

THE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO BASILDON ATHLETICS CLUB!

NEW!

MAY 2017 | ISSUE 01

BAS MAG

GREATEST OF ALL TIME

Joseph Harding smashes national record in Sheffield

INTO THE UNKNOWN

Masters prepare for league battle

MUD SWEAT & CHEERS

Basildon's cross country squad exceeds expectations

PLAN YOUR SEASON

The not to be missed guide to track fixtures



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REGULARS

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Teenage sensation Joseph Harding (above) has put Basildon back on the map, breaking the all time national record for the U15 indoor pentathlon.

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14 STILL GOT IT

Basildon will enter the Eastern Masters' League for the first time in 2017, but who are their rivals and what are their chances?



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News

Results / Achievements / Performances / Club Events / Training Updates / Gossip / Developments / Success

LEE VALLEY MIDDLE DISTANCE

WINTER TRAINING PAYS OFF FOR MIDDLE DISTANCE MAESTROS

A **SIZEABLE** number of Basildon's middle distance athletes attended this year's Lee Valley Middle Distance open in February and were rewarded with a host of personal bests.

Stephen Strange (pictured, right) gave the fastest performance of the Basildon squad during the evening, earning a new personal best of 1:54.71 over 800 metres.

Meanwhile, Under 20 Mitchel Cox gave a flavour of what to expect this summer, when he smashed two minutes for the first time, clocking 1:59.4 seconds – a massive breakthrough for any 800m specialist.

Under 17 Isaac Brown reaped the benefits of the cross country season with his indoor debut and an impressive 2:04.28 seconds, enough to finish second in his race. In doing so, he finished ahead of two U20s and an U23, by quite some distance. Fellow Under 17 Matthew Houchell took inspiration, scoring his own personal best of 2:16.35.

In the 1500m races, Basildon's Gus Withers didn't disappoint. The U20 stopped the clock in 4:26.76 – another personal best. There were also commendable performances from James Tydeman and Andy Coleman who both achieved season's best times at the meet.



BENNETT LANDS SPONSOR DEAL

HIGH HURDLER Sam Bennett has landed a place on the sports sponsorship programme offered by Essex physiotherapy and sports clinic Cedar Hall.

Bennett – who placed second at the ESAA English Schools Championships in Gateshead last summer – follows in the footsteps of Basildon multi-eventer Kristian Brown, who is already on the sponsorship programme.

The programme is among the first of its kind in the country and offers free treatment sponsorships to local, young athletes who are potential Olympians of the future.

Bennett, who is about to go into his second

year in the Under 17 category, is coached by Steven Surety.

According to the company's website, the sponsorships were the brainchild of clinical directors and osteopathic consultants Sara Lovett and Jacki Milne who were inspired by the build up to the 2012 London Olympics.

It says: "Their decision to commit to help young athletes from the local community covers all aspects of the athletes' therapeutic needs as they work towards UK, European & World Championships and ultimately the Olympics." Athletes on the programme have access to therapies all year round.

BMAF & SOUTH OF ENGLAND MASTERS

BASILDON'S MASTERS CLEAN UP AT MULTI AREA INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS



BASILDON'S masters squad laid down their intentions for this summer's Eastern League in February, with a haul of gold medals at this year's BMAF Pentathlon / South of England Indoor Masters' Championships.

The event – combined with the Eastern Regional Championships - featured five of Basildon's expanding veteran squad: Jan Barnard, Andy Coleman, Joe McGrath, Heidi Nicholas and Clint Nicholls.

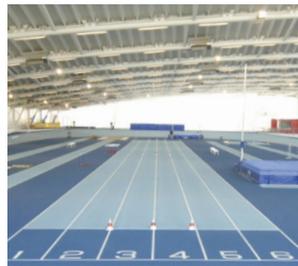
In his third year in the 35-39s age group, multi-eventer Clint Nicholls (pictured below) successfully defended his Indoor Pentathlon title against fierce competition from Nene Valley Harriers.

It is the third year in a row

that Nicholls has claimed the title. In doing so, he managed some noteworthy performances including a 1.83 high jump and an 8.9 seconds 60m Hurdles – a lifetime best. His score of 3,132 points was some 61 points higher than his previous personal best.

While the five events for the men's pentathlon were being played out at Lee Valley, Heidi Nicholas was busy completing five events of her own, but as individual disciplines.

Competing in the 35-39s age group, Heidi Nicholas' long jump of 4.87m was a championship best performance, as was her high jump of 1.48m. She completed her 60m Hurdles in a time of 12.05



seconds to take the gold and took third in the 60 metres. She rounded off her medal haul with an 8m triple jump.

While the multi-eventers were occupying their day, Basildon's short sprints specialist Jan Barnard was targeting a double in the 60m and 200m races. Fresh from his county championship victory a week earlier, he looked confident in warm up. In the 60m, he clocked 7.63 seconds to win gold, while, in the 200m, he lit the after-burners at 100m, to cross the line in 25.05 seconds – a lifetime best.

Elsewhere in the field, Joe McGrath jumped 3.23 metres in the pole vault, enough for second across all age groups.

To complete a medal haul across disciplines, Andy Coleman (pictured, top left), took to the track in the 800m. Having been running well in training and putting in a mixture of speed and endurance sets, he was awarded with a third place finish for his efforts.



News in brief

Snippets from around the club across all disciplines and ages



VESPA COLLECTS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Sprints coach Vespa Ellis won a community champion award at the start of the year, for her dedication to athletics.



CLUB RECORD BROKEN AT VARSITY GAMES
Archie Leeming broke the club record for the 7.26kg Shot at the Inter Varsity Match on 1 February, throwing 14.49m.



NEW BALANCE OFFERS DISCOUNTS
Paid up members of England Athletics qualify for a 10% online discount using the code **ENGATHLETICS10OFF**.



COMMONWEALTH YOUTH DETAILS RELEASED
Details of "preferred" selection competitions for this year's Commonwealth Youth Games have been released at <http://bit.ly/2locu78>

NEWS

BUCS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

BASILDON DAZZLE AT BRITISH UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Finals, PBs and a bronze medal rounded off a good weekend's competition at this year's championships.

HALF mile specialist Isobel Ives spearheaded a weekend of strong performances at this year's British Universities & Colleges Indoor Championships.

Having run well in her heat and semi-final, Ives secured a bronze in her final race at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield.

Her time of 2.08.79 was enough to edge out Scot Kelsey Stewart who finished less than a second behind.

