

120621 Club Athletics is back with the UK Youth Development League!

After so many excellent individual open meeting performances and new club records broken so far this season, the club was finally able to experience a return to club athletics with the first fixture since 2019 – the YDL lower age group (U13 / U15) at Kingston. It is fitting that we were blessed with a glorious, sunny afternoon along with five other clubs in our division to revel in some great athletics. Guildford & Godalming were the clear victors on the day with an impressive team covering all events, including a few individual athletes that currently lead the national rankings in their age group!

The afternoon's programme of events was a little over three hours in total reflecting the restricted timetable of events for this first match, however once underway there was non-stop action and every one of the Walton athletes performed admirably in a tough and competitive league. To finish 3rd of the 6 teams overall is outstanding and it was great to see some of the more established club members of the **U15** squad supported by a handful of promising new athletes to the club this year. A warm welcome into the competition squad and their first taste of club competition to **Oliver Brown, Mia Chandler, Ama Kwateng and Oluwatobi Aderoju**.

The events kicked off in the field with **Olivia Barnes (U13)** and **Bea Hansen (U13)** long jumping for the girls, both achieving new **PBs** of 3.53m and 3.54m respectively, sowing the seeds for the continued strong team performances throughout the afternoon. At the same time, where it is customary for the hurdles to come first on the track, **Friso Boomsma (U15)** displayed great composure to take a strong 2nd place in the 'A' string with 14.0. **Friso** went on to run a new **PB** in the 100m, before securing valuable points with another **PB** and 1.40m in the high jump and run the pivotal lead off leg in the boy's 4 x 100m relay.

In the 800m middle distance races for the U15s, Walton had great representation both in the girls and boys in what was a high-quality field. First off saw **Evie Bedford (U15)** run a great season-opener in 2:33.7, together with **Ama** racing for the first time and clocking a strong 2:40.5 for her debut. **Evie** and **Ama** were followed up by **Ella Henderson (U15)** who led her race from gun to tape, strong throughout, finishing in a well-deserved **PB** of 2:31.0. Both **Evie** and **Ella** displayed their resilience by following up with the 300m event 90 minutes later, with **Ella's** run of 46.4 for the 3rd place 'A' string particularly noteworthy on tired legs.

The boys 800m races were equally exciting to watch. **Christian Boyd (U15)**, with some early season race experience behind him, leading the Walton contingent and further improving his **PB** as 'A' string to 2:22.3. Strong performances also came from each of the three others, **Callum Campbell-Curd (U15)** in 2:25.1, **Harry Currie (U15)** in 2:26.2 and **Harrison Kwei (U15)** in 2:28.1, which all bodes well for a solid season ahead.

Before the turn of the U13 1200m distance event, the attention on the track switched back to all the sprint events in the following order: U15 100m, U13 75m, U15 300m before the relay teams lined up for the 4x100m. Both the Walton girls, **Mia** and **Oluwatobi** can be proud of their debut 100m for the club in what was arguably one of the two highest quality events of the whole day with four of the other five girls racing in the 'A' string running inside the AAA performance standards (benchmark national standards!). When it came to the boys, it was Walton's turn to dominate, which each boy winning their respective race outright. **Xavier Taylor (U15)** running the 'A' string powering to a splendid new **PB** of 12.4, **Isaac Amankwaah (U15)** a new **PB** of 13.1 and **Oliver Brown (U15)** first time running for the club clocking 12.9.

Then it all turned black, red and gold as a sea of Walton vests with no less than 11 fleet footed U13s took to the track for the 75m sprint. As with the older girls 100m, the 75m was a blinder with every girl racing in the 'A' string inside the AAA performance standard including **Layla Drury (U13)** in a cracking 10.9. **Poppy Wilson (U13)** took a great 2nd place running 'B' string for Walton with 11.6. Other standout sprint performances were from **Poppy Beaumont (U13)** in 11.1 and **Olivia Barnes (U13)** in 11.2, with both **Mimi Scannella (U13)** and **Georgia Wells (U13)** having good debut races in 12.0 and 12.1 respectively. The boys 75m sprint, also fiercely contested, saw both **Logan Jacques (U13)** and **Tom Purnell (U13)** place 3rd clocking the same 11.0 in their 'A' and 'B' string races respectively. Another standout performance came from **James McAvoy (U13)** in 10.8, with **Paul Webb (U13)** and **Harvey Nelson (U13)** setting a good marker for their first competition of the year with 11.8 and 12.0.

Over in the field events, **Oliver** aptly demonstrated his all-round capability and potential by pairing up with **Friso** in the high jump and between them taking the maximum points for the event with his winning jump of 1.50m. There

was also both **Riley Barton (U13)** and **George Harvey (U13)** having their first taste of a javelin competition before taking part in the relays. Totally new to the event, but as any experienced thrower knows, there are days it just will not fly as you want. What was nonetheless impressive was **George** opted to stick a safe third one in to record a valid mark, very much the mentality of an experienced multi-eventer.

