

SOMERSET SCHOOLS' ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION COMBINED EVENTS AND RACE WALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Millfield School, Street
Saturday and Sunday 24 and 25 April 2010**

On 19 February, information and entry forms were sent to 67 schools and colleges and 17 clubs in Somerset, with a closing date of 26 March so that the programme could be prepared during the Easter holidays.

As usual, substitutions could be made after the entry date, and indeed, on the days of competition. Final details were sent to all competing schools, colleges, clubs and guests on 15 April.

We enjoyed the usual excellent hospitality at Millfield, thanks to close liaison with Gary Jennings and the generosity of the school. The track and the field event sites were in superb order, offering the athletes every chance to perform at their best. Grateful thanks must go to Millfield for such attention to detail.

The meeting continues to be popular, though the total Somerset entry of 203 was the lowest for six years. The recent trend has been 175 entries in 2002, 192 in 2003, 218 in 2004, 235 in 2005, 224 in 2006, 254 in 2007, 259 in 2008 and 268 last year. One or two schools entered athletes for the first time, but, once again, thanks are due mainly to those loyal schools and clubs who support the meeting year after year, appreciating the value of the unique atmosphere generated for their athletes by Combined Events competition.

Apparently, our Championship is advertised at Great Britain squad week-ends as a meeting athletes of that calibre might wish to contest – an enormous compliment to Somerset Schools' AA, Somerset County AA and Millfield School.

In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the quality of performance in the Senior age groups has been enhanced enormously with the acceptance of guest competitors (mostly of international standard). This year, one of these was David Guest who set a Welsh Senior record of 7416 points and who would go on to finish 4th in the World Junior Championships in Moncton, Canada (scoring 7691 points and missing a medal by a mere 60 points) just three months later. David was selected to represent Wales in the Commonwealth Games but had to withdraw through injury. One guest who did make the trip to Delhi was Tom Reynolds (Northern Ireland) who finished 9th with 7210. Other guests came from Devon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, South Wales, Cheshire, Manchester, Surrey and Northern Ireland; several others would have appeared at Millfield had Eyjafjallajökull not intervened to prevent their return from warm-weather training in Spain and South Africa. Dorset joined us once again, with 28 entries.

We also included several events for the Somerset County AA which could not be accommodated in their Track and Field Championships: Under-15 Boys' Hammer; Under-17 Men's Hammer; Under-20 Men's Hammer; Under-17 Men's 1500m Steeplechase and a 2000m Steeplechase for Junior and Senior Men. Race Walks were offered for all age groups, attracting a total entry of nine.

Despite a host of fine performances, no records were broken this year.

The 2010 County Champions are:

Under -13 Boys' Quadrathlon (34 Somerset entries – 28 competitors)

Jonathan Hill (King Arthur's) 867 points

Junior Boys' Pentathlon (33 - 25)

Matthew Cole (Westfield) 2347 points

Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk (3 - 1)

Hamish Forfar (Brymore) 24-45.40

Intermediate Boys' Octathlon (24 - 14)

Harry Hall (West Somerset) 3912 points

Intermediate Boys' 5000m Race Walk (5 - 2)

Toby Boulton (Brymore) 34-31.63

Senior Boys' Decathlon (7 - 6)

James Lelliott (Millfield) 5781 points

Senior Boys' 5000m Race Walk (1 - 1)

Ben Casey (Yeovil College) 28-22.24

Senior Men's Decathlon (6 - 4)

Ben Rendall (Yeovil Olympiads A.C.) 5938 points

Under -13 Girls' Quadrathlon (35 - 35)

Alicia Bryant (Danesfield) 601 points

Junior Girls' Pentathlon (38 - 27)

Emily Dixon (Team Bath) 2654 points

Intermediate Girls' Heptathlon (16 - 10)

Jo Callender-Wood (Mendip AC) 3326 points

Senior Girls' Heptathlon (7 - 2)

Amelia Richards (Millfield) 3347 points

Senior Women's Heptathlon (3 - 3)

Sara Geary (Yeovil Olympiads AC) 3726 points

A number of teachers, coaches and parents assisted our loyal band of officials and all worked incredibly hard throughout the entire week-end. Sally and Nick Higman (Referee and Technical Manager respectively) led the officials brilliantly, ensuring the meeting ran efficiently.