For Ives, it also meant important points for her University of Bath team mates and helped her squad finish third in both the combined and women's BUCS championships.

Two Basildon athletes made the final of the women's triple jump competition underscoring the club's emerging strength in this event.

Georgia Green jumped 11.39m in qualifying and followed this mark with a leap of 11.44m in the final – a lifetime best.

Team mate Vicky Oshunremi joined her in the final with a jump of 11.43m in qualifying.

Oshunremi's 11.37m jump in the final, wearing the colours of Sheffield Hallam, was enough for

11th place, one place behind Green.

There was also two Basildon team mates competing against each other in the Shot competition.

Archie Leeming – representing Bath University - threw 14.01m in his qualifying round while Aaron York threw 8.26m, wearing the colours of Chichester.

Leeming would later add another 10cm to his distance in the final, sufficient for sixth place against exceptional competition. The winner – Woodford Green's Youcef Zatat - threw 17.58m.

On the track, Basildon middle distance dynamo Adam Houchell clocked a new lifetime best of 4:01.67 in the 1500m semi-final, having qualified from the heats the previous day in 4:06.03.

Jack Avery was unlucky not to qualify for the 400m finals when he clocked 52.06 to finish third in his heat, representing Brighton University.

In the women's 60m Hurdles, Daisy Durden – who has not competed in Essex since 2011 - clocked 10.64 seconds, representing the University of Exeter.



SPRINTERS ENJOY NEWHAM NIGHT OF BESTS

BASILDON'S sprinters gave a commanding performance at the Newham Open in February and were rewarded with a host of personal bests for their efforts.

The sprinters were in action over 60 metres in East London.

Tom Starling achieved a new best, clocking a nippy 7.15 seconds in his second 60m race over the night.

Starling – who moved up to the Under 20 age group this season – came second in the graded race by 0.02 seconds and squeezed

out Kent AC's Luke Sargeant by 0.01 seconds.

In the following race, Under 15 Joseph Harding stunned a field of seniors, under 20s and under 17s, with a personal best of 7.19 seconds, adding to his phenomenal start to the season following his triumphs at the Essex County Indoor Championships earlier in the month.

Also following up a strong performance from the County Championships was Daniel Cousins.

Cousins was second in his race, beating a

local rival from Ilford by 0.02 seconds. Under 17 Emmanuel Ogunmola achieved a new personal best, thanks to his third place finish in 8.02 seconds.

The open meeting took place on Wednesday 15 February and was part of the Newham Sprints Programme.

The graded meets are a series of 60m open meetings held indoors throughout the winter season and promoted by Newham Borough Council and Newham and Essex Beagles Athletics Club.



COMMENT: LET'S BRING HOME THE SAL LEAGUE TITLE

The decline in senior athletes embracing league competition has provided food for thought for many clubs and, if you love team competition, then 2016 could be considered a disappointing season for Basildon AC.

Despite some outstanding individual performances at championships, our teams underperformed.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the embarrassing relegation to the third tier of the Southern Athletics League. To make things worse, while Basildon were falling, our rivals were performing.

Local adversaries Thurrock were promoted to the division above and Chelmsford won the SAL's top division.

In the British Athletics League, Chelmsford and Havering fielded adequate teams and Southend even borrowed our own athletes to compete for them under the "higher claim" rules.

LOOKING AHEAD TO A BRIGHTER 2017

Thankfully, we can now consign 2016 to the history books and our recent winter season gave a better indication of what we are capable of as a club.

Indoors we have given a real glimpse of what we can do. Our sprinters have acquitted themselves well, clocking lifetime bests across all age groups.

Our hurdlers are

getting faster and more confident and our presence in the field events is building. And it doesn't stop there. Those who competed in the cross country season also deserve recognition.

STRENGTH & DEPTH ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Anyone who had written us off after the disastrous summer were given something to think about in the Essex XC League.

Our younger teams showed pride and determination in their performances. They also inspired the Senior teams.

Even the Senior Men's team, who could have easily been relegated to division two, fought hard to retain their top tier status.

This was as much a consequence of the excellence of our under 20s as it was the attendance record of our veteran athletes.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NUMBERS

For us to rebuild in 2017, it's now a matter of attendance.

There is no doubt, that our full strength squad can beat any team in the third division of the SAL. The question is whether we can bring the same commitment from the winter season into the summer.

Let's hope we do. After all, if you love club competition, there is immense satisfaction in bringing a title back to the town where you live.

SCHOOLS XC SUCCESS

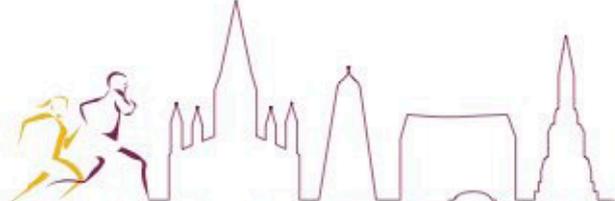
CROSS Country youngsters managed several top ten finishes at this year's Essex County Schools Cross Country Championships.

Abigail Ives beat local rivals to win the Under 15 girls' category, while team mate Keirra Scott finished eighth in the same race.

In the Under 17 Women's race, Grace Burrell, finished in sixth place.

Harrison Smith lost out to Ilford AC rival Ahmed Abdulle in the Under 20 men's race by six seconds but secured second place by the same margin from Havering's Ben Davis. Brandon Thorpe finished seventh in the same race.

In the Under 17 youth's race, Daniel Riley finished sixth with Isaac Brown around 30 seconds behind in 10th spot.



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and Ewerby Thorpe.

The new race venue is:
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Boston Road, Sleaford NG34 9GH

The new date is:
Sunday 7th May 2017 at 9.45am

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The Lincolnshire Runner



Race Limit 700. Race run under UKA rules. Runners must be aged 17 or over on the day of the race.

HARDING PROVES HE IS THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME AT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

MULTI EVENTER Joseph Harding took the all-time national record for the U15 Boys' Pentathlon at the England Athletics Combined Events Championships in March.

Harding - who is coached by Stephen Peaty - led the chase for the title from the opening event and clocked the fastest time in the UK this year for the 60m hurdles at 8.25 seconds. This performance has also put him second on the all time list for the hurdles in this age group.

Despite having strung together a series of breathtaking performances, it was the long jump which left spectators gasping in awe as he jumped 6.61m - the furthest of any athlete in his age group this year and 20th on the all-time list for this event.

