' Pole Vault**: Dan Huntley (Westfield School) – 2m55.

Results were sent to all competing schools on Friday 19 June, 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) wherever possible.

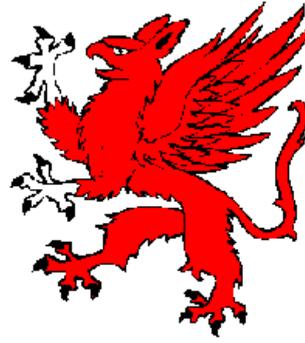
This meeting surely remains a valuable early experience for our youngest talent.

**RICHARD BOWDEN**

# SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

## **Secretary**

Mr. B. Baker  
16 Holly Court  
Frome  
BA11 2SQ  
Tel. 01373 464766  
Mobile. 07855749543  
Email. brianssaa@blueyonder.co.uk



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## **Senior Track & Field Championships Report 2009**

I find it quite difficult to write a comprehensive report on the senior track and field championships because now that the 'new' entry system, managed by Dave Cooke incorporating computerisation linked to the photo-finish equipment, is very much up and running I am effectively out of the loop!

In the previous year's discussions with Dave we had tentatively indicated that entries would be electronic from the area secretaries. This though proved to be too ambitious and thus as usual entries were made by hand. Dave had to add any new athletes to his data bank before being able to draw up heats and pools. Because of the dilemma thrown up by the software if heats are amalgamated or 'countless' substitutions made on the day we insisted that entries should be in by the due date, which was made later than previous years, and further insisted that there were to be no substitutions on the day.

From my perspective this led to a 'sharper' meeting albeit with a number of events collapsed to straight finals. Again, though, time was lost during late morning due I feel to the inbuilt pressure within the programme, the organisation of 'new' races at their start and the lack of track officials to organise ahead of the programme. Thanks must go wholeheartedly, however, to all officials and helpers; quite simply such a large meeting does not take place without their day-long efforts.

Within the field the use of EDM meant that the usual time consuming events finished to schedule and with 'first three finishing slips' in operation presentations to field athletes were rarely delayed.

Again the athletes Dick and I met at presentation were a credit to themselves, their schools and their areas. Also the 'Somerset family' is now understood by so many that parents came to the presentation area to talk through problems. There was most certainly a happy, effective, workmanlike atmosphere at presentation helped, if not guided, by pupils from Westfield School.

The standard of the meeting, in pleasant weather conditions, was high:

- 15 national entry standards
- 8 national standards
- CBP - Lauren Gale (M) Inter Girls Pole Vault – 3.00m
- CBP – James Lelliott (M) Inter Boys Long Jump – 7.02m
- ✗ Unfortunately there were no competitors for the new event – Senior Girls 1500m steeplechase or for Senior Girls 200m and Hurdle events!

Taunton area again won most trophies along with the overall trophy with Mendip securing Junior, Intermediate and Overall Girls trophies.

# **SOUTH-WEST SCHOOLS' AA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Exeter Arena  
Saturday 20 June 2009**

Following the Somerset Schools' AA Track and Field Championships, the selection committee met at Wellington School on Sunday 14 June to select the team for the South-West Championships. We enjoyed the customary superb hospitality and, as usual, the meeting took around six hours, as is the norm when we are due to travel 'away from home' for the South-West Championships. In total, 115 athletes were selected to fill 139 places, the Intermediate Girls' Hammer once again proving a stumbling block. In the subsequent few days there were four withdrawals; two through injury and two suffering a 'change of heart'. 33 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, 32 in 2006, 28 in 2007 and 31 last year. 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 most communication to pupils and students was reasonable this year, though inevitably a few had to be 'chased' for confirmation of availability on the Thursday afternoon (and even on the Friday).

Much of the administration and 'kitting-out' was done in the two coaches on the journey to Exeter, and then completed at the team base in the stadium. A number of athletes travelled independently and whilst this does not cause problems with the collection of numbers and the borrowing or purchasing of kit, as these later-arrivals have not been part of a 'captive audience', they are often the athletes whose fees remain unpaid after the meeting. In 2008 the last payment arrived in mid-September, beating the 2007 performance by three weeks; we have achieved a new 'personal worst' this year, however, as at the time of writing there is still £97.00 outstanding, despite three reminders. Therefore, the frustrations I expressed in the 2007 report must be repeated – though we must bear in mind we are dealing with large numbers of athletes from a variety of establishments.