Computer scoring kept athletes, parents, teachers and coaches fully aware of totals and positions immediately after each event and thanks go to Brian Baker for that vital service. Fully automatic timing and photo-finish were in operation throughout the meeting, fascinating aspects of the week-end for the athletes, and another development which has enhanced the status of our Championship, thanks to the time and effort put in by David Cooke and Eleanor Brock. This is typical of the superb co-operation between the Somerset Schools' AA and the Somerset County AA.

RICHARD BOWDEN

ESAA SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL COMBINED EVENTS AND RACE WALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Millfield School, Street
Saturday and Sunday 26 and 27 June 2010

The hosting county (Somerset) and the venue (Millfield School) for the 2010 South-West Regional Combined Events and Race Walking Championships were confirmed at the 2009 South-West Schools' AA Annual General Meeting, with myself as the Local Organiser. I always knew that certain vital ingredients would be in place to ensure the success of the meeting and this was certainly the case. The key elements were: Brian Baker providing the computer scoring and results service, Sally Higman's appointment as Referee, a loyal band of Somerset Schools' AA and Somerset County AA officials (supported by a number of visiting officials from other competing counties) working tirelessly throughout the busy week-end and the provision of the superb Millfield School facilities thanks to the usual first-class co-operation of Gary Jennings (Master i/c Athletics) and his staff.

Initial information was sent to all relevant County Secretaries (with a copy for the Combined Events Team Manager) on Friday 7 May with a reply slip to indicate probable numbers in each age group for all competitions (including Race Walks), and names of any officials able to attend; the replies being due by Friday 28 May. The electronic system for entries operated smoothly and certainly made seeding of heats and pools a relatively straightforward task, though some counties continue to fail to provide personal best performances for some athletes, possibly disadvantaging them in their allocation to heats and pools. The final timetable (including lists of competitors and details of heats and pools) was given to Team Managers at the South-West Schools' AA Track and Field Championships a week prior to the meeting.

Some years ago, entries were up around the 130 mark and after several years of slight decline – 117 in 1998, 121 in 1999, 114 in 2000 – an encouraging 126 entered in 2001 and 121 in 2002. There followed an alarming dip to a total of 93 in 2003 and 96 in 2004, so I was pleased to note that the decline had been arrested with 121 entries in 2005, 113 in 2006 and 116 in 2007. I was hopeful that the 2008 total of 109 was not about to herald the beginning of another downward trend and 119 entries in 2009 suggested healthier participation. The total entry of 118 in 2010 maintains our optimism with only the South-East Region topping our total. The detailed breakdown for 2010 is as follows:

	JB	IB	SB	JG	IG	SG
Avon	2	4	0	3	3	0
Channel Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cornwall	4	3	0	4	4	1
Devon	3	2	3	4	4	4
Dorset	4	4	2	4	3	2
Gloucestershire	0	1	1	3	2	3
Somerset	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wiltshire	4	4	1	4	4	0
TOTALS	21	22	11	26	24	14

Inevitably, numbers actually competing did not quite match this entry (102 athletes took part, just one fewer than in 2009). However, standards at the head of most fields were significantly better this year, shown by the fact that seven individuals and five teams found places in the South-West "All-Time Top-10" rankings. The highlights were a superb Championship Best Performance of 3169 in the Junior Boys' Pentathlon by Nicholas Hunt (Dorset) who added 221 points to the previous best score, and the Wiltshire Junior Girls' Pentathlon team score of 8371, meaning that the Cornwall Junior Girls' 2009 score of 8124 points was surpassed by a margin of 247 points.