On his way to taking the gold medal, Harding was offered some strong competition from

Thurrock rival Daniel Ogutuga in the long jump, however, as Ogutuga leaped 6.20m in the third attempt, putting him second on the national rankings in the year to date.

But Harding was simply a class apart in a performance which summed up his season to date. His points total of 3132 - a British all time best score for the event - brought to an end Reuben Esien's five year old championship record and surpassed last year's winning points total by more than 100 points.

With the year only just getting started, Harding has already bagged more gold medals than most athletes can hope to bring home in a season.

In January, he took the Essex & Eastern Athletics Championship U15 titles for the Long Jump (6.30m) and 60m Hurdles. He also laid down a



serious mark of intent at the Newham open, where he sprinted 60m on the flat in 7.19 seconds.

Last season - in his first year in the U15 age group - Harding took the County Championship

title in the 100m and won the South of England Combined Events Championships. He was eighth in the English Schools Multi Events Championships - a title he will surely have his eye on in the season ahead.

HURDLES PEDIGREE SHINES AT EASTERN CHAMPS

BASILDON'S pedigree in the hurdles came through at this year's Essex and Eastern Indoor Championships with medals across age groups.

There were gold medals for Sam Bennett (U17 Men), Kiera Bainsfair (U17 Women), Joseph Harding (U15 Men) and Paige Stephens (U13 Girls).

Bennett won his final race in 8.11 seconds, ahead of Enfield's Daniel Knight (8.26 seconds). Bennett had already won his heat, earlier in the championships.

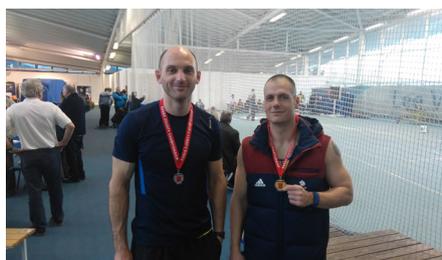
Bainsfair also won her heat, and dominated the final, winning in 8.81 seconds, ahead of Chelmsford's Jessica Hopkins (8.99 seconds).

Harding - who would later go on to win at national level (see above article) - stormed his final in a time of 8.27 seconds, more than a second ahead of St Albans' Kai Alland in second (9.62 seconds).

Stephens took her medal ahead of team mate Carlie Dinham in an exciting finish.

Stephens came home in 10.79 seconds and Dinham in 10.86 seconds.

Clint Nicholls was third in the senior men's age group, running 9.1 seconds, behind Chelmsford's Bradley Reed (8.59 seconds) and Huntingdonshire's Liam Hunt (8.94 seconds).



In the Under 20 Men's competition Jack Broadbent picked up a silver after clocking 8.75 seconds behind Mayowa Osunsami of Newham & Essex Beagles (8.38 seconds).

In the sprints, masters duo Jan Barnard and Nicholls (pictured, above) battled it out

for the veteran's 60m title leading to another Basildon one-two on the podium.

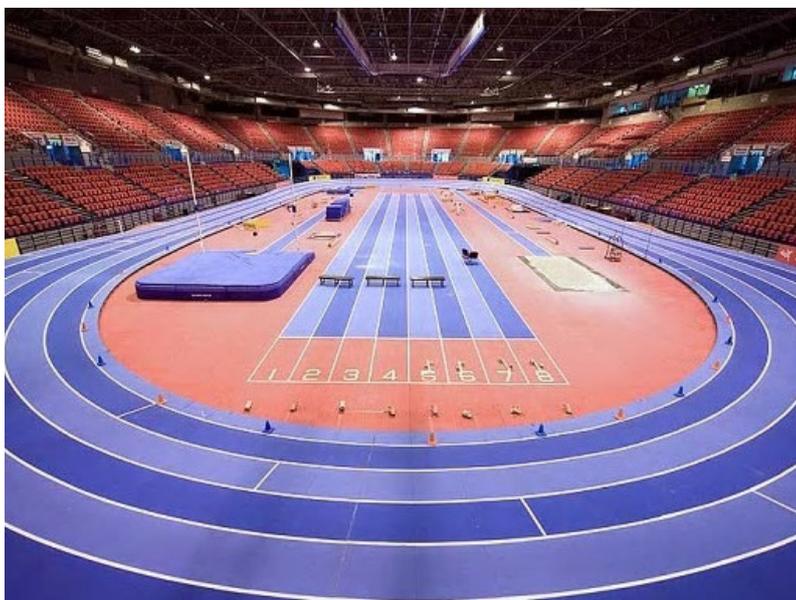
Barnard set a lifetime best in the 60m, clocking 7.57 seconds ahead of Nicholls who also scored a personal best in 7.77 seconds. Woodford Green's Alan James took the bronze in 8.10 seconds.

Heidi Nicholas won the title in the women's Over 35's 60m, in 8.84 seconds, ahead of Chelmsford's Clare St John Coleman in 9.41 seconds.

Archie Leeming - took silver in the Senior Men's shot, with a putt of 14.44 metres, just behind veteran Gintas Degutis of Newham, who threw 14.56 metres. Charlie Hopkins won silver in the U13 Boys' Shot with 7.06 metres.

Joseph Harding won the Long Jump in the U15 Boys' category, ahead of local rival Daniel Ogutuga.

Paige Stephens also took gold in the U13 Girls' event, to add to her success in the Hurdles.



Bristol-born pole vaulter Joe McGrath took silver at the Midland Counties Indoor Championships at the Birmingham Barclaycard Arena in February. He cleared 3.20m, enough for second behind Chesterfield's Christopher Price (3.30m).



TALK OF THE TOWN

A brief round up of Basildon athletes in action around the country over the past three months



Girl power in Nottingham

Basildon's female cross country squad were out in force at this year's Nationals in Nottingham.

- 1/ Holly Freegard (pictured, right) led Basildon's U13 Girls home in 108th.
- 2/ Emma Houchell (pictured, middle) placed 39th in the Senior Women's race.
- 3/ Grace Burrell (pictured, far right) completed the course in 88th in the Under 15 Girls' category..

• See full coverage of the event in our Cross Country Review later in this edition.





Bainsfair smashes club record with national bronze

Basildon's Kiera Bainsfair rounded off a stellar indoor season with a bronze medal at the England Athletics Combined Events Championships and smashing a club record.

Her U17 women's pentathlon points tally of 3559, set at the Sheffield Institute of Sport on 11 March, was strong enough to take the club record for the indoor pentathlon.

The previous record was held by Samantha Foster and had been unmatched since 1994.