Back in the longer 300m sprint event the boys followed up the gutsy performances from **Ella** and **Evie**. **Isaac** buoyed up after his good 100m win earlier, took an excellent 2nd place in the 'A' string with a strong new **PB** of 42.1, with **Christian** stepping in and showing the same resilience as the middle-distance girls by securing 2nd place with 45.9.

The team manager had been quietly panicking earlier at the prospect that the club was to try to put out FIVE U13 4x100m relay teams to all the other clubs two teams, however was immense relieved as **Susie McLoughlin** - a European and World Masters sprint champion – stepped in to help prepare the younger age group, with **Jamie McLoughlin** stepping in to coordinate the U15s. Credit where credit is due as it was a great spectacle and all the teams performed just like any other well-drilled squad!

The U13 4x100m girls race was won by an exceptionally fast Guildford & Godalming squad, with a slick display by the Walton 'A' team of **Layla**, **Olivia**, **Lottie** and **Poppy B** anchoring the team, storming down the final 100m to sneak the 2nd place away from Woking on the line in 58.6. Both other Walton teams were well in the mix with **Amy McLoughlin (U13)**, **Constance Flory (U13)**, **Libby Jones (U13)**, **Cleo Gollings (U13)**, and **Leyli Morgan (U13)** making up the teams with the other girls who had competed earlier – **Bea**, **Poppy W** and **Mimi**.

The boys race was no less tense with two very well-matched Walton teams, any which one could claim the official scoring 2nd place behind the Reigate quartet, in Walton's official recorded time of 58.0. When it came to the wire it was **Riley**, **George**, **James** and **Harvey** that just prevailed over **Tom**, **Josh P**, **Paul** and **Logan**.

The U15 4x100m relays were more conventional with each club having just the one team each for both boys and girls. Thanking **Evie** after a busy afternoon racing in both the 800m and 300m, she stepped up to the plate to ensure the girls fielded a full team to perform well together as a unit with **Oluwatobi**, **Ama** and **Mia**. However, it was the boys team of **Friso**, **Oliver**, **Isaac** and **Xavier** that took the honours with a convincing win in a fast time of 50.2.

With the adrenaline of the short relays over, it was time to see the strength of the U13 Walton distance runners in the 1200m in what were very hot conditions by now, but as always, it is the same for all competitors. **Lottie Paul (U13)** and **Libby Jones (U13)** showed determination and ran well to both finish in 3rd place as the 'A' and 'B' strings with 4:30.0 and 4:47.0 respectively. In a crowded field of twelve boys success was had with a fantastic run for 3rd place 'A' string by **Jacob Rose (U13)** clocking 4:03.3, with **Josh Johnston (U13)** taking the win in the 'B' string' in 4:08.7. Great runs in those hot conditions. However, it wasn't over yet, with a final mixed girls and boys 1200m race to follow. **Layla** who had earlier sprinted the 75m and just prior to the 1200m the lead leg for the 2nd place 4x100m relay team, tore off to lead the field with amongst others **Cleo**, **Olivia** and **Poppy W** from Walton in hot pursuit. The boys from other clubs in the field were nowhere to be seen and by the end of the first lap it came down to a two-horse race that was to be settled over the final 100m, nearly by a duel were it to be allowed (!). The G&G athlete narrowly took victory over **Layla** inside 4:10, with strong runs coming from the remaining Walton trio in support.

During the 1200s and ahead of the final 4x300m relay on the track there had been some more field events taking place. Straight from the relays the U13 boys long jump saw both **Logan** and **Josh Parr (U13)** matching each other with the same 3.72m jump and picking up good points, while **Poppy B** off the back of only the one short coaching session, took a great 2nd place 'A' string in the javelin behind the country's number one thrower in her age group from Guildford & Godalming.

Finally, the 4x300m sprint relay topped off a great end to the afternoon's athletics with Walton boys U15 team again taking the narrowest of wins over the Woking quartet. **Oliver** opened with a near unassailable lead handing over to the trio of Walton's 800m boys to hold off an attack that was inevitably to come from runners on fresher legs. **Harry** and **Christian** dug deep and maintained a solid position leaving it for **Callum** to run home the final 300m leg. For a moment it looked like Woking could claw back for victory, but **Callum** showed great composure and remained calm, whilst aware of the threat, and came through with a final flourish arms aloft for the win in 3:02.4

PHOTOS BELOW



U15 4 x 100m relay teams: **Ama, Tobi, Evie, Mia and Xavier, Isaac, Friso and Oliver**



Friso running in for 2nd place 'A' string 80m hurdles



New club gazebo finally getting its first ever use !



Xavier storming to victory in the 'A' string 100m with a new PB of 12.4



Oliver comfortably winning the guest 100m in a fast 12.9, before going onto win the 'A' string high jump and running storming legs in both the boys U15 winning 4 x 100m and 4 x 300m relay teams.