

SOMERSET SCHOOLS' ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

JUNIOR (UNDER-13 AND UNDER-14) CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Bill Whistlecroft Athletics Arena, Yeovil
Wednesday 5 June 2019

The 2019 Championships were held on the traditional date, the first Wednesday after half-term.

Full details were posted to the 47 eligible schools on Monday 15 April with an URGENT sticker and a note of the closing date on each envelope. An email was then sent to every school on Tuesday 7 May in support of the hard copy, reminding everyone of the closing date for entries - Friday 17 May. The 4 main Track and Field clubs were sent the information so that they might identify their most talented Under-13 and Under-14 athletes and encourage their local schools to submit entries. The Championships Committee (of 2) then met at Sexey's School on Thursday 30 May to organise the event, with the final details sent by post to all the schools on Saturday 1 June.

We continue to make every attempt to enable schools to submit their entries simply and efficiently and year on year we appear to be making some headway in regard to most of the problems faced in the past. It remains frustrating, however, when schools submit entry forms in handwriting which is sometimes illegible, fail to use the official entry forms, enter athletes in 3 events, fail to include the officials' form, or neglect to enclose entry fees. These all cause unnecessary additional communication and delays in final preparations.

All those problems paled into insignificance this year, however, when a school entered athletes a year too old for the age groups. A few Year 9 athletes were noted in competition but every attempt was made to rectify the situation as soon as possible. I regret to report that certain of my explicit instructions were ignored, causing disruption to the timetable, officials' valuable time being wasted and results having to be amended after the meeting. Thankfully, all the awards reached the rightful recipients. An instance of 2 athletes swapping numbers and events (a clear breach of the rules of the sport) was also spotted, but the results do correspond with the official entries. Power of 10 rankings and profiles do not match those results though.

A briefing meeting for all teaching staff was held before the start of the meeting, emphasizing the need for officials and athletes to arrive at field events in good time. This helped with warm-up and ensured events began on time. Pleasant weather, together with the usual enthusiasm of the athletes and tireless efforts on the part of our group of loyal Somerset County AA officials (and those from Dorset, Devon and Avon) combined to make the event a success. Photo-finish and fully automatic timing were in operation for all track events, thanks to David Cooke.

After many years of pleading, we finally reached our target of 30 schools competing (compared with 26 in 2008 and 2009, 29 in 2010, 28 in 2011, 29 in 2012, 28 in 2013, 27 in 2014, 28 in 2015, 27 in 2016 and 2017 and 28 last year). We could now revise that target to try to reflect the reasonable expectation of 35 schools taking part.

Entries were as follows by age group:

Under-13 Girls = 142 (97 in 2013, 99 in 2014, 127 in 2015, 106 in 2016, 121 in 2017, 149 in 2018).

Under-13 Boys = 157 (122 in 2013, 109 in 2014, 120 in 2015, 135 in 2016, 160 in 2017, 128 in 2018).

Under-14 Girls = 177 (153 in 2013, 149 in 2014, 152 in 2015, 128 in 2016, 189 in 2017, 182 in 2018).

Under-14 Boys = 167 (165 in 2013, 150 in 2014, 161 in 2015, 152 in 2016, 183 in 2017, 188 in 2018).

Total entries = 643 (537 in 2013, 507 in 2014, 560 in 2015, 521 in 2016, 653 in 2017, 647 in 2018).

Following the demise of the Middle Schools' Competition we hoped to see greater participation than the 3 of the 9 which took part in 2015. We attracted 5 in 2016 but only 3 out of 8 in 2017 and just 2 last year. That figure went back up to 3 this time as Fairlands Middle School entered a single athlete, joining good numbers from Danesfield Middle School and Minehead Middle School. A very encouraging point is that total entries over the past 3 years have shown great improvement (over 600 each time) despite a 50% increase in the entry fees from £1.00 to £1.50 per event entry from 2017. Again though, many athletes were clearly nowhere near the relevant standard.

Standards near the top were encouraging, however, and there were 3 Championship Best Performances:

Under-13 Girls' Shot (new event): Lizzie Kemmish (Taunton Preparatory School) – 8m15.