Bainsfair – in her first year of the Under 17 age group – grabbed third spot by nudging out her Chelmsford rival Jessica Hopkins by just 16 points after all five events.

Gloucester Park's rising star achieved a personal best in the shot putt, with the 3K weight landing at 9.94 metres. She also performed well in the 800m (2:24.78), High Jump (1.61m) and Long Jump (5.17m).

Her long jump was just one centimetre behind her own club record, set at the same venue last year – a distance which hasn't been beaten by any club athlete in the U20 or U17 age group indoors.

Bainsfair's 60m Hurdles time of 8.95 was admittedly behind the performances which earned her the Eastern AA Championship title (8.81) and South of England silver medal (8.78) earlier in the season.

But, the national bronze medal is consolation for disappointment at the All England individual event championships earlier in the year. At the previous event, she had been disqualified in the 60m Hurdles and finished 5th in the 300m, despite strong races in the heats and semi finals.



Under 20 Hurdler Michael Shields qualified for the A final at this year's London Indoor Games with a commanding performance in his first race.

His initial performance of 8.43 seconds was enough to make the fastest final, where he finished fifth in a time of 8.61 seconds.

The final race was won by Charnwood's Tre Thomas in a time of 7.95 seconds - a lifetime best.



3

Seeking promotion

As Basildon prepare to start life in Division Three, BasMag considers the strength of the squad and looks at some of the athletes they are likely to encounter

Last season saw two of Basildon's Essex rivals elevated from the third tier of the Southern Athletics League (SAL).

Thurrock were promoted as champions of Division 3 North and Harlow qualified for promotion through the end of season "paper match".

In 2017, Basildon will start life in Division 3, joined by Essex rivals Colchester & Tendring, Luton and West Suffolk who were all relegated from Division 2 at the end of last summer.

If last year's final standings are anything to go by, then the challenge this year will likely come from Watford or St Albans who were both unlucky not to make the playoff places. Watford missed automatic promotion by just two league points.

There are also those clubs which boast vast squads, but whose athletes prefer to turn out for the British Athletics League, rather than the SAL. Woodford Green, Newham & Essex Beagles and Enfield & Haringey all have outstanding athletes on paper, but failed to get them to the track when it mattered last year and finished mid-table as a result.

Now that Luton AC have been relegated, their 'B team' has been

disbanded and merged into the 'A team' which was relegated from Division 2. This should help them to strengthen their numbers.

Last year's Division 3 strugglers, Mornington Chasers and Ilford AC - who both failed to post double league points by the end of the season will be hoping for a better showing this time out.

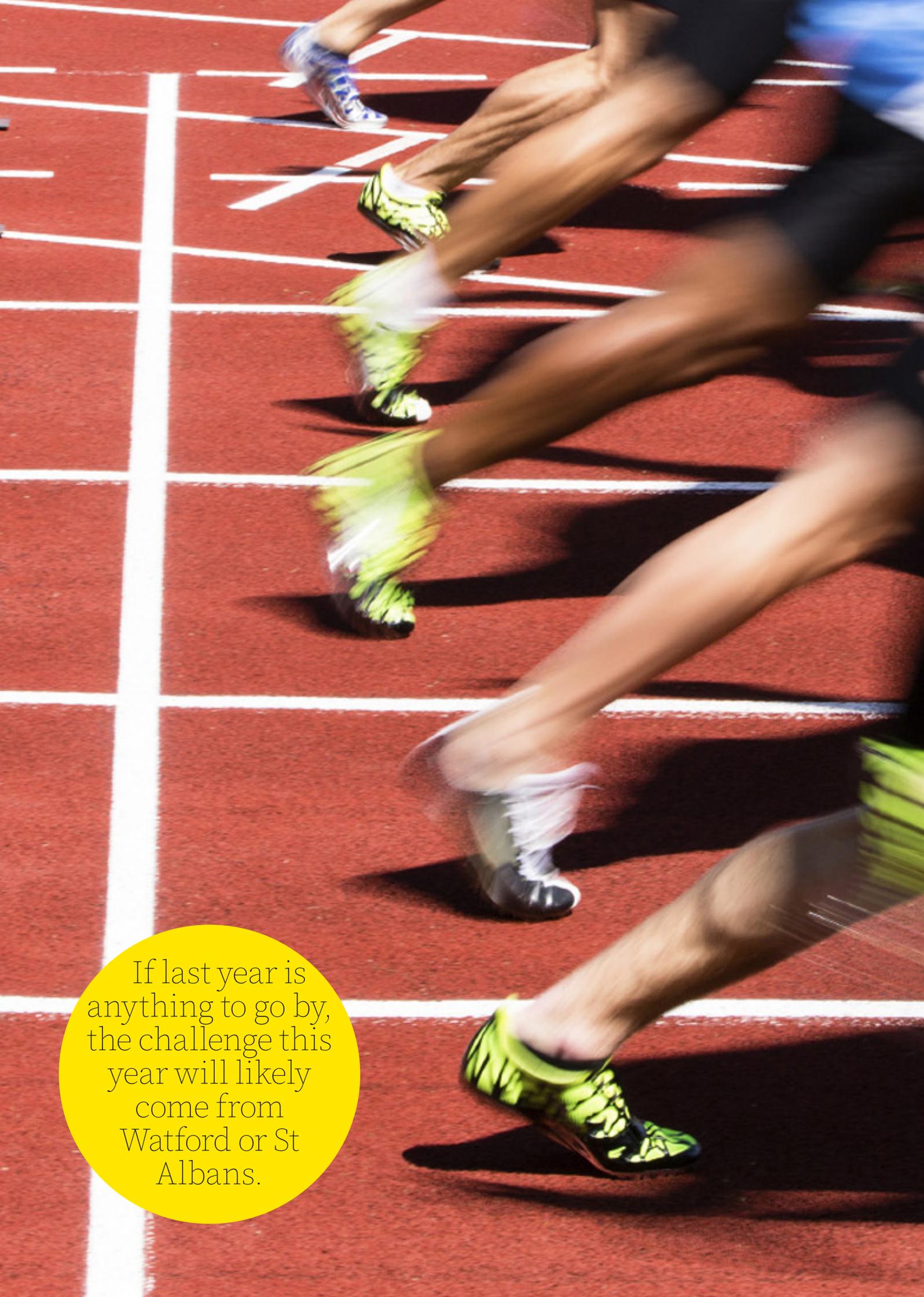
According to attendees at the league's annual general meeting, held in the winter, the number of teams in each division is due to be restructured at the end of the season to even out numbers in each division and region.

