

SOMERSET SCHOOLS' ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION COMBINED EVENTS AND RACE WALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Millfield School, Street
Saturday and Sunday 7 and 8 May 2011**

On 25 February, information and entry forms were sent to 66 schools and colleges and 17 clubs in Somerset, with a closing date of 1 April 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 26 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; the total Somerset entry of 240 was encouraging. 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, 268 in 2009 and 203 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 meeting is advertised at Great Britain squad week-ends as one which athletes of that calibre might wish to contest – an enormous compliment to Somerset Schools' AA, Somerset County AA and Millfield School.

Since 2008 the quality of performance in the Senior age groups has been enhanced enormously with the acceptance of guest competitors (many of international standard). Guest entries were fewer this year as our later date meant clashes with other events. Visiting athletes came from Gloucestershire, Cornwall, South Wales and Birmingham University. Dorset joined us once again, with 27 entries. Interest continues to grow to our east with Wiltshire Schools' AA (and St Laurence School) making 28 entries.

With the Somerset County AA Track and Field Championships reverting to a two-day meeting we did not need to incorporate any additional events this year, though Race Walks were offered for all age groups, attracting a total entry of six.

The 2011 County Champions (including two with superb Championship Best Performances) are:

Under -13 Boys' Quadrathlon (33 Somerset entries – 22 competitors)

Ben Jones	(Queen's College)	749 points
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Junior Boys' Pentathlon (43 - 32)

James Tostevin	(Preston School)	2406 points
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Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk (4 - 2)

Gareth Stockton	(Brymore School)	20-59.1
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<u>Intermediate Boys' Octathlon</u> (27 - 20)		
Harry Hall	(West Somerset College)	4490 points
<u>Intermediate Boys' 5000m Race Walk</u> (2 - 2)		
Hamish Forfar	(Brymore School)	34-33.6
<u>Senior Boys' Decathlon</u> (8 - 7)		
Ben Thompson	(West Somerset College)	5110 points
<u>Senior Men's Decathlon</u> (4 - 1)		
Stuart Richards	(Yeovil Olympiads A.C.)	3151 points
<u>Under -13 Girls' Quadrathlon</u> (44 - 41)		
Laurie Dawkins	(Taunton Preparatory School)	814 points CBP
<u>Junior Girls' Pentathlon</u> (50 - 40)		
Amy Cooper	(Millfield School)	2595 points
<u>Intermediate Girls' Heptathlon</u> (20 - 8)		
Katy Rushmer	(Millfield School)	3386 points
<u>Senior Girls' Heptathlon</u> (9 - 3)		
Jazmin Sawyers	(Millfield School)	5007 points CBP
<u>Senior Women's Heptathlon</u> (2 - 2)		
Sara Geary	(Yeovil Olympiads AC)	3540 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

Exeter Arena
Saturday and Sunday 25 and 26 June 2011

The hosting county (Devon) and the venue (Exeter Arena) for the 2011 South-West Regional Combined Events and Race Walking Championships were confirmed at the 2010 South-West Schools' AA Annual General Meeting, with Christine Baden as the Local Organiser. Therefore we were entirely confident that the meeting would be a roaring success thanks to Christine's enthusiasm and experience, together with the outstanding support she could rely upon from the Devon Schools' AA, Devon County AA and Exeter Harriers – in particular the assistance of Eileen Mander, Janet Phillips and Terry O'Brien.

Add to these elements the superb Exeter Arena facilities, Bob Ivory's expertise and attention to detail and the helpful co-operation of the stadium staff and we knew we had all the ingredients required for a first-class Regional Round. It has become customary in these reports to bemoan the lack of officials but Christine would like to pay tribute to the work carried out by Pat Gillett in the recruitment of officials throughout the South-West so that all events were well staffed and Team Managers were not pressed into action as has been the case in past years.

The electronic system for entries operated smoothly and certainly made seeding of heats and pools a relatively straightforward task, though some counties persist in failing even to estimate personal best performances for some athletes, possibly disadvantaging them in their allocation to heats and pools. From the electronic entries, Brian Baker organised the lists of competitors and details of heats and pools so that this information could be given to Team Managers at the South-West Schools' AA Track and Field Championships a week prior to the meeting, and Christine was able to prepare the final printed programmes.

