

300621 Lily B league (at Kingston) – time to embrace new disciplines!



The order of the day was to adapt and overcome and make the most of a challenging situation. While not all girls were able to compete at their preferred event, they were all magnificent and displayed great resilience and competitiveness through the day, with a few taking on the challenge of competing in the age group above, and a couple of others discovering what field events have to offer!

It is a testament to all the girls efforts that the team nonetheless finished in 3rd place overall across the six clubs competing (our U13 age group were 2nd), with Guildford & Godalming (G&G) once again the clear deserved winners, a repeat from the YDL earlier in the month.

Walton fielded relatively few competitors in the U17s but some fine performances came from the quartet of **Charlotte Maxwell, Olivia Hansen, Frida Blackwood** and **Evie Donaldson**. **Evie** and **Olivia** both set PBs in the long jump with 4.35m and 4.28m respectively. Then on the track **Olivia** also ran a solid 14.1 over 100m, before pairing up in the 200m with **Frida**, to clock 29.0 and 28.5 respectively. This left **Charlotte** who raced with **Frida** over the longer 300m sprint distance, with both girls running season's bests of 44.6 and 46.1, improvements over their season opener the month prior.

At the other end of the age spectrum in the non-scoring U11s – and I could write an entire satire on this (!) – a small number did get to experience the competitive environment with a 75m sprint and long jump, before the enforcement of a decision that only two U11s were allowed per team (!). Nonetheless, there were some great sprint performances among the bunch. Especially fast on their feet were **Olanna Brown, Darci Whatford** and **Ruby Weller**, with **Charlotte Birkett** the quickest of the group (and 2nd overall U11 in the competition) clocking 11.7. **Charlotte** was also Walton's top long jumper on the day with 2.78m, before running a final 600m together with **Darci**. They both ran well in what was a tough race won in 2:00.

Our U15 girls team continues to build and it was great to welcome **Dara Popoola** and **Ava Bagshaw** to their first club event. **Dara** made an unusual entrance, just in time to race the 100m, running across the line without her number in a good season opener of 15.1. **Dara** went onto run a strong debut race over 200m (with her race number pinned on by now), while also winning the 'B' string shot putt for the team with 7.28m. **Ava** also made a successful club debut, and as well as being quite new to the sport, ran well in both the 100m and the 75m hurdles event. **Ava** was kept company in both events by **Oluwatobi Aderaju**, who improved on her previous 100m time for a new PB of 14.9. **Oluwatobi** went on to take the 3rd place in the 'A' string shot with 7.37m in her first ever formal attempt. Between **Oluwatobi** and **Dara** they achieved 1st place over the other clubs in this event – a strong pairing! Onto the longer distances, **Ama Kwateng** showing great progress in only her second competition, further improved to set a new PB over 800m in 2:37.6, having earlier run 48.0 for the first time over 300m. New PBs came thick and fast with **Evie Bedford** having a great run over 1500m for 3rd place 'A' string with 5:12.7 – four seconds faster than her recent run in the Surrey Schools trials. The 800m was a competitive race among the clubs represented, and a tight race from start to finish. **Ella Henderson** and **Jimena Styne**s continue to run consistent times over the distance this season, clocking 2:31.1 and 2:32.4, respectively.

With the U13 age group bursting with so much talent to enable all to compete, a few needed to be redeployed as acting U15s for the afternoon. Congratulations to each of these girls who stepped up to the task and performed admirably in each of the events they competed: **Leyli Morgan, Lois Froude, Nicole Greenwood** and **Sabrina Coppola Johansen**. Both **Lois** and **Nicole** (her first club outing too!) competed in the 200m and long jump, with **Nicole** additionally running the 100m in a time of 15.0. **Leyli** accredited herself well in her first 1500m accompanied by **Sabrina** who, undeterred by the older girls, ran very hard to take the lead from the off and was rewarded with a great time of 5:16.3. **Sabrina** went onto run the 800m later in the afternoon and clocked another fast time with 2:37.5, a great day's racing.

So, turning to the U13s (competing as U13s!), there were yet again some brilliant performances. It was great to also welcome additional newcomers competing for Walton for the first time: **Francesca Weal, Gabriella Pellowe, Kate Frost** and **Olivia Smith**. **Olivia S** ran both the 100m and 200m, clocking a fast 14.4 over the shorter distance, with **Kate** impressing with her performances of 13.8 over the hurdles and a great debut time of 30.9 over the longer 200m sprint. **Francesca**, first time for Walton as a first year U13 but with no lack of prior competition experience, competed very well across the 100m, 200m and long jump recording 14.9, 31.4 and a jump of 3.79m.

The remaining girls had all been to Kingston before in the YDL fixture earlier this month. First event of the day it was **Layla Drury** taking 2nd place in the 'A' string with a fast 13.3. **Layla's** run over 200m in 30.3 was impressive coming shortly after a determined run in a competitive race over 1500m, finishing in 5:23.7. **Poppy Wilson** showed great composure to also run the hurdles event for the first time, before clocking 5:41.2 over 1500m. A great time and a natural progression from her strong 1200m a few back. As with **Poppy, Cleo Gollings** previously having run the 1200m at the YDL, put in a strong performance of 5:38.7 for the 1500m and showed great strength then going onto run 2:42.0 in the scoring race for the 800m later in the afternoon. The other two 800m middle distance were great spectacles to watch. **Olivia Barnes**, in the scoring race, must have had her Weetabix that morning to relegate the other competitors to spectators as she finished clear in a fantastic new PB of 2:33.3. This was followed by side-by-side team tactical running by **Lottie Paul** and **Libby Jones**, successfully keeping the G&G pair at bay to run in for 2:55.9 and 2:57.0. **Libby** had earlier shown a natural aptitude for more technical disciplines where, together with **Mimi Scannella**, the two girls secured equal top club points alongside G&G in the discus event. **Mimi** also threw the shot putt alongside the Walton scorers of **Poppy Beaumont** and **Beatrice Hansen**. In addition, **Beatrice** showed further improvement with a new official PB in the long jump of 4.04m. **Poppy B** had a great day across her three events, further improving her javelin with a throw of 16.50m, together with a first-time effort and very promising 7.52m in the shot, having started the day taking 2nd place in the 'A' string 100m clocking 14.1. The final team performance to highlight came from **Chiamaka Brown**. Great to see **Chia** back competing for the club with two excellent 2nd place 'A' string performances of 22.00m in the javelin and 1.35m in the high jump.

Thank you to the club officials on the day, **Malcolm Howard** (track judge) and **Matt Reed** (timekeeper), and to **Tina Howell** supporting myself as stand-in team manager. Also, to the parents supporting field judges in some of the individual events.