While this potentially could mean a greater number of teams promoted to Division 2 at the end of the season, it also means those teams who faced the drop last year will think they have a good chance of bouncing back up at the first time of asking.

Until the new structure is formally approved by league members, this will mean an all-out scrap for the top places in this year's competition.

SQUAD STRENGTH

Despite last year's relegation, there were some stellar performances within the Basildon squad, showing both talent and

A photograph of several runners on a red track, with a yellow circle containing text overlaid in the bottom left corner. The runners are in motion, with their legs and feet blurred, suggesting a fast pace. The track is red with white lane markings. The runners are wearing various athletic shoes, including blue and green ones. The text in the yellow circle reads: "If last year is anything to go by, the challenge this year will likely come from Watford or St Albans."

If last year is anything to go by, the challenge this year will likely come from Watford or St Albans.



determination.

BasMag stripped down the statistics across last year's five SAL League matches. These were broken down by sex, event, A string, B string and match.

WINNERS

Looking solely at A string performances, there were two athletes more likely to win a maximum four points than any other – Jack Avery and Charlotte Skeggs.

Avery took A string victories in the 400m Hurdles at three separate matches during the 2016 season and a further win in the 400m flat in the fourth match at Ashford.

Skeggs also took four A string victories over the season, with three of these all at the final meeting at Hemel Hempstead (100m Hurdles, Long Jump, Javelin). She had previously won the A string 100m Hurdles race at the third match at Lee Valley.

There were several athletes who clocked three A string wins during the season: Anna Whitfield (1500m, 3000m), Archie Leeming (Shot), Victoria Oshunremi (Triple Jump, Shot).

When the analysis moves to the B-String athletes, Basildon also had a wealth of consistent athletes. Katherine Ellis picked up maximum points in the B string category on four occasions, in match one (Hammer), match three (Discus) and match five (Hammer and Javelin).

Three other athletes picked up B-string

wins on two occasions: Clint Nicholls (110m Hurdles), George Elliott (400m and 400m Hurdles), Luke Beard (Shot).

WARRIORS

Elsewhere in the team, there were a host of multi-eventers, willing to compete in several events to score points for the team, knowing that performances may be compromised as a result.

“... there were two athletes more likely to win a maximum four points than any other – Jack Avery and Charlotte Skeggs.”

BasMag calculated the highest points scorer by awarding 4 points for a win, 3 for second, 2 for third and 1 for fourth place. No distinction was made between A or B string in this part of the analysis. Any points from participation in relay teams were not included in the total.

At the first match in Cambridge, Clint Nicholls was the highest scoring male athlete with 13 points, ahead of Matthew Scott (10 points) and Jack Avery (9 points). Katherine Ellis was the highest scoring female with 10 points, ahead of Charlotte Skeggs (9 points) and Olivia Bullis (8 points).

In the second match in Ipswich, Nicholls topped the table again, scoring 11 points ahead of Luke Beard (9 points).

George Elliott and Theo Fadayiro were tied on eight points in third place. In the women's rankings, Charlotte Skeggs was top with 11 points, ahead of Janine Phillips and Shannon McNeil (both with 8 points).

At Lee Valley – match three – decathlete Nicholls again led the men, bringing home 12 points during the day. Max Jones was second (8 points), with Tom Starling and Aaron York jointly in third (6 points). The women's table was tied at the top with heptathlete Charlotte Skeggs tying with Katherine Ellis on 13 points. Fellow multi-eventer Heidi Nicholas was in third with 10 points.

In the blazing sun of match four at Ashford, Nicholls again topped the men's table, just one point ahead of Adeolu Adeyemi (11 points). Joe McGrath and Luke Beard were tied in third spot (10 points). Heidi Nicholas led the women's table with 13 points, ahead of triple jumper Victoria Oshunremi (11 points) and Shannon McNeil (9 points).

At the relegation battle at Hemel (match 5), Joe McGrath led the men's table (10 points), ahead of Luke Beard (8 points). Daniel Ashley, Harrison Chapman and Jack Avery all scored 7 points in third place. Charlotte Skeggs was back on top of the women's table with a massive 14 points, ahead of Meg Rapley (12 points) and Heidi Nicholas in third (10 points).

LOOKING AHEAD

The first match of the season could be among the toughest for the Basildon squad. Newham & Essex Beagles finished 9th last time out and will surely be confident they can achieve promotion in the newly restructured league next year. Also looking to bounce back will be Luton who were relegated with Basildon at the end of last season. All of the clubs, however, have some strong talent in the mix.

Braintree, who finished 14th last year, will be looking to do well from the women's throws. Their throwing specialist Megan Larkins is able to compete across Shot, Discus and Hammer. She has a Hammer PB of 46.75m and a Shot of 11.02m. In the men's sprints, Braintree

also have Lewis Thorn. Last year he ran 100m in 11.17 seconds and ran 22.8 seconds in the 200m at this year's England Under 20's Indoor Championships.

The men's triple jump, in particular, has all the makings of a fantastic contest. Braintree boast Charlie Shingleton in the horizontal jumps. Shingleton is a 6.59m long jumper and has been known to trouble the 13 metre mark in the triple jump too.

Luton, meanwhile have Craig Andrew. Andrew – who is also an active coach at the club – jumped 13.93m in the final of the East Anglian League last year. He also has a long jump PB of 6.84m. West Norfolk also have the potential to score

“Also looking to bounce back will be Luton who were relegated with Basildon at the end of last season.”

well in the triple. Their athlete James Greenhalgh has a PB of 12.21m and a long jump of 6.40m.

Not to be outdone, Biggleswade also have some talent in the jumps. Morgan Webster jumps 12.29m in the triple and can also sprint. Last season, he ran 11.39 in the 100m and 23.00 in the 200m. In the high jump, Biggleswade have a strong vertical jumper in Josh Watson. The Under 23 jumped 1.98m at the BUCS Championships last year and has a host of secondary events to support his main discipline. Other names to look out for, will be representing Newham & Essex Beagles. Bob Kingman – going into his fourth year in the V40 age group – can still pole vault 4.12m and will be looking for a win. Matt Baptiste is Newham's throws specialist, with strong bests in the shot, discus and hammer.

They have good sprinters including Dela Wohuno in the 200m (23.5) and great pedigree in the middle distance events too.



COMING OF

AGE

Basildon have men's and women's teams looking for a place at the championship league final in their inaugural season in the Eastern Masters' League.