It was gratifying to see that athletes from all seven competing South-West counties qualified for the E.S.A.A. Championships in September; the full list is as follows:

<u>Junior Boys' Pentathlon (2948)</u>			<u>Team Result (7816)</u>	
1. Nicholas Hunt*	(Dorset)	3169 CBP	1. Somerset	7159
2. Brad Hill*	(Wiltshire)	2656	2. Wiltshire	7000
3. Robert Phillips*	(Avon)	2616	3. Dorset	6918
			4. Cornwall	5833
			5. Devon	5016

<u>Intermediate Boys' Octathlon (5468)</u>			<u>Team Result (14009)</u>	
1. Harry Woodward*	(Cornwall)	4402	1. Somerset	12209
2. James Taylor*	(Gloucestershire)	4382	2. Wiltshire	11341
3. Harry Hall	(Somerset)	4142	3. Avon	10890
4. Jacob Fisher*	(Avon)	4135		

Senior Boys' Decathlon (6726)

1. Joe Hutchinson*	(Wiltshire)	6353
2. James Lelliott	(Somerset)	6294
3. Jamie Courtenay*	(Gloucestershire)	5971
4. Haydn Brown Williams*	(Devon)	5785

Team Result (18124)

1. Somerset	16587
2. Devon	11313

Junior Girls' Pentathlon (3143)

1. Jordanna Morrish*	(Cornwall)	3043
2. Lizzie Clifford	(Wiltshire)	2975
3. Emily Dixon	(Wiltshire)	2909
4. Roo Black*	(Somerset)	2780
5. Katy Rushmer*	(Somerset)	2700

Team Result (8124)

1. Wiltshire	8371 CBP
2. Somerset	7968
3. Cornwall	7659
4. Dorset	7033
5. Gloucestershire	6819
6. Devon	6779

Intermediate Girls' Heptathlon (4687)

1. Gaby Rowsell*	(Dorset)	4193
2. Hannah Claydon*	(Wiltshire)	3885
3. Jessica Clark*	(Dorset)	3760

Team Result (12277)

1. Cornwall	10337
2. Wiltshire	10224
3. Devon	9643
4. Avon	8950

Senior Girls' Heptathlon (4649)

1. Rebecca Chapman	(Devon)	4524
2. Philippa Brett*	(Cornwall)	3896
3. Lauren Anning	(Devon)	3693
4. Frankie Courtney*	(Gloucestershire)	3490
5. Sian Huxtable*	(Somerset)	3411

Team Result (13129)

1. Devon	10795
2. Gloucestershire	8879
3. Somerset	7621

*** Individual qualifiers for the ESAA Championships.**

Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk

1. Hamish Forfar	(Somerset)	18-16.5
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Intermediate Boys' 5000m Race Walk

1. Toby Boulton	(Somerset)	33-01.9
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Senior Boys' 5000m Race Walk

1. Ben Casey	(Somerset)	31-15.2
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Throughout a thoroughly enjoyable week-end the unique atmosphere of Combined Events was maintained thanks to some excellent performances, rousing team spirit and the commitment of so many individuals and groups mentioned earlier.

The venue for the 2011 Championships (due to be held on Saturday/Sunday 25/26 June) will be Exeter Arena (organised by Devon Schools' AA).

With regard to the organising county and venue for the 2012 Championships, a letter inviting 'bids' was sent to County Secretaries (and to other interested parties within South-West counties) on Monday 4 October with responses due by Friday 29 October. The 2012 hosting county and venue will then be decided at the South-West Schools' AA Annual General Meeting at Wellington School on Saturday 6 November and colleagues will be informed of the details following that meeting.

