

SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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2022 Track and Field Report

At last year's AGM I outlined the position of competition after the 'Covid years', "Track and Field competition did not take place in 2020, the 2021 season ... did not have Area or South-West Championships whilst the County 'Competitions' were contested, in the main, by known athletes. We have 'lost' those coming into the sport, predominantly the younger age groups" and "Hopefully 2022 will see the true 'restart' of competition and championships but with so many 'lost' athletes much thought will have to be given to the format of entry systems and championship days."

Through many ideas and much discussion at the Championships committee a new format for the County Championships was produced. This essentially used as a foundation my thoughts:

- My proposed programme runs from 11.00 to 14.15 for Juniors = 3¼ hours with 1¼ overlap
- From 13.00 to 16.30 for Intermediates/Seniors = 3½ hours with 1¼ overlap
- The whole day runs from 11.00 to 16.30 = 5½ hours!
- Either by luck, lethargy, design or entry standards competitor numbers will have to be managed
- The programme does, I think, give scope for more Junior competitors than normally seen!
- I expect Intermediate/Senior entries to be lower than normal and thus field events can be and are combined.

It was decided to continue the entry system of the previous year's 'Competitions', and the year's Cross-Country Championships, asking athletes to confirm their Area selection and pay their entry fee through a JotForm, set up by YOAC.

Throughout the discussions participation numbers could not be predicted due to the unknown numbers entered by schools to the Area Championships and the level of non-confirmation!

At the end of the entry process there were 467 event entries from 344 athletes. The number of events entered in 2019 (the last pre-Covid year) was 688 meaning the year saw a drop in entries of one third.

Event numbers were therefore 'manageable' with the largest track event (JB 100m) having 14 competitors and the largest field event (combined IB and SB Javelin) also seeing 14 entries.

For the majority of athletes the day was a positive experience but the 'looks good on paper' programme did have its scheduling errors for some individual athletes, notably Intermediate and Senior athletes 'doubling up' in hurdles / sprints / long jump.

From an officials' viewpoint the day was one of constant (starting of) competition. With a shortened day this was always going to be the case but in so doing the preparation / warm-up phase of any event was greatly reduced and thus hurried. All helpers and officials are thanked for their contribution to the Championships. Without the loyal and large band of volunteers this and other Association activities cannot take place.

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Similarly the 'good for Covid' format of a call room didn't work smoothly due in the main to the inexperience of athletes understanding the procedures of a large (formal) athletic event.

The pre-event and post-event administration was vastly different to previous championships. The confirmed entries came to me via the JotForm in a random order for each of the 4 areas. These, firstly, had to be ordered into each of the 6 age groups. Secondly, each individual age group had to be merged across the 4 areas so that thirdly, within each age group the athletes could be grouped into the individual events; for intermediates and seniors the individual events had to be merged. Finally heats and pools could be constructed and printed.

With races in particular being stand alone the photo-finish computers simply produced race results which had to be collated at the end of the day. Likewise best performances from field cards had to be logged before both field and track results could be printed and published.

At the end of this lengthy process three athletes were credited with Championship Best Performances:

Inter Girls 1500m StCh	Sophie Nicholls	Mendip	4:34.65
Inter Girls Shot	Amalia Bonito	Mendip	12.87
Senior Girls Javelin	Sophie Hamilton	Mendip	50.08

If the JotForm entry system and the split day format are to continue, I think both have many merits, much thought must again be shared to iron out the first year problems.

SOUTH-WEST SCHOOLS' AA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Exeter Arena
Saturday 18 June 2022

Following the Somerset Schools' AA Track and Field Championships, the Selection Committee met at the Yeovil Olympiads AC clubhouse on Sunday 12 June to select the team for the South-West Championships; the meeting taking almost 5 hours, as usual, given our meticulous process of team selection. In total, 107 athletes were selected to fill a possible 120 places (10 fewer than in previous years to ease pressure on officials and field event sites) and we managed to select at least 1 athlete in each event.

