



Merritt's mighty throws help Southampton make bright start.

Southampton Athletic Club's young athlete's made a great start to their league season with victory in the first Wessex league match on the Isle of Wight on Sunday.

With many athletes' missing because of the school holidays, Southampton nevertheless took victory with many fine performances on a fine and sunny day.

The Under 17 men's team were comprised of five middle distance runners competing in this age group for the first time. Alex Ruggles typified the spirit of the team and showed his versatility by achieving three personal bests in finishing second in the 200m (25.3), 400m (56.2) and in leading from start to finish winning the 800m (2.08). Jack Lynch running the 100m for the 1st time finished 3rd in (12.70) and followed this by winning the long jump (5.29) and the B string 800m (2.13.2). Jack Spencer recorded personal bests in winning the B string 200m (26.0) and the 400m (57.1). Niall Holt continued his fine improvement in winning the 1500m in a personal best time of (4.41) and secured valuable points with 2nd places in the B string long jump and shot putt. David Fisher also added valuable points with a first place in the javelin and second place in the shot putt.

The Under 17 Women's team was affected by the absence of athletes taking Easter holiday breaks. Five girls made the journey, with Emma Cowell winning the A string 80m hurdles, long jump and Javelin; Libbie Nunn taking 2nd place in both Shot and Discus on her one good leg!; Elly Henderson winning the B string Long Jump for the team despite being taken ill on the day; Becky Kidson competed in all 3 sprints, winning good points for the team with 1st places in the B string 100, 200 and 300m; completing the team was Olivia Kelly who finished 2nd and 3rd respectively in the A string 300 and 200m sprints.

In the Under 15 girls, Sophie Merritt won all 3 throwing events including the shot put in a new club & Wessex league record of 12.19m. Sophie also took the discus with a throw of 32.97m also a club record and the javelin with a throw of 34.34m. Team mate Emily Green was just behind Sophie in the javelin with a throw of 33.96m.

The days other winners were Steph Bottell in the 100m, Abbie Fisher in the 800m & Helen Jones in the 1500m. Steph was also 2nd in the 200m & 3rd in the a string Long Jump whilst Abbie was 2nd in the b string 200m and 2nd in the 300m and Helen won the b string discus in a new personal best of 20.94m. Valuable points were also contributed by JoJo Ruggles on her debut for the club who was 3rd in the b string 100m and won the b string 300m and Emma Redfern who bravely turned out in unfamiliar events to come 4th in the 75m hurdles and 3rd in the b string shot put before coming 3rd in the b string 800m. Steph, JoJo, Abbie & Sophie completed the events by coming home 2nd in the relay.

The U15 boys had just 4 competitors but nevertheless recorded 4 victories, 3 of them by Rory Farrell who had a magnificent day. The best of these came in the high jump where he leapt to a new pb

height of 1.78m to go 2nd in the UK age group rankings and miss out on a new club record by just a centimetre. Rory also won the Shot Put with a pb of 11.47m and the 400m with a time of 57.1 secs. Alexander Allen won the 800m in an impressive 2 min 18.1 secs. Alexander also won the b string 400m and was 2nd in the Long Jump. Another pb came in the 1500m where Jamie Abrahams was 2nd in 4 mins 49.0 secs. Jamie also won the b string long jump and was 3rd in the b string 200m. Josh Powell completed the team; making a fine club debut to come 3rd in the 200m and win the b string 800m. Abrahams, Farrell, Powell & Allen then combined to come 2nd in the relay.

The U13 girls also had only 4 athletes but again performed superbly with 3 victories. Two of these belonged to Sophia Whybourne who had a great day winning the shot put with a pb of exactly 8 metres and the 200m with another pb of 30.8secs. Sophia then came 2nd in the 75m hurdles with her 3rd pb of the day in 13.9 secs. Finally, Sophia was in the winning relay team along with Maddie Cooper, Ellie Hodgson & Elizabeth Curzen.

Ellie in her individual events was 2nd in the 100m in a pb of 14.9 secs, 3rd in the b string Long Jump in a pb of 3.22m and 3rd in the discus in yet another pb of 10.4m. Maddie won the b string 100m in a pb of 15.1 secs and also won the b string 75m hurdles and was 2nd in the b string shot put. Elizabeth was 2nd in the 800m in a pb of 2 mins 48.9 secs and was also 2nd in the long Jump and won the b string 200m.

The U13 boys won an incredible 7 of the 11 events. Adam Jones won 2 of them in the 100m with a pb of 14.2 secs and the 75m hurdles with a pb of 13.7 secs and was also 2nd in the high jump with another pb of 1.30m. His good friend Owen Lawrence also won 2, the 800m in a pb of 2 mins 33.1 secs and the Long Jump. Luke Powell won another 2 on his track and field debut for the club, the first being a magnificent time of 5 mins 04.5 secs for a pb in the 1500m and the other coming in the javelin. Other track & field debuts were made by Blake Miller who was 3rd in the 200m before winning the b string hurdles and the b string 1500m in a good time of 5 mins 18.7 secs. The final victory was secured by debutant Oliver Ruggles in the discus who for good measure won the b string 800m.

The team was completed by another debutant in Matthew Balchin who was 2nd in the b string 100m as well as anchoring the relay team to 2nd place along with Jones, Lawrence & Powell.

Southampton's U11 squad got their league campaign off to a magnificent start winning 4 of the 8 quad kid events contested on the day.

George Rosam led the way for the boys, winning both the 75m sprint & the long jump, coming 4th in the 600m & 6th in the Vortex throw to finish 3rd overall out of the 24 boys competing on his track & field debut for the club. Close behind him was Dan Head who 2nd in the Sprint & Vortex throw, 5th in the Long Jump and 9th in the 600m to come home 4th overall. Jack Higgins finished 16th overall including 3rd place in the 600m and 4th place in the 75m sprint. Patrick Fisher was 19th overall on his track & field debut for the club and was 10th in the 600m.

In the girls events, Olivia finished 8th overall out of 26 girls including a pillar to post win in the 600m in an impressive 2 minutes exactly. Georgia O'Dell was 10th overall on her track & field debut for the club including winning the 75m sprint in a time of 12.2 seconds. Eli-Rose Francis also performed well to come home 16th overall performing consistently in all 4 events.

Match Result:

Southampton AC	365
Isle of Wight	336
Portsmouth	177
New Forest Jnr	146
Winchester	108