Officials managing this year's Eastern Masters' League have shaken up the divisional structure, merging the previous four divisions into just three. Basildon's maiden year in the league will see them compete in the newly expanded Southern Division which features seven teams for both the men's and women's competition.

The notable additions are a composite team from West Suffolk AC with St Edmund's Pacers and an expanded team from Chelmsford AC who have formed a composite squad with Springfield Striders.

MEN SEEKING TOP SPOT

Basildon AC will be hoping to threaten the relative comfort of last year's division champions Southend AC in this year's Men's League with the arrival of several new athletes in their squad.

Southend dominated the league in 2016, winning every match through strong individual performances and by picking up points in the older age group categories at the expense of teams unable to fill these events.

Having topped the league last time out, Southend made the championship final in Bedford where they finished second, losing out to Bedford & County AC.

Thurrock AC, meanwhile, will also be confident of making the championship final once more, having qualified last year with a second placed finish in the league.

In 2016, Thurrock's men progressed through broad strength across disciplines as

opposed to Southend's stand out performances of individuals.

A steady stream of points across disciplines and ages, laid the path for the Grays-based club to make the final.

Another contender will be Loughton AC, who were snapping at Thurrock's heels last year as a result of their broad squad.

This year, they'll, no doubt, be hoping to go one better in the league and pip Thurrock to the second final spot.

While Loughton had few individual victories last year, they had plenty of second-place finishes and boasted important wins in the race walk, triple jump and high jump. Notably, Loughton struggled to field a M35 relay team for much of last year, which hurt their progress to the final.

As a club that boasts a British Athletics League team, a top tier Southern League squad and more county champions than any other club in Essex, some may have anticipated a better showing from Chelmsford AC last year.

The yellow-and-greens showed a glimpse of what they can do in certain events, however.

The club was arguably one of the strongest in the over 50 age categories last year, dominating the throws and middle distance events.

However, an absence of competitors across the programme was ultimately to be their undoing.

Basildon will be looking to take full advantage of their arch rivals' weaknesses this year, after the opposing fortunes in the





Basildon's broad range is key

If Basildon are to have a chance of making the top two this year, both men and women's teams will need to make use of their talents across all age groups and disciplines.

EASTERN MASTERS ATHLETICS LEAGUE SOUTH EAST DIVISION TABLE 2016 (MEN)

- 1. SOUTHEND AC**
(2016 EMAC FINAL RUNNERS UP)
(2016 DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONS)
- 2. THURROCK HARRIERS**
(2016 CHAMPIONSHIP FINALISTS)
(2016 DIVISIONAL RUNNERS UP)
- 3. LOUGHTON AC**
- 4. CHELMSFORD AC**
- 5. IPSWICH & COLCHESTER**

EASTERN MASTERS ATHLETICS LEAGUE SOUTH EAST DIVISION TABLE 2016 (WOMEN)

- 1. LOUGHTON AC**
(2016 EMAC CHAMPIONSHIP FINALISTS)
(2016 DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONS)
- 2. SOUTHEND AC**
(2016 EMAC CHAMPIONSHIP FINALISTS)
(2016 DIVISIONAL RUNNERS UP)
- 3. CHELMSFORD AC**
- 4. IPSWICH & COLCHESTER**
- 5. THURROCK HARRIERS**



The Eastern Masters League is structured in three age groups: 35-49, 50-59 and 60+.

This is different to other UK Athletics championship events in which masters athletes are bracketed in age groups of five years. The standard of the league can surprise. Last year's final saw the winner of the Men 35-49 400m Hurdles finish in 58.8 seconds, the M35 shot landed at 12.28m, the 1500m was won in 4:16.6. The men's pole vault in the same age group was 4m. In the women's mid-tier age group (aged 50-59 years), the 100m was won in 14.2 seconds.

The matches take place on a Wednesday evening between May and August with the final on a Saturday in September. All fixtures start at 7pm, except for the fixture at Ipswich which is scheduled for 7.30pm.

ACTION / Eastern Masters' League

Southern Athletics League last year.

However, this might be more difficult than originally planned with Chelmsford opting to link up with their local road club – Springfield Striders – to bolster their distance runners in the older age group categories.

Finally, Ipswich Harriers and Colchester & Tendring's combined team will be hoping they can improve on last year, with the prospect of a home fixture looking set to bolster their fortunes.

This was still in discussion at the time of writing, but as the team lost out from low turnout last year, this fixture change could make a world of difference when it comes to the end of the season.

WOMEN EYEING FINALS

Loughton AC's women had a strong presence across all events in the South East division in last year's Eastern Masters Women's League and there were few events where they were unable to field an athlete.

This enthusiasm ultimately led to qualification for the league final, where they finished fourth. Loughton boast good race walkers and some nippy sprinters in the older age categories.

As the only South East Division team to have made the championship final with both a men's and women's team last year, Southend AC can rightly be proud of the strength of their squad.

Southend's women's team boasts strength in short and long sprints, middle distance and throws, with only the jumps causing problems for the team last year.

However, the arrival of a new pole vault coach at the end of the season and some enthusiastic first-time high jumpers last year may change their fortunes in the field events.

Chelmsford AC were unlucky not to make the final last year, narrowly missing out to second-placed Southend.

The club has some good female multi-events, able to put in strong times on the track and a handful of good individuals in the jumps, including the pole vault – an event which has traditionally hindered many female teams.

Having narrowly missed out on progressing last year, it is likely that Chelmsford will be mounting a strong challenge this time around, particularly given their new composite formation with Springfield.

The composite Ipswich/Colchester team and the athletes from Thurrock were sparse in numbers last year.

As a result, their match scores were too low to really give any indication of what their squads can deliver when at full strength.

In 2017, Ipswich are likely to benefit from a home fixture at the end of season, while Thurrock may try to harness the momentum from their senior team which were promoted

Fixture 2: Garon Park, Southend



in the Southern Athletics League at the end of last year's track season.

Basildon will be arriving to the party with a small, but capable squad on paper.

The new-town team have all events covered, apart from some of those in the older age groups, which may suggest they can challenge for the higher positions in the division.

STRUCTURALLY SOUND

The League structure for 2017 has seven teams in each of the three divisions: Central, Northern and Southern.

The Northern Division is comprised of Hunts AC, Peterborough AC, Nene Valley Harriers, Corby AC, Stamford Striders, Ryston Runners AC and West Norfolk AC.