Under-14 Girls' Discus: Beau Barrington-Hibbert (Millfield Preparatory School) – 28m48.

Under-14 Girls' Javelin: Savannah Lamb (Holyrood Academy) – 32m30.

Certificates (for the first three in each event) and County Champion badges were collected on the day or were sent to the schools as soon as possible after the meeting. Every athlete who competed will receive a personal invitation to the four 2020 Somerset Schools' AA Coaching Courses.

RICHARD BOWDEN

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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County Track and Field Championships' Report 2019

As early as January 2018 I alerted Area Secretaries to the 'congestion' that was very likely to occur in 2019 due to the position of weekends and holidays within the year and therefore the shortening of school terms. This compaction affected, of course, not only school athletics but all summer sports, whether school based or not, also school examination schedules along with other commitments within individual schools and colleges. As a result possible dates of Area Championships were very difficult to find.

The stipulated second weekend of June remained for the championships which took place at The Bill Whistlecroft Athletic Arena. Area Championships took place as early as the first week of May through to the last week of the term. Ahead of these information was sent to Area Secretaries which included further updates to the previous year's electronic entry forms.

However, the shortened early track and field competitive season became even shorter due to periods of severe weather leading up to the Area Championships and beyond to the County Championships. As an example the Combined Events Championships were severely impacted.

I was therefore approached just prior to the first Area Championships as to whether there was any way of 'loosening' the entry requirements for the County Championships, specifically for athletes who had not been able to start their competitive season or who had started competing but were going to be restrained by their examination timetable or indeed known athletes trapped in both scenarios. This dilemma was discussed at the May Executive meeting and I followed this by an email to Area Secretaries. (Addendum 1.)

Such a system was not compatible with the entry forms and thus I included specific entry procedure (Addendum 2) along with a reiteration of the general entry requirements. (Addendum 3)

I did not envisage a huge number of additional athletes to be entered but at least this gave an opportunity to Area Secretaries and their athletes every possible chance of competing at the championships if circumstances outside of their control had restricted their season to date.

Although on initial entry forms there were numerous such athletes the final figures show that Mendip, (predominantly) Taunton and Yeovil areas took advantage of this system with extra athletes in 15 events. Only one event's entry was more than the desired maximum of 16 competitors, this being the Junior Boys 100m with 17 entries. (I was not going to inform just one athlete he could not compete.)

One simply, yet significant, development at this stage was a revamp of the format of the printed programme. The usual 'cramped' 8 sides of A5 became 4 sides of A4 allowing relevant information to be viewed on the centre pages. It is challenging to show the 95 individual events' records; national, entry and county standards along with the day's timetable in an easily accessed and viewed layout.

Across the championships two events had no entries: Senior Boys 2000m Steeplechase and Intermediate Girls 3000m. Small entries in some events allowed these to be combined: 800m, 1500m and 1500mSc for IG and SG; 3000m for IB, SB and SG; 1500m for IB and SB whilst only the sprint hurdles for JG required heats. These combinations along with a few in the field events meant the revised timetabled programme could have more 'relaxed' timings and also finish 15 minutes early. This indeed happened on the day.

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The championships took place in good weather conditions conducive to high performance and importantly for this event relaxed (that word again) administration for subsequent championships.

As an organiser and timetabler, rather than an athlete or coach, I hope that on the day there will be some drop-outs so 'life' isn't so frenzied; this was indeed the case as in particular the Junior Boys 100m saw 13 competitors in the usual two heats.

Although the number of officials volunteering to help at the championships was less than the previous year all key lead positions, this year, were filled. Thus with the help of those who 'jump over the fence' events started on time. Particular thanks must go to the early starters who officiated the large number of athletes in the combined hammer competitions, the lead officials who managed the specific event teams and to David Cooke who copies, pastes and manipulates the entries from 24 entry forms into one data base from which heats, pools, photo-finish and results are produced.

Huge thanks to all who officiated or helped during the day.