Sadly, just 25 of our 60 schools and colleges were represented (though up from 22 in 2018 and 23 in 2019) - Mendip 6 out of 15, Sedgemoor 4 out of 13, Taunton 9 out of 14, Yeovil 6 out of 18.

It had not been possible to operate the usual 'confirmation of availability' system of taking details from the first-3 in each event at presentation so we relied on the webforms submitted some weeks earlier. That resulted in more withdrawals than ever in the week leading up to the Championships, with 10 athletes declaring their unavailability to compete in an event. We brought in 2 reserves and doubled-up 5 athletes already in the team but it still left us with 5 gaps – JG Pole Vault, IG 300m Hurdles, IG Long Jump, SG 100m Hurdles and SG Triple Jump. Following a 'no-show' on the day in 2016 and 2017 I am saddened to report that 2 athletes failed to appear this year.

The seventh Bill Whistlecroft Hurdles Trophy was presented to Harry Barton (Millfield School) for his 14.3 clocking in the Senior Boys' 110m Hurdles at the Somerset Schools' AA Championships.

Schools and colleges with selected athletes were notified on the Monday by email, with a copy sent to all our club contacts as a back-up. With the team posted on the website immediately after selection, communication to athletes was extremely efficient again this year but 10 had to be 'chased' for confirmation of availability on the Thursday and I still had to attempt to contact 3 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, though there were far fewer cash transactions this year as many parents chose to make use of our new system of paying by BACS.

If the withdrawals in the week leading up to the Championships and the 'no-shows' on the day were irritating, the major frustration once again has been the failure of schools and parents to settle debts promptly. Even after several reminders I was still having to request fees and kit payments in October. 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 have continued to ask colleagues to consider adding this to the Constitution and/or the Selection Policies at several Annual General Meetings over the past 10 years (the last time in 2019) and I repeat it here.

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 in 2018 Somerset won an unprecedented 12 out of 12 trophies. In 2019 we won 10 trophies but this year was one of relative 'failure' as we took only 7 – Senior Girls, Intermediate and Senior Boys, Overall Boys, Track Events, Field Events and Overall Champions.

Our 2022 South-West Champions were:

Junior Girls – 3rd - 62 points (Devon 65 points)

Shot	Zoe Allen	(Millfield School)	11m07
Javelin	Ellie Roe	(Huish Episcopi Academy)	32m99

Junior Boys – 3rd - 69 points (Avon 78 points)

High Jump	Robert Brand	(King's School)	1m75
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Intermediate Girls – 2nd – 90 points (Devon 105 points)

Shot	Amalia Eneanya-Bonito	(Millfield School)	12m31
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Intermediate Boys – 1st – 91 points

Senior Girls – 1st – 97 points

Long Jump	Lucy Fellows	(Millfield School)	5m92
Javelin	Sophie Hamilton	(Millfield School)	42m05

Senior Boys – 1st – 94 points

110m Hurdles	Harry Barton	(Millfield School)	14.44
400m Hurdles	Noah Miller	(Millfield School)	56.02
2000m Steeplechase	Tom Heal	(Richard Huish College)	5:58.65
Javelin	Ben Jones	(Richard Huish College)	50m80

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, 2015 and 2019, 22 in 2017, 23 in 2012 and 24 in 2010. 34 golds in 2018 was outstanding but this year we crashed to our worst total in over 20 years – a mere 10 victories not boding well for the ESAA Championships.

A dedicated, loyal group of Team Managers supported the athletes superbly. On 10 May I had invited 16 male colleagues and 10 ladies to work with our teams at South-West and ESAA levels and a total of 12 (including myself) declared their desire to work with the team in Exeter. Each age group except the Senior Boys had 2 members of staff: Jo Pike and Alex Ireland (Junior Girls), Adrian Palmer and Jason Allen (Junior Boys), Simon Prior and Emma Radford-James (Intermediate Girls), Richard Llewellyn-Eaton and Lloyd Williams (Intermediate Boys), Zach Harrop and Charlotte Fisher (Senior Girls) and Gary Jennings with the Senior Boys. A large number of our officials were on duty, with other members of the Association involved with Presentations, Recording and Scoring, so we can be proud of the contribution made by so many Somerset personnel.