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 but increases to 119 entries in 2009 and 118 in 2010 suggested healthier participation. The total entry of 120 in 2011 maintains our optimism with only the South-East Region (137) topping our total. The remaining four Regions saw entries of 90 in the North-East, 88 in the Midlands and the North-West and 75 in East Anglia. The detailed breakdown for the 2011 South-West entries is as follows:

	JB	IB	SB	JG	IG	SG
Avon	4	4	1	4	4	1
Channel Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cornwall	4	4	0	4	4	1
Devon	4	1	1	4	4	4
Dorset	4	4	3	4	4	4
Gloucestershire	0	0	1	0	1	0
Somerset	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wiltshire	4	4	1	4	4	1
TOTALS	24	21	11	24	25	15

Inevitably, numbers actually competing did not quite match this entry (99 athletes took part, just three fewer than in 2010 and four down on 2009). However, standards at the head of most fields remain extremely encouraging, even though only three individuals and five teams achieved places in the South-West "All-Time Top-10" rankings. The highlight was a superb Championship Best Performance of 4847 points in the Senior Girls' Heptathlon by Rebecca Chapman (Devon) who added 198 points to the previous best score, set in 2002 by Kimberley Goodall (Channel Islands) – a score which took her to the Manchester Commonwealth Games.

It was gratifying to see that athletes from all seven competing South-West counties qualified for the E.S.A.A. Championships in September in the following numbers: Somerset 15, Devon 10, Cornwall 6, Dorset 4, Wiltshire 4, Gloucestershire 2, Avon 1.

The leading results and the full list of qualifiers for the ESAA Championships are as follows:

Junior Boys' Pentathlon (3169)

1. James Tostevin	(Somerset)	2736
2. Liam Prynne*	(Cornwall)	2562
3. Gio Downie*	(Wiltshire)	2451
4. Jack Hardy*	(Devon)	2444

Intermediate Boys' Octathlon (5468)

1. Nicholas Hunt*	(Dorset)	4908
2. Harry Hall	(Somerset)	4745
3. Ben Davies*	(Wiltshire)	4351
4. George Giles	(Somerset)	4319
5. Josh Bush*	(Devon)	4268

Senior Boys' Decathlon (6726)

1. James Taylor*	(Gloucestershire)	5486
2. Jake Webber	(Somerset)	5304
3. Callum Rea*	(Wiltshire)	5237
4. Ben Thompson	(Somerset)	5074
5. Matthew St Clair	(Somerset)	4849
6. Andrew Lees*	(Dorset)	4579

Junior Girls' Pentathlon (3143)

1. Shannon Robertson	(Devon)	2730
2. Amy Cooper*	(Somerset)	2708
3. Jade Simpson	(Devon)	2585
4. Charlotte Haynes*	(Wiltshire)	2515
5. Nadia Kellie-Smith	(Devon)	2501
6. Anicia Skeates*	(Avon)	2471

Intermediate Girls' Heptathlon (4687)

1. Jordanna Morrish	(Cornwall)	4148
2. Kate Davies*	(Gloucestershire)	4014
3. Kiani Pay	(Cornwall)	3927
4. Alice Vage	(Cornwall)	3764
5. Katy Rushmer*	(Somerset)	3714
6. Annabel Brown*	(Dorset)	3663

Senior Girls' Heptathlon (4649)

1. Rebecca Chapman	(Devon)	4847 CBP
2. Gabrielle Rowsell*	(Dorset)	4506
3. Megan Toon*	(Somerset)	4318
4. Philippa Brett*	(Cornwall)	3945

Team Result (7816)

1. Somerset	7338
2. Wiltshire	6861
3. Cornwall	6681
4. Dorset	5523
5. Devon	5511

Team Result (14009)

1. Somerset	13294
2. Dorset	12446
3. Wiltshire	12301
4. Cornwall	6553

Team Result (18124)

1. Somerset	15227
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Team Result (8371)

1. Devon	7816
2. Somerset	7317
3. Wiltshire	6805
4. Dorset	6067
5. Cornwall	4468

Team Result (12277)

1. Cornwall	11839
2. Dorset	10503
3. Avon	8307
4. Devon	7706

Team Result (13129)

1. Devon	11794
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*** Individual qualifiers for the ESAA Championships.**

Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk

1. Gareth Stockton	(Somerset)	19-01.48
2. Harry Orr	(Somerset)	19-32.41

Intermediate Boys' 5000m Race Walk

1. Toby Boulton	(Somerset)	34-43.00
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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 2012 Championships (due to be held on Saturday 30 June and Sunday 1 July) will be Exeter Arena once again, this time organised by the Somerset Schools' AA.