Athletes continue to perform to a very high standard with numerous personal bests being achieved along with many county standards or above:

	Contested (entered) Events	Non- contested Events	Won in County + Standard	National Standards	Entry Standards	County Standards
Junior Girls	13		8	1	2	15
Inter Girls	16	1	10	2	6	12
Senior Girls	17		12	3	5	16
Junior Boys	14		8	0	2	19
Inter Boys	17		13	2	4	18
Senior Boys	16	1	11	3	10	11
TOTAL	93	2	62	11	29	91
			65%			
2018 totals	93	2	73 (77%)	17	23	104
2017 totals	88	6	59 (62%)	10	22	108

Given the unusual circumstances at the start of the season it is perhaps not surprising that the overall figures are slightly lower than the previous stellar year. But with 11 National standards and 29 Entry Standards (admittedly by some athletes gaining two) the 32 needed for a successful ESAA Championships had been achieved - with more to be gained at the following weekend's South-West Championships?

This year, and it continues to amaze, seven new championship best performances were set:

Junior Girls	300m	42.64	L. Fellows	Mendip
Intermediate Girls	300m	40.15	L. Gifford Groves	Mendip
Intermediate Girls	Shot	11.22	S. Hamilton	Mendip
Intermediate Boys	Sprint Hurdle	13.26	J. Schlueter	Mendip
Intermediate Boys	400m Hurdles	56.36	K. Welch	Taunton
Senior Girls	Shot	12.00	A. Bailey	Mendip
Senior Boys	Sprint Hurdle	14.09	J. Turner	Taunton

The oldest record to be broken was the 1988 Senior Boys' Sprint Hurdle whilst the The Bill Whistlecroft Hurdles Trophy was awarded to Kester Welch.

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Addendum 1

At the last executive meeting we discussed the format and future of Area Championships.

Briefly:

- *Without a strong base of Area Championships the feed of athletes into the County Championships and the progression from them is diminished.*
- *Some 18 months ago I flagged up the unusual situation of this year's summer calendar with holiday / start of month / weekend placement. These, of course, also affected examination timetables. Consequently this year's Area Champs have been fraught with 'conflict'.*
- *Across the country County Associations are struggling for various reasons - at least one County is NOT holding a Track & Field Championships!*
- *We are a highly successful county and we would all want this to continue. So much so that our record would support a possible move into the next ESAA County group, meaning an increased team size to ESAA T&F.*
- *The unfortunate weather experienced specifically at the Combined Events Champs but also on odd days during the summer so far has meant that some athletes have had little competition to secure good performances or determine their best event.*

If our County Championships are to be successful producing strong teams for the South-West and National Championships every endeavour must be made to ensure that all potential county athletes participate.

To this end at the executive we discussed the loosening of entry procedures.

- *This means that if, from your Area Championships or from nominations from schools/colleges, you feel you have a fifth athlete worthy of a place in any event at the Track & Field Championships please include them on your entry form. (I feel there will be no sixth placed athletes.)*
- *I have also been informed that at least one county athlete is looking at another (third, untried but very possibly highly successful) event. On the day only two events will be contested but in this situation I have said three events can be entered.*

Addendum 2

1. *These fifth athletes must be aware they are 'reserves' and can only compete if space is available. My feeling is there will be space BUT we cannot have more than 16 athletes per event.*
2. *Any fifth athlete (or third event athlete) must have a (R) inserted after their last name on the entry form. eg. Baker (R). This will allow me to 'find' them quickly.*
3. *If you enter more than 4 athletes in an event the entry form will automatically highlight that you have done so. Please ignore this error message; but again it is a highlight for me.*
4. *The entry form only allows an athlete to enter 2 events. Thus a third event athlete must be entered again on a new line with the third event and, please, include the (R).*

Addendum 3

However, none of the above supersedes the general entry requirements as stated in my initial letter, "careful observation of the programme order is essential when selecting events for individual athletes"; "a fourth competitor should have reached the 'D standard'..." this would apply to the fifth competitor also; discus and hammer "consistently obtained 'D standard'".