ESAA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Manchester Regional Arena
Friday and Saturday 8 and 9 July 2022**

Although the Somerset team had done well in winning 7 of the 12 South-West trophies, just 10 individual victories and relatively few National Standard and National Entry Standard performances indicated that the team selected for the 2022 ESAA Championships would be significantly weaker than those of recent years. Those stronger teams had been selected on the back of 24 South-West event wins in 2010, 20 in 2011, 23 in 2012, 16 in 2013, 19 in 2014, 21 in 2015, 19 in 2016, 22 in 2017, 34 in 2018 and 21 in 2019. It was agreed from the outset though that we would select our maximum number of 40 athletes in our first official ESAA Track and Field Championships in the B Group.

An initial group of 34 athletes across 40 events was drawn up after Easter but following the Somerset County AA Championships the group included just 5 NES and 5 NS performances. The full list of athletes and all the data were sent out to the SSAA Committee, Area Secretaries, Team Managers, club contacts and coaches as the season progressed, with updates on 17 May, 24 May, 31 May, 8 June and 16 June with recommendations welcomed to ensure fairness and transparency. Some athletes were added, others discarded, so that by the time the final selections took place at Millfield School on Sunday 19 June we were considering 53 athletes for the 40 places (11 with NES and 6 with NS). For comparison, the 2019 team of 32 athletes had included 22 NS performers and 10 athletes with NES.

An additional 2 athletes were unavailable, though in the case of Seren Rodgers this was for the very best of reasons as she had been selected to represent Great Britain in the Heptathlon at the European Under-18 Championships in Jerusalem. Seren went into the Championships ranked 14th in Europe but finished a magnificent 7th.

There were 3 withdrawals following selection – 1 through injury and 2 following positive Covid tests (1 on the Thursday, the day of travel to Manchester) – so our final team numbered 37.

Selection letters and all the pre-Championships communications were carried out by email to athletes and schools/colleges on the evening of 19 June with the selected team posted on the website. The deadline for the return of the Transport/Kit Order form and the Medical Information form together with fees and kit payments was Friday 1 July but as always seems to be the case, a great deal of reminding was necessary in the lead-up to the Championships.

Quotes for coach hire having proved prohibitive we changed our transport plans dramatically this year by the use of 3 mini-buses from King's College. This saved an enormous amount of money (a cost that would have had to have been borne by each athlete) and allowed us useful flexibility with transportation from the team hotel to the stadium. On Thursday 7 July we left King's College at 11.00am where 19 athletes met, with a pick-up at Dunball (M5 Junction 23) at 11.30am, where another 6 joined the group. The remaining 12 athletes travelled independently and met the team at the hotel. The system of Young Officials was in operation again but we made no nomination this year.

Our team hotel (allocated by ESAA) was the Mercure Manchester Norton Grange Hotel and Spa in Rochdale, Greater Manchester (just 20 minutes from the stadium), with Somerset the only county team staying there. Despite the fact that ESAA had no event sponsor a generous grant was still made to each county so that, added to our transport arrangements, enabled us to charge each athlete only £95.00 which included two nights' 4-Star hotel accommodation on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis, entry fee, stadium seat and packed lunch (provided by SSAA, thanks to Richard Llewellyn-Eaton's efforts).

2019 marked the end of the 3-year review of the new A, B, C, D Groups and Somerset's move from C to B was ratified at the 2019 ESAA Annual Council Meeting. Group B winning totals in the past 3 years had been: 142 points (Lancashire 2017), 117.5 (Derbyshire 2018) and 146 (Merseyside 2019) so it was felt an additional 20 points on our 2019 score (with an extra 8 athletes) would make Somerset very competitive

in Group B. As will be seen below, we fell far short of that total but topping Group B in the future remains our aspiration, of course.