Having won 8 of the 12 trophies in 1997, 4 in 1998 and 9 in 1999, I reported in 2006 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 on home soil in 2007 when we took 9 of the 12 titles. That was always going to be a hard act to follow (especially in Devon), nevertheless, we found ourselves returning to Exeter in 2009 bearing the seven trophies captured in 2008, made up of the following victories: Senior Girls, Senior Boys, Overall Boys, Overall Track Events, Overall Field Events, Relays and Overall Champions.

Although we retained Senior Girls and Overall Field Events, and (most encouragingly) claimed a share of the Junior Boys' trophy, a mere three wins sees us once again in a slump which, hopefully, will not become a trend. This report is not meant to be full of gloom; there were some outstanding displays, including three Championship Best Performances from Amelia Richards, James Lelliott and Kitty Eleyae in Long Jump events.

## Our 2009 South-West Champions are:

### Junior Girls – 3<sup>rd</sup> = - 47 points (Devon 65)

200m	Zara Gabbidon	(Wadham)	26.3
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### Junior Boys – 1<sup>st</sup> = - 74 points

800m	Sam Bedford	(Millfield)	2-02.4
Shot	Grant McConnell	(Millfield)	12m 65

### Intermediate Girls – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 89 points (Devon 92)

High Jump	Megan Toon	(Wellington)	1m 590
Pole Vault	Lauren Gale	(Frome College)	2m 90
<b>Long Jump</b>	<b>Amelia Richards</b>	<b>(Millfield)</b>	<b>5m74 (CBP)</b>
Triple Jump	Hilary Moorhead	(King's College)	11m 17
Javelin	Rosie Butler	(Millfield)	35m 37

### Intermediate Boys – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 91.5 points (Avon 95)

<b>Long Jump</b>	<b>James Lelliott</b>	<b>(Millfield)</b>	<b>7m 07 (CBP)</b>
Triple Jump	Jimi Tele	(Millfield)	14m 00
Discus	Liam Biddlecombe	(Holyrood)	47m 10
4 x 100m Relay			45.4

### Senior Girls – 1<sup>st</sup> – 120 points

100m	Kitty Eleyae	(Millfield)	12.4
800m	Rose Penfold	(Wells Cathedral)	2-18.8
High Jump	Heather Cumming	(Millfield)	1m 63
<b>Long Jump</b>	<b>Kitty Eleyae</b>	<b>(Millfield)</b>	<b>5m 90 (CBP)</b>
Discus	Katie Wickman	(Millfield)	41m 96
Javelin	Izzy Jeffs	(Taunton School)	44m 52

### Senior Boys – 4<sup>th</sup> – 77 points (Gloucestershire 91)

2000m Steeplechase	Charlie Maclean	(King's College)	6-18.8
Javelin	Simon Klys	(Wellington)	53m 92

20 event wins was two fewer than the 2007 figure but bettered our 'normal' performance of around 17 in 2001, 2004 and 2006, and our 19 from last year.

None of these performances would have been possible without the excellent work of a dedicated, loyal group of team managers (in mid-April I had invited 18 male colleagues and 13 ladies to work with our teams at South-West and National level). On duty in Exeter were Richard Llewellyn-Eaton (Junior Girls), Les Neville and Jason Allen (Junior Boys), Julie Harrison (Intermediate Girls), Gary Jennings and Norm Ridgway (Intermediate Boys), Charlotte Fisher (Senior Girls) and Stuart Richards (Senior Boys). All 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 (whether home or away) to ensure the smooth running of what is a huge meeting.

**RICHARD BOWDEN**

# AVIVA E.S.A.A. TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Don Valley Stadium, Sheffield  
Friday and Saturday 10 and 11 July 2009**

Following a number of fine performance at South-West level, we certainly 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 in 2007 when we considered 51 athletes over 59 events. In 2008 41 athletes were under the spotlight across 49 events and this year the figures increased to 54 athletes over 66 events. The usual meticulous selection process was carried out at Wellington School where we enjoyed superb hospitality, as always.