With regard to the organising county and venue for the 2013 Championships, a letter inviting 'bids' was sent to County Secretaries (and by email to other interested parties within South-West counties) on Tuesday 4 October with responses due by Friday 28 October. The 2013 hosting county and venue will then be decided at the South-West Schools' AA Annual General Meeting at Wellington School on Saturday 5 November and colleagues will be informed of the details following that meeting.

RICHARD BOWDEN

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

Exeter Arena
Saturday and Sunday 17 and 18 September 2011

The ESAA Combined Events and Race Walking Championships made a welcome return to the West Country this year, the meeting having been previously staged at Exeter Arena in 2004 and 2007. On neither of those earlier occasions had Somerset enjoyed team victories but we made the short trip down the A303 and the M5 with high hopes of all three of our teams at least appearing on the rostrum.

With three teams and three individual athletes qualifying for the Combined Events Championships and two Race Walkers selected, our group of seventeen would be one of the largest on show, as usual. In fact the Somerset contingent would have been twenty had three athletes not elected to attend a Great Britain Junior bobsleigh training week-end in Latvia. These absentees almost certainly cost us an individual gold medal and the Senior Boys' team title.

With a number of our athletes happy to arrange their own transport (either meeting at the team hotel or at the stadium) only one mini-bus was required, with pick-up points at Sexey's School, Millfield School and in Wellington. Three Team Managers drove their cars to the hotel and this gave us useful flexibility in terms of ferrying athletes to and from the stadium on each day. The team accommodation was the Mercure, Southgate Hotel in the centre of Exeter which proved an excellent choice, offering excellent food, superb leisure facilities and an easy ten minute drive to the stadium.

The weather varied from pleasantly warm to cool with frequent drizzle, conditions not particularly favourable for the athletes. The organisation by the Devon Schools' AA was first class, as expected, and the stadium looked in very good order, so in those aspects our athletes were given every chance to perform well. The packed lunches were far better than some we have received in past years.

Our full results were:

Junior Boys' 3000m Race Walk

Gareth Stockton	(Brymore)	7	18-37.46
Harry Orr	(Brymore)	8	19-39.64

Junior Boys' Pentathlon

James Tostevin	(Preston)	8	2696
Luke Reynolds	(Haygrove)	18	2443
Tim Kirkman	(Downside)	25	2329
Jonathan Hill	(King Arthur's)	27	2316
Team Score		4	7468

Intermediate Boys' Octathlon

Harry Hall	(West Somerset)	4	4794
George Giles	(West Somerset)	13	4360
Jake Cussell	(The Blue)	24	4023
Ollie Clarke	(Millfield)	29	3851
Team Score		3	13177

Senior Boys' Decathlon

Ben Thompson	(West Somerset)	15	5269
Matthew St Clair	(Millfield)	17	5053
Jake Webber	(Yeovil College)	18	5004
Aaron Athersuch	(Yeovil College)	24	3878
Team Score		3	15326

Junior Girls' Pentathlon

Amy Cooper	(Millfield)	1	3091
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Intermediate Girls' Heptathlon

Katy Rushmer	(Millfield)	29	3287
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Senior Girls' Heptathlon

Megan Toon	(Wellington)	13	3626
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Two additional athletes joined the party – Jordanna Morrish (Cornwall) and Anna Alexander-Holmes (Wiltshire) who moved to Millfield School this year. They were delightful company and it is hoped their experience with the Somerset group will make them both eager to wear the red vest next year.

Roger Blades, the ESAA National Combined Events Co-ordinator, deserves to be mentioned in this report. Not only did he make special provision for Aaron Athersuch to compete as a guest in the Senior Boys' Decathlon once we had replaced him with James Lelliott for the Final, he found time during his busy week-end to present our three Ultimate Trophy winners with their awards.

The highlight of the week-end saw two of our athletes, Amy Cooper and Harry Hall, earn selection for the England team for the Indoor Combined Events Home International at the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow on Saturday 3 December; Amy's tremendous victory in the Junior Girls' Pentathlon being the icing on the cake in a meeting which invariably proves to be a wonderful finale to the season.

The entire group enjoyed tremendous support from our loyal band of parents, and they certainly helped engender the fantastic team spirit which was most definitely a major factor in the Somerset performances. Another element which should never be underestimated was the incredible work carried out by the Team Managers, which included a most valuable contribution from Chris Wakeford as Team Coach – following in the footsteps of other former Somerset Combined Events athletes Catherine Parmiter and Ben Gibb. Superb care and attention to detail from the staff 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.

RICHARD BOWDEN