Our overall performance is analysed below (17* 18* 19* = 32 athletes - up from 25; 22^ = 40 athletes):

	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17*	18*	19*	22^
Personal Bests	6	9	7	3	4	10	7	14	8	8	4	8	9	9	7	11
Ent Standard	6	7	7	7	6	7	9	9	6	5	13	11	11	7	7	7
Nat Standard	4	7	8	9	8	12	4	14	9	14	8	8	10	13	14	7
Top-8 Places	11	12	13	15	16	15	9	18	11	17	15	17	18	17	19	13
Scorers	12	14	16	18	17	19	14	23	15	19	21	21	21	21	22	16
Total Score	57	83	98	98	85.5	106.5	55	125	80.5	118	90	89	116	121.5	129.5	79
Trophies	-	JB	IG	IB	-	IB	-	JB	SB	IB	SB	-	IG	IG	SG	SB
		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 = 33 - Lancashire)
Intermediate Boys	12 th	6 points	(Winning Total = 46 – Avon)
Senior Boys	1 st =	33 points	(Cheshire Trophy – shared with Lancashire)
Junior Girls	12 th	3 points	(Winning Total = 35 – Cheshire)
Intermediate Girls	10 =	16 points	(Winning Total = 48 - Cheshire)
Senior Girls	8 th	20 points	(Winning Total = 41 - Lancashire)
Aggregate Total	8 th	79 points	(Winning Total = 157 - Lancashire)

In terms of trophies we did manage to maintain our winning ways, though no team scores were made available at the end of the Championships – a complete mystery in these days of such sophisticated technology. Once the provisional results had been communicated (some 3 weeks after the event) it appeared Somerset had won the Senior Boys' age group and the Cheshire Trophy with 33 points. Sadly, 2 additional points were found for Lancashire so the trophy was shared.

The individual highlights were our 5 medallists (4 silver and 1 bronze) and an Intermediate athlete in the ESAA team for the SIAB Championships in Belfast: Sophie Nicholls (Wells Cathedral School) in the 3000m.

Our decision to take 40 athletes (even though that meant just over half the team had not achieved NES before selection) was vindicated when Vivienne Card (IG 80m Hurdles) surpassed the mark in Manchester and Noah Heal finished 7th in the IB 1500m Steeplechase to become another useful scorer. A detailed analysis of each athlete's performance accompanies this report.

In thanking my colleagues for their sympathy concerning my broken arm I must pay tribute to the work carried out throughout the weekend on the part of the Team Managers who prepared each athlete as thoroughly as possible, particularly in the final lead-up to competition. Accompanying me were Richard Llewellyn-Eaton, Jo Pike (also Safeguarding Officer), Simon Prior, Charlotte Fisher, Rhys Llewellyn-Eaton, Zach Harrop and Steve Shaw (who had rushed back from Jerusalem in order to be with the team).

Finally, the Parade was enhanced by new county name boards, with counties invited to include some appropriate wording on the back. The Somerset message was penned by Chairman, Jane Yandell:

*Steeped in ancient myth and lore
Our reputation goes before...
Cathedral, Castle, Tor and Coast
To Somerset: a cider toast
Our athletes give their Level best
To wear the Dragon on their chest.*

ENGLISH SCHOOLS' AA TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022 – SOMERSET RESULTS