The Central Division features Milton Keynes, Bedford & County, Luton AC, Biggleswade, Bedford Harriers, Fairlands Valley Spartans and Cambridge & Coleridge AC. The Southern Division includes Southend AC, Loughton AC, Thurrock Harriers, Colchester & Tendring with Ipswich Harriers, Basildon AC, West Suffolk with St Edmunds Pacers and Chelmsford AC with Springfield Striders. The Southern Division fixtures take place on Wednesday 3 May at Blackshots

Stadium in Thurrock, Wednesday 7 June at Garon Park, Southend, Wednesday 5 July at Melbourne Park in Chelmsford and Wednesday 26 July (TBC) at Northgate Sports Centre in Ipswich.

The league championship final, which will feature the top two teams in each division, will take place on Sunday 10 September in Bedford.

SPLIT EVENTS PROGRAMME

As was the case last year, the events will alternate at each fixture to ensure all events can be completed on each evening.

Match 1 will feature Pole Vault, Shot, 100m, 3000m, Long Jump, Hammer, 400m, 1K race walk and a 4 x 100 relay.

Match 2 will include High Jump, Discus, Sprint Hurdles, 1500m, Triple Jump, Javelin, 200m, 1.5K race walk and a 4 x 200m relay.

Match 3 opens with a 400m Hurdles, followed by Pole Vault, Shot, 1 mile race walk, Long Jump, 800m, 200m, Hammer and 4 x 400 relay.

Match 4 has a 2k race walk, High Jump, Discus, 100m, Discus, High Jump, Mile, Triple Jump, Javelin, 400m and Medley Relay (400, 200, 200, 400). The final in Bedford features all events for all age groups.

Fixture 1: Blackshots Stadium, Thurrock



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Mud, sweat and cheers

Medals, trophies and numerous county selections underscore a growing strength in Basildon's long distance squad. *BasMag* reports

The 2016/2017 cross country season was a successful campaign for Basildon, with team podium finishes in five age groups in the Essex League and individual medals in league, county, county schools and regional championships.

Testament to the quality and depth of talent, was the reasonably sized squad which travelled to the prestigious English National Cross Country Championships in Nottingham, with two athletes achieving top 40 performances.

Led by husband and wife team managers Nick and Mandy Wetheridge, the crowning glory of the 2016/17 cross campaign was the Essex League performance across the age groups.

The team scoring system allowed each team to discount their worst match performance out of the five, which led to some victories and losses by the narrowest of margins.

LEAGUE SUCCESS

The Under 15 Girls shared the overall title with Chelmsford AC after Chelmsford gave a storming finish at Gloucester Park on the final day of competition.

The Senior Women were, arguably, the surprise package of the season. Having promised very little after match two – where they finished 11th out of 12 teams in the top division – they marched back to take second overall and nudge Southend AC down to third.

Their victory at Braintree in January and second place at Gloucester Park snatched the silver from their rivals at the other end of the A13.

Phoenix Striders, Ilford AC and Thurrock Harriers were relegated in the Senior Women's classification and Billericay Striders, Halstead Road Runners and Havering AC were promoted.

The Under 15 Boys achieved second spot after a strong campaign, having finished second in race two at Chelmsford and by winning race four and coming third at the final match on home turf at Gloucester Park.

The Under 17 Men took third place in the league table – shared with Colchester & Tendring. Their seventh position at Gloucester Park meant they would have to share the bronze position, as they needed to drop their bruising eighth place finish in Cambridge from race three.

The Under 13 Girls had two outstanding fixtures in race one (Thurrock) and race four (Braintree), where they had won outright.

However, they were stuck with a sixth place from race two (Chelmsford) as they had to drop their eighth-place finish in Cambridge. It meant they had to have a better final day than Thurrock – which they managed by one spot to take the bronze.

The Senior Men were having a battle of their own, fighting Phoenix Striders, Ilford, Thrift Green and Pitsea to avoid the trapdoor to Division 2. Thankfully, they prevailed.

The Under 20s – who raced with the seniors - managed some excellent finishes across the season and some strong and dedicated performances from the masters' squad ensured Basildon did enough to avoid the drop.

Phoenix, Thrift Green and Pitsea were relegated.



Adam Houchell was one of eight Basildon athletes to tackle this year's National XC Champs in Nottingham

In Depth

Thurrock Harriers, Cambridge & Coleridge and Halsted were promoted

ATHLETE PERFORMANCES

In the Senior Women's category, Laura Brooks proved to be the star performer in the Essex League this season, taking the silver medal across the race series. Brooks showed just how good a season she was having in February when she won a race in the South Essex League, beating Billericay's Emma Prideaux who has just been called up the England team for the first time.

Under 13 Abigail Ives has enjoyed a tremendous season, winning the Essex League individual title. From the four races in which she scored, she won every race. She also won the Essex Schools championship match in January in the Junior Girls' category. She placed 12th at the South East Schools Area championships in February.

Grace Burrell grabbed a bronze in the



Under 15 Girls' league category and followed this up with a top 90 finish at the English National Cross Country fixture in Nottingham, finishing 88th. She had already made the top 60 in the South of England at the area championships in Parliament Hill in January.

Under 20 Men Max Jones and Brandon Thorpe battled it out for individual medals in the league, finishing in silver and bronze positions, with just two points between them. The result bodes well for the track season as both athletes were major scorers in the Southern Athletics League last season.

Jones took silver, having also achieved 8th in the County Championships in January. Thorpe, meanwhile, took bronze in the league. He also made the Essex Schools squad, finishing 7th at the qualifier in Colchester and managing a respectable 16th at the South East Schools Championship at Brands Hatch in February.



Sophie Wetheridge

In the Masters' categories, Louise Douglass finished third across the league matches in the Women's 35-44 age group. Douglass was also part of the team that ran at the South of England AA Championships.

FUTURE STARS

As well as those athletes that medalled in the 2016/17 season, there were also athletes that showed future promise for the months and years to come.

In the Under 13 Girls', Daizy Harris came seventh in the league and was part of the team that competed at the English National XC Championships. Hollie Rex finished 7th in the Under 15 Girls' Essex League category, one point ahead of Sophie Wetheridge in 9th. Both girls raced at the Nationals in Nottingham.

In the Under 17s Abby Rex was 8th in the women's standings and Issac Brown a credible 5th in the men's event.

In addition to the performances of Max Jones and Brandon Thorpe, Christian Gray

enjoyed his last finish in the Under 20's category, with a 6th placed position in the league. He becomes a Senior (U23) this year on the track and has already clocked a 16th position in the Essex County Championships and continues to be the first man home in the Basildon park run at least once a month.