RICHARD BOWDEN

E.S.A.A. COMBINED EVENTS AND RACE WALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Northwood Stadium, Stoke-on-Trent
Saturday and Sunday 18 and 19 September 2010**

The ESAA Combined Events and Race Walking Championships returned to Stoke-on-Trent this year, the meeting having been staged at Northwood Stadium in 1993 and 1995. On neither of those occasions had Somerset enjoyed individual or team victories so we travelled to The Potteries with the hope of “third time lucky”.

With three teams and four individual athletes qualifying for the Combined Events Championships (one individual withdrew through injury), and three Race Walkers selected (though one subsequently withdrew), our group would, nevertheless, be one of the largest on show, as usual. With athletes arriving punctually at the three pick-up points, we encountered fewer motorway hold-ups than might be expected on the M5 and M6 on a Friday afternoon, arriving at our destination around the planned time of 5.30pm with a total of 16 athletes (Ben Casey travelled from Leeds and met the group at the stadium on the Saturday) 4 Team Managers and Ben Gibb as Team Coach.

We travelled with Berry's Coaches, sharing with the Devon group as usual, and stayed at the Best Western Stoke-on-Trent Moat House which had been recommended almost a year in advance and booked in February. This proved an excellent choice of accommodation, a mere ten minutes' drive from the stadium. The coach driver was perfectly happy to make two trips on each morning, therefore affording some athletes a much appreciated additional hour's rest. Also, he was prepared to collect the early finishers (Intermediate Boys and Senior Girls) at 4.00pm on the Saturday in order that they might take advantage of the hotel's leisure facilities, rather than wait for a further two hours in cool, damp conditions until the Junior Boys' Presentation. The location also alleviated any problems regarding the coach driver's hours on the Sunday.

The weather was cool with drizzle from 2.00pm onwards on the Saturday – and colder with persistent rain on the second day; therefore, conditions were not particularly favourable for the athletes. The organisation was most efficient, the stadium looked in very good order, the packed lunches were far better than some we have received in past years and the additional refreshments provided by City of Stoke AC were excellent value for money so our athletes were given every chance to perform well.

Our full results were:

Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk

Hamish Forfar	(Brymore)	10	20-53.12
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Junior Boys' Pentathlon

Matt Cole	(Westfield)	12	2457
James Tostevin	(Preston)	17	2330
Philip Bridge	(The Park)	33	2003
Luke Reynolds	(Haygrove)	35	1751
Team Score		3	6790

Intermediate Boys' Octathlon

Harry Hall	(West Somerset)	13	4221
Aaron Athersuch	(Buckler's Mead)	22	4038
George Giles	(West Somerset)	29	3819
Jake Cory	(Buckler's Mead)	31	3752
Team Score		3	12078

Senior Boys' 5000m Race Walk

Ben Casey	(Yeovil College)	3	29-19.82
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Senior Boys' Decathlon

James Lelliott	(Millfield)	4	6508
Chris Hewitson	(Millfield)	19	5097
Constantin Kossen	(King's College)	26	4591
Ben Thompson	(West Somerset)	27	4523
Team Score		2	16196

Junior Girls' Pentathlon

Katy Rushmer	(Millfield)	19	2468
Roo Black	(St Dunstan's)	36	2077

Senior Girls' Heptathlon

Sian Huxtable	(Millfield)	13	3306
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The three Somerset teams all gained podium places with the Junior Boys (fielding three Year 8 athletes) and the Intermediate Boys showing typically encouraging fighting qualities to appear on the rostrum by a mere 21 points and 5 points respectively! The Senior Boys qualified with the best Regional score, but Lincolnshire performed especially well over the two days to consign Somerset to second place by 217 points.

The entire group enjoyed tremendous support from our loyal band of parents, and they certainly helped engender a fantastic team spirit which was most definitely a major factor in the team performances. Another factor which should never be underestimated was the incredible work carried out by the Team Managers. Superb care and attention to detail throughout an exhausting two days were consistently in evidence to a most deserving group of Somerset athletes whose response on and off the track made the whole week-end thoroughly enjoyable and a wonderful way in which to complete another busy season.

RICHARD BOWDEN