SOUTH-WEST SCHOOLS' AA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Exeter Arena
Saturday 15 June 2019

Following the Somerset Schools' AA Track and Field Championships, the Selection Committee met at Hazlegrove School on Sunday 9 June to select the team for the South-West Championships. We enjoyed superb hospitality and the meeting took almost 5 hours, as usual, given our meticulous process of team selection. In total, 115 athletes were selected to fill a possible 130 places and this year we managed to select at least 1 athlete in each event. There were no withdrawals during the week but after 2 years (2016 and 2017) of a 'no-show' on the day, I am sad to report that this occurred again this year.

The sixth Bill Whistlecroft Hurdles Trophy was presented to Kester Welch (Kingsmead School) for his CBP 56.36 clocking in the Intermediate Boys' 400m Hurdles at the Somerset Schools' AA Championships.

Alarming, just 23 of our 60 schools and colleges were represented (though up from 22 in 2018) - Mendip 5 out of 15 (the same number as in 2018), Sedgemoor 2 out of 13 (3 in 2017 and 2018), Taunton 9 out of 14 (the same number as in 2016, 2017 and 2018), Yeovil 7 out of 18 (up by 2 this year) - compared with 34 in 2000, 33 in 2001, 33 in 2002, 35 in 2003, 29 in 2004, 32 in 2005, 32 in 2006, 28 in 2007, 31 in 2008, 33 in 2009 and 2010, 30 in 2011, 34 in 2012, 31 in 2013, 35 in 2014, 31 in 2015, 27 in 2016, 29 in 2017 and 22 last year. These figures serve to re-emphasise the fact that there remains a fair number of huge schools and colleges which fail to take part significantly at Area or County level – invariably some athletes 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 Sunday evening by email and on the Monday or Tuesday by letter. With the team posted on the website immediately after selection, communication to pupils and students was extremely efficient again this year but 15 had to be 'chased' for confirmation of availability on the Thursday afternoon and I still had to attempt to contact 9 of those athletes on the Friday. It should be noted that when athletes fail to submit their webform I have no idea of any medical issues, no idea if they require items of kit and I do not have an emergency telephone number. Therefore, our recent decision to pay stricter attention to various aspects of safeguarding entails considerable extra work.

We decided to maintain our policy of arranging no official team transport to Exeter but parents or teachers delivered all the athletes in good time. Administration and collection of money at the stadium was straightforward thanks to excellent assistance from the Team Managers, and most late payments were received fairly soon after the meeting. That aspect had been such a frustrating element of my role over the years that I proposed the following at the 2011 Annual General Meeting – **"On the day of the Somerset Schools' AA Annual General Meeting, any monies still owed by any athlete who represented the Somerset Schools' AA during the previous year shall render all athletes from his or her school or college ineligible to participate in any Somerset Schools' AA Championships for the ensuing year"**.

I was very pleased to report that the final 2013 payment was sent to the Treasurer by the end of August and although more reminders were necessary in 2014, in mid-September the total owed was a mere £20.00. In 2015 only £36.00 was owed in September and the last payment arrived on the 15 of the month. In 2016 I was able to send the final amount of £12.00 to the Treasurer on 18 August but in 2017 there remained £75.00 outstanding from 2 schools (£32.00 and £43.00) at the time of writing the report, despite 3 reminders to the schools and a personal email to 2 of the 3 athletes/parents concerned. 2018 was much better - just a single fee of £7.00 outstanding after the summer holidays, though the Finance Officer of the school in question contacted me and the payment arrived on 17 September.

I regret to report that this year has been far more frustrating, with some fees and kit payments remaining outstanding well over 3 months after the meeting. Despite reminders on 17 June (£148.00 owed by 9 schools), 15 July (£46.00 owed by 3 schools) and 3 September (£39.00 owed by 2 schools), the penultimate payment arrived on 3 October and at the time of writing I am waiting to receive the final £25.00. I have been informed that the school now has the money from the parents and will be forwarding a cheque as soon as possible.