While not present in the league matches while at university, Emma and Adam Houchell also deserve recognition. Both finished in the top 40 at this year's Nationals - an incredible feat.

Adam - an Under 20 who goes up to senior level (U23s) on the track this summer - finished 35th and was also just a second off of four minutes for the 1500m in his BUCS Championships semi final in Sheffield, representing Nottingham University.

Emma Houchell, meanwhile, finished fifth at the Essex County Cross Country Championships and 39th at the Nationals. She also finished 26th at the BUCS XC Championships, representing Birmingham University.

Daizy Harris



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FIXTURES



TRACK & FIELD

Sat 29 April – Mon 1 May
British Universities & Colleges
'BUCS' Championships
Bedford

Mon 1 May
Essex County
Multi Events Championships
Thurrock

Mon 1 May
Mile End Open
Mile End

Tues 2 May
Woodford Green Open
Woodford

Wed 3 May
Ashford Leisure Trust Open
Ashford

Wed 3 May
Eastern Masters' League
Thurrock

Wed 3 May
Watford Open & BMC Gold
Standard Races
Watford

Sun 7 May
Eastern Young Athletes' League
Peterborough

Sun 7 May
Newham Network Open
Newham

Sat 13/Sun 14 May
Essex County Championships
Chelmsford

Tues 16 May
BMC Gold Standard Races
Stretford

Wed 17 May
Watford Open Meeting
Watford

Sat 20 May
England Athletics 10,000m
Championships
Highgate

Sat 20 May
UK Youth Development League
(U13/U15)
Various

Sun 21 May
Sweatshop Southern Athletics
League
Mile End

Mon 22 May
Blackheath & Bromley Open
Bromley

Wed 24 May
Lee Valley Summer Spring
Series Open
Lee Valley

Sun 28 May
UK Javelin Carnival
Loughborough

Sun 28 May
UK Youth Development League
(U17/U20)
Various

Mon 29 May
Newham Network Open Series
Newham

Wed 31 May
Blackheath & Bromley Open
Bromley

Wed 31 May
BMC Regional Races
Brighton

Wed 31 May
Watford Open Graded Meeting
Watford

Sun 4 June
Eastern Young Athletes' League
Luton

Wed 7 June
Lee Valley Summer Sprint Open
Lee Valley

Wed 7 June
Eastern Masters' League
Garon Park, Southend

Thu 8 June
Invicta East Kent Open
Canterbury

Sat 10 June
SEAA South of England U20/
Senior Championships
Crystal Palace

Sun 11 June
Watford Minors' Open Series
Watford

Mon 12 June
Blackheath & Bromley Open
Bromley

Tues 13 June
Woodford Green Open
Woodford

Wed 14 June
Watford Open & BMC Gold
Standard Races
Watford

Sat 17 June
The Mason Trophy Inter
Counties Schools
Birmingham

Sat 17 June
Southern Athletics League
St Albans

Sun 18 June
British Masters Pentathlon
Championships
Oxford

Sun 18 June
UK Youth Development League
(U13/U15)
Various

Wed 21 June
Cambridgeshire AA Open
St Ives

Wed 21 June
Lee Valley Summer Sprint Open
Lee Valley

Sat 24 June
BMC Grand Prix
Watford

Sat 24 June
Eastern Counties AA
Championships
Cambridge

Sat 24 June
British Masters Track & Field
Championships
Birmingham

Sun 25 June

UK Youth Development League
(U17/U20)
Various

Wed 28 June

Blackheath & Bromley Open
Bromley

Wed 28 June

Watford Open Graded Meeting
Watford

Fri 30 June – Sun 2 July

British Athletics Championships
Birmingham

Fri 30 June

Essex County Relay
Championships
Upminster

ROAD

Thu 4 May

Gravesend Floodlit 5K and
10K Series
Gravesend

Sat 6 May

QEOP 10K Summer Series
Stratford

Tue 9 May

Veterans' AC 5 Miles
Battersea Park

Wed 10 May

RunThrough Chase the Sun 5K
and 10K Series
Finsbury Park

Sun 14 May

Oxford Town & Gown 10K
Oxford

Wed 17 May

RunThrough Chase the Sun 5K
and 10K Series
Stratford

Sat 20 May

British Masters' Road Relay
Championships
Sutton Park, Birmingham

Sat 27 May

RunThrough Olympic Park 10M /
Half Marathon
Stratford

Sun 28 May

Great Manchester Run 10K
Manchester

Fri 2 June

Gravesend Floodlit 5/10K Series
Gravesend

Sat 3 June

QEOP 10K Summer Series
Stratford

Sun 4 June

Regent's Park Summer 10K
London

Mon 5 June

Self Transcendence 5K
Battersea Park

Sun 11 June

Nice Work Richmond 5/10K
Richmond Park

Sun 11 June

St Albans Half Marathon
St Albans

Tue 13 June

Veterans AC 5M
Battersea Park

Sun 18 June

British Masters 5K Road
Championships
Horwich

Tue 20 June

Harwich 5K Series
Harwich

Thu 22 June

Maldon Handicap 5K Series
Maldon

Sat 24 June

RunThrough 5K / 10K / 10M /
Half Marathon
Stratford

Sun 25 June

Royal Parks Summer 10K Series
Greenwich

MULTI TERRAIN

Wed 10 May

Crown to Crown 5K
Westley Heights, Basildon

Sun 21 May

Horsham 10K
Horsham

Sun 25 June

British Masters Multi-terrain
Championships
Gravesend

Sweatshop Southern Athletics League 2017

Division Three North

April 15 2017 @ Braintree

Competing clubs: Braintree, Biggleswade, Luton,
Basildon, Newham & Essex, West Norfolk

May 21 2017 @ Mile End

Competing clubs: Victoria Park & Tower Hamlets,
Barnet & District, Basildon, Enfield & Haringey
with Hawcs, Highgate, Peterborough

June 17 2017 @ St Albans

Competing clubs: St Albans, Huntingdonshire,
Chiltern Harriers with Bedford & County (B),
Vale of Aylesbury, Basildon, Orion Harriers

July 8 2017 @ Hemel Hempstead

Competing clubs: Vale of Aylesbury, Woodford
Green with Essex Ladies, Harlow AC, Watford,
Enfield & Haringey with Hawcs, Basildon

August 19 2017 @ Colchester

Competing clubs: Colchester & Tendring,
West Suffolk, Braintree, Loughton,
Basildon, Ilford

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