Thankfully there were no withdrawals after the entry deadline so we travelled to Sheffield with a full complement of 25 athletes. The team would have been much stronger had we had the services of two National Standard performers, however, but Izzy Jeffs was selected for the Great Britain team at the World Youth Championships in Bressanone, Italy and Robert Clowes was unavailable due to football commitments at Yeovil Town FC. In addition, two other athletes who had achieved the National Entry Standard declared themselves to be unavailable.

Transport arrangements ran smoothly (until a few minutes after the team was deposited at their accommodation!) with Berry's Coaches, as usual, with pick-up points at Wellington, Taunton, Puriton and Gordano Services. A number of athletes travelled independently and met the team in Sheffield, though one found the required commitment to the team too much to bear and, reluctantly, we agreed to a Friday night arrival. No athlete had access to a personal car during the Championships this year.

Accommodation was at Endcliffe Village Flats (Sheffield University) and proved comfortable with good food.

The table below indicates the performance of this year's team and clearly shows the excellent quality of our top athletes with regard to National Standard performances. We are steadily increasing the number of top-8 finishers, and two-thirds of the team scored points. Sadly though, once again a very small number gained a Personal Best. Our overall score, though pleasing when compared to most totals in the past sixteen years, was nowhere near enough to win the Tonkin Cup for 'C' Group aggregate scores.

**Our overall performance is analysed below:**

	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
<b>Personal Bests</b>	8	7	5	12	9	10	12	3	12	8	8	6	9	7	3	4
<b>Entry Standard</b>	7	7	11	11	9	9	6	7	6	8	6	6	7	7	7	6
<b>Nat Standard</b>	7	4	2	6	6	8	6	2	8	3	5	4	7	8	9	8
<b>Top-8 Places</b>	13	11	12	12	12	12	13	7	11	9	11	11	12	13	15	16
<b>Scorers</b>	15	13	15	19	16	17	15	11	17	12	14	12	14	16	18	17
<b>Total Score</b>	66	62	59	75	85	78	87	44	68	40	78	57	83	98	98	85.5
<b>Trophies</b>	SG	-	-	SG	SG	-	SB	-	JB	-	SG	-	JB	IG	IB	-
					SB		IG		SB				SG	Ov	SG	

**The team scores and positions for each age group were:**

Junior Boys	7 =	8 points	(winning total – 39 - Norfolk)
Intermediate Boys	2	39 points	(winning total – 39.5 – Dorset)
Senior Boys	12=	7 points	(winning total – 47 – Bedfordshire and Luton)
Junior Girls	No Somerset entries		(winning total – 30 - Norfolk)
Intermediate Girls	4	15 points	(winning total – 22 – Bedfordshire and Luton)
Senior Girls	2	16.5 points	(winning total – 18 – Cleveland)
Aggregate Total	5	85.5 points	(winning total – 113 - Norfolk)

Although we fell short of team success, there was gratifying individual Somerset presence on the medal rostrum. Bronze positions were achieved by Amelia Richards (Millfield School) in the Intermediate Girls' Long Jump (5m 42), Tom Heard (West Somerset College) in the Intermediate Boys' Shot (15m 13) and Kitty Eleyae (Millfield School) in the Senior Girls' Long Jump (5m 60). Silver medals went to James Lelliott (Millfield School) in the Intermediate Boys' Long Jump (6m 89) and Liam Biddlecombe (Holyrood School) in the Intermediate Boys' Discus (51m 08).

Unfortunately (and unusually) there was no gold for Somerset this year but we did enjoy further international representation when Amelia Richards and Liam Biddlecombe (appointed England captain) competed in the SIAB International in Antrim, Northern Ireland. Amelia finished 5<sup>th</sup> with 5m 26 whilst Liam won his event with 52m 41. James Lelliott would have joined them in Antrim but was selected for the Great Britain team at the European Youth Olympic Festival in Tampere, Finland where he jumped 6m 63 in qualification.

I must conclude this report with a tribute to the work carried out throughout the week-end on the part of the team managers. I certainly feel that all the athletes would agree that they were prepared as thoroughly as possible, particularly in the final lead-up to competition. Having taken 7 team managers to Gateshead in 2006 (rather than our stipulated 5), 8 to Birmingham in 2007 and 8 to Gateshead last year, we took 7 to Sheffield. The loyalty maintained by this group must be viewed as an outstanding feature of our Association.

**RICHARD BOWDEN**