At the 2019 SSAA Annual General Meeting I would appreciate some discussion of my original proposal – **"On the day of the Somerset Schools' AA Annual General Meeting, any monies still owed by any athlete who represented the Somerset Schools' AA during the previous year shall render all athletes from his or her school or college ineligible to participate in any Somerset Schools' AA Championships for the ensuing year"** – with an appropriate addition to the Constitution and/or the Selection Policies under consideration.

The past 20 years have seen our fortunes fluctuate in terms of the 12 team trophies on offer. After winning 9 in 1999, 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 on home soil in 2007 we improved to take 9 of the 12 titles. We found ourselves returning to Exeter in 2009 bearing the 7 trophies captured in 2008 but after claiming only 3 items of silverware on that occasion we doubled the total in 2010 with 6 victories. A truly magnificent team performance in 2011 saw us equal our best-ever haul of 9 trophies, and 8 victories in 2012 represented a tremendous day's work. We were only one short of that number in 2013 with 7 but 2014 saw us finally break into double figures with a record haul of 10 of the 12 trophies. 2015 saw us come close to repeating a double-figure haul, falling one short, but in 2016 we dropped back to 7. We equalled that total in 2017 but last year Somerset won an unprecedented 12 out of 12 trophies. This year was one of relative 'failure' as we took only 10 – Junior and Intermediate Girls, Intermediate and Senior Boys, Overall Girls, Overall Boys, Track Events, Field Events, Relays and Overall Champions.

Our 2019 South-West Champions were:

Junior Girls – 1st - 84 points

300m	Lucy Fellows	(Millfield School)	40.40 (CBP)
High Jump	Lucy Fellows	(Millfield School)	1m68
Long Jump	Seren Rodgers	(The Castle School)	5m61

Junior Boys – 2nd - 80 points (Avon 88 points)

Intermediate Girls – 1st - 116 points

300m	Lucia Gifford-Groves	(Millfield School)	39.92 (CBP)
80m Hurdles	Lydia Smith	(Bishop Fox's School)	11.48
Long Jump	Lydia Smith	(Bishop Fox's School)	5m94 (CBP)
Shot	Sophie Hamilton	(Millfield School)	12m23
Javelin	Millie Quaintance	(Millfield School)	44m98 (CBP)

Intermediate Boys – 1st - 125 points

100m Hurdles	Jami Schlueter	(Millfield School)	13.05 (CBP)
400m Hurdles	Kester Welch	(Kingsmead School)	57.79
1500m Steeplechase	Tom Heal	(Kingsmead School)	4:28.77
4x100m Relay	Somerset		44.86
Pole Vault	Kurt Gilbert	(Kingsmead School)	3m80
Long Jump	Jami Schlueter	(Millfield School)	7m02 (CBP)
Shot	Jadiel Wahab	(Millfield School)	15m33

Senior Girls – 2nd - 102 points (Devon 120 points)

1500m Steeplechase	Elise Thorner	(Millfield School)	4:47.96 (CBP)
Pole Vault	Amy Haslam	(Millfield School)	3m50

Senior Boys – 1st - 119 points

110m Hurdles	Jack Turner	(Wellington School)	14.37
4x100m Relay	Somerset		44.90
Pole Vault	Jacob Clark	(Millfield School)	4m50
Javelin	Tom Dollery	(Taunton School)	54m35

16 event victories in 2013 represented our lowest total in over ten years, our 'normal' tally being 17 (in 2001, 2004 and 2006), 19 in 2008, 2014 and 2016, 20 in 2009 and 2011, 21 in 2007 and 2015, 22 in 2017, 23 in 2012 and 24 in 2010. 34 golds in 2018 was outstanding but this year's 21 was encouraging.

A dedicated, loyal group of Team Managers supported the athletes superbly. In mid-April I had invited 21 male colleagues and 11 ladies to work with our teams at South-West and National levels and a total of 12 (including myself) declared their desire to work with the team in Exeter. 2 members of staff worked with each age group: Emma Radford-James and Adrian Palmer (Junior Girls), Jon Leonard and Jason Allen (Junior Boys), Jo Pike and Katie Cobb (Intermediate Girls), Richard Llewellyn-Eaton and Gary Jennings (Intermediate Boys), Abi Tickner, assisted by Cecily Turner (Senior Girls) and Frank Tickner and Alan Richardson with the Senior Boys. A large number of our officials were on duty, with other members of the Association involved with Announcing, Recording and Scoring, so we can be proud of the contribution made by so many Somerset personnel.