Name	School	Age Group	Event	Heat	PB	Final	PB	Points				
Gemma Tolputt	(Millfield School)	Junior Girls	1500m	5. 4:42.64 NES				1				
Annabelle Suffield	(Millfield School)	Junior Girls	1500m	12. 4:51.21								
Lois Moore	(Millfield School)	Junior Girls	High Jump			7. 1m56		2				
Zoe Allen	(Millfield School)	Junior Girls	Shot			9. 9m70						
Ellie Roe	(Huish Episcopi Academy)	Junior Girls	Javelin			14. 25m50						
Kaycie Adams	(Bridgwater College Academy)	Junior Girls	Javelin			11. 30m06						
Harriet Souttar-Stone	(Holyrood Academy)	Junior Girls	Javelin			13. 26m93						
Tom Webb	(Millfield School)	Junior Boys	1500m	7. 4:16.09 q NES	✓	10. 4:14.18 NES	✓	1				
Charlie Court	(Crispin School)	Junior Boys	1500m	10. 4:22.15	✓							
Robert Brand	(King’s School)	Junior Boys	High Jump			12. 1m64						
Finlay Stuart	(The Castle School)	Junior Boys	High Jump			14. 1m59						
		Junior Boys	4x100m Relay			14. 51.56						
Iris Courtney	(Millfield School)	Inter Girls	1500m	10. 4:50.39								
Sophie Nicholls	(Wells Cathedral School)	Inter Girls	3000m			2. 9:38.10 NS	✓	7 + 2				
Vivienne Card	(Preston School)	Inter Girls	80m Hurdles	6. 11.83 NES	✓			1				
Lucy Acott	(Huish Episcopi Academy)	Inter Girls	1500m Steeplechase	WITHDREW - INJURY								
Venetia Mahony	(Millfield School)	Inter Girls	High Jump			4. 1m68 NES	✓	5 + 1				
Declan Tuohy	(King’s College)	Inter Boys	200m	4. 23.05								
Ogbemudia Eribo	(King’s College)	Inter Boys	100m Hurdles	7. 14.52								
Aaron Adotevi	(Brymore Academy)	Inter Boys	400m Hurdles	5. 61.29								
Dillon Millard	(Bishop Fox’s School)	Inter Boys	1500m Steeplechase			6. 4:37.93 NES	✓	3 + 1				
Noah Heal	(Kingsmead School)	Inter Boys	1500m Steeplechase			7. 4:42.25	✓	2				
Tycho Simmons	(Queen’s College)	Inter Boys	Shot			9. 11m64						
		Inter Boys	4x100m Relay			Disqualified						
Ella Smith	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	200m	4. 25.68 q NES		7. 25.66 NES		2 + 1				
Keira Gilman	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	200m	7. 27.01								
Ella Wintle	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	400m	WITHDREW – POSITIVE COVID TEST								
Freya Buglass	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	800m	WITHDREW – POSITIVE COVID TEST								
Sophia Wilson	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	1500m Steeplechase			10. 5:29.94						
Anya Evans	(King’s School)	Senior Girls	1500m Steeplechase			13. 5:44.72						
Lucy Fellows	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	Long Jump			3. 5m78 NS		6 + 2				
Sophie Hamilton	(Millfield School)	Senior Girls	Javelin			2. 45m88 NS		7 + 2				
		Senior Girls	4x100m Relay			9. 50.05						
Eddie Griffin	(Bridgwater College)	Senior Boys	400m	6. 51.19								
Daniel Maydew	(The King Alfred School)	Senior Boys	3000m			6. 8:31.70 NS		3 + 2				
Daniel Fisher	(Richard Huish College)	Senior Boys	3000m			18. 8:45.30	✓					
Harry Barton	(Millfield School)	Senior Boys	110m Hurdles	1. 13.84 Q NS	✓	2. 14.10 NS		7 + 2				
Noah Miller	(Millfield School)	Senior Boys	400m Hurdles	4. 55.51 q NES	✓	8. 57.46 NES		1 + 1				
Tom Heal	(Richard Huish College)	Senior Boys	2000m Steeplechase			2. 5:52.21 NS	✓	7 + 2				
Louis Reynolds	(Queen’s College)	Senior Boys	High Jump			10. 1m82						
Toks Akanbi-Mortimer	(Millfield School)	Senior Boys	Long Jump			9. 6m35						
Ben Jones	(Richard Huish College)	Senior Boys	Javelin			6. 56m49 NS		3 + 2				
Callum Hendy	(Taunton School)	Senior Boys	Javelin			13. 46m45						
		Senior Boys	4x100m Relay			7. 44.41 NES		2 + 1				
PBs = 11	NES = 7	NS = 7	Top-8 = 13	Scorers = 16	JG = 3 (12 th)	JB = 1 (11 th)	IG = 16 (10 th)	IB = 6 (12 th)	SG = 20 (8 th)	SB = 33 (1 st)	Overall = 79 (8 th)	Trophies = Sen Boys