RICHARD BOWDEN

NEW BALANCE ESAA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham
Friday and Saturday 12 and 13 July 2019

The Somerset team of 115 athletes had shown outstanding strength in depth at the South-West Schools' AA Championships in Exeter, securing 10 trophies. At the 'sharp end', 19 event wins in 2014 (compared with 24 in 2010, 20 in 2011, 23 in 2012 and 16 in 2013) went up to 21 in 2015, back to 19 in 2016, rose to 22 in 2017 but shot up to 34 last year (including 4 CBPs). 21 golds this time was encouraging but 7 CBPs offered a bold statement that the Birmingham team would be another powerful outfit. It was no surprise therefore, that we set about the selection of our 32 athletes with great optimism on the morning of Sunday 16 June, enjoying the hospitality of Westfield Academy.

An extremely strong Somerset team was selected despite 6 athletes (5 with a National Entry Standard, 1 with a National Standard) declaring unavailability this year. The ESAA reorganisation meant we could select a team of 32 though we were still obliged to leave out 16 athletes (including those unavailable or injured) with a National Entry Standard. Amongst the 70 names on our long list we considered 22 athletes with National Standards (19 in 2012, 16 in 2013, 20 in 2014, 19 in 2015, 12 in 2016, 16 in 2017 and 20 last year) and another 20 with National Entry Standards (21 in 2012, 27 in 2013, 17 in 2014, 22 in 2015, 27 in 2016, 21 in 2017 and 24 last year). The final team of 32 therefore included 22 NS performers and 10 athletes with NES.

There was one withdrawal following selection (the athlete being unwilling to travel to Birmingham on the occasion of his 18th birthday or to stay in the team hotel). Happily, the circumstances around his European Under-20 selection meant we were able to invite an athlete from a different age group and event, that late invitation being gratefully accepted with typical loyalty and pride at being part of the group. All the pre-Championships communication and systems went well – though complete revamps of all our selection paperwork to comply with GDPR and safeguarding procedures meant additional work.

By changing our transport arrangements (making use of a smaller 33-seater coach from Knight Brothers Travel, a school vehicle and 2 cars) we saved almost £1200.00 and everything ran very smoothly, our timings almost the same as in 2018. 3 Team Managers met the coach at King's College at 1.30pm with the official pick-up points being Taunton (M5 Junction 25) at 2.00pm, where 14 athletes joined the group and Dunball (M5 Junction 23) at 2.30pm, where another 3 met the coach. 15 athletes and 4 Team Managers travelled independently and met the team in Birmingham. The system of Young Officials was in operation again but we made no nomination this year.

We were delighted that our allocated accommodation would mean a return to the Crowne Plaza Hotel (NEC) which had proved to be such a superb team base in 2010, 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2018. Our packed lunches, provided by King's College, were far superior (and better value) than those offered by the organisers.

Our overall performance is analysed below (17* 18* 19* = 32 athletes - up from 25):

	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17*	18*	19*
Personal Bests	8	6	9	7	3	4	10	7	14	8	8	4	8	9	9	7
Entry Standard	6	6	7	7	7	6	7	9	9	6	5	13	11	11	7	7
Nat Standard	5	4	7	8	9	8	12	4	14	9	14	8	8	10	13	14
Top-8 Places	11	11	12	13	15	16	15	9	18	11	17	15	17	18	17	19
Scorers	14	12	14	16	18	17	19	14	23	15	19	21	21	21	21	22
Total Score	78	57	83	98	98	85.5	106.5	55	125	80.5	118	90	89	116	121.5	129.5
Trophies	SG	-	JB	IG	IB	-	IB	-	JB	SB	IB	SB	-	IG	IG	SG
			SG	Ov	SG		SG		IB		Ov			Ov	SG	Ov
							Ov		Ov						Ov	

The team scores and positions for each age group were:

Junior Boys	11 th	1 point	(Winning Total = 28 - Suffolk)
Intermediate Boys	3 rd	24 points	(Winning Total = 41 – Warwickshire)
Senior Boys	2 nd	20 points	(Winning Total = 22 – Warwickshire)
Junior Girls	3 rd	19 points	(Winning Total = 23 – Bedfordshire & Luton)
Intermediate Girls	2 nd	26.5 points	(Winning Total = 37 - Wiltshire)
Senior Girls	1 st	39 points	(CF Gosling Trophy)
Aggregate Total	1 st	129.5 points	(Tonkin Cup)

In terms of trophies we maintained our winning ways, this year claiming 2 trophies, including the C Group Overall Aggregate Trophy for the third year in a row and the seventh time in 13 years. The individual highlights were our 8 medallists (2 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze) and an Intermediate athlete in the ESAA team in Swansea: Lucia Gifford-Groves (Millfield School) – 300m.

Following problems encountered in 2015 and 2016 when parents removed athletes from the team earlier than the permitted time, the point about remaining with the group (already stated clearly on the availability form filled out at the SSAA Championships) was emphasised once again in the athletes' selection letter. In addition, the signed transport reply slip included a section ensuring each athlete understood his/her commitment to meet the group by 6.00pm on the Thursday and remain with the team throughout both days of competition (at least until the conclusion of the Parade on the Saturday afternoon). I am pleased to report that there were no such problems in 2017, 2018 or 2019.

2019 marks the end of the 3-year review of the new A, B, C, D Groups and it is clear that our teams have put Somerset in a very strong position to claim a move to Group B. This would mean a team of 40 athletes from 2020 and final decisions on county movements will be ratified at the 2019 ESAA Annual Council Meeting. Group B winning totals in the past 3 years have been: 142 points (Lancashire 2017), 117.5 (Derbyshire 2018) and 146 (Merseyside 2019) so an additional 20 points from an extra 8 athletes should make Somerset very competitive in Group B, should our requested 'promotion' take place.

I must conclude this report with a tribute to the work carried out throughout the weekend on the part of the Team Managers and 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. Accompanying me were Richard Llewellyn-Eaton, Frank Tickner, Jo Pike, Abi Tickner, Jon Leonard and Rhys Llewellyn-Eaton. The care, loyalty, reliability and attention to detail maintained by these enthusiastic colleagues must surely be viewed by the athletes, parents, teachers and coaches as outstanding features of our Association.

RICHARD BOWDEN

Report for the Somerset Schools' A.G.M. 2019

E.S.A.A. Schools' Track and Field Cup 2019

County round

Thirty-eight teams from 14 schools entered this year (two more schools and nine more teams than last year) with schools split between taking part at Millfield School and the Castle track in Taunton. Both events were contested keenly.

Regional final

Seven Somerset teams (two more than last year) qualified for the Regional 'A' Final at Millfield, organised by Alan Richardson and Gary Jennings.

Millfield (IB, IG)
Millfield Prep (JB, JG)
Kings Bruton (IG)
Kingsmead Academy (IB)
King's Hall (JG)

Seven Somerset teams (four more than last year) qualified for the Regional 'B' Finals.

Haygrove (IB) – attended SW-3
King's Hall School (JB) – attended SW-3
King's College (IB) – attended SW-3
King's Bruton (IB) – attended SW-3
Taunton (IB) – attended SW-3
Wellington (IB) – attended SW-3
Kingsmead Academy (IG) – attended SW-3

National final

Two Somerset teams qualified for the National Final.

Millfield (IG and IB)

Millfield IG finished 3rd and Millfield IB finished 9th.

My sincere thanks go to all organisers, school staff, coaches and pupils for their hard work and effort to ensure everything ran smoothly.

Gary Jennings - E.S.A.A. Schools' Track and Field Cup County Secretary.