

200721 A well-earned 2nd place for Walton in the Youth Development League (U13/U15) at Guildford

After some of the worst weather on record earlier in the week we were blessed once again (I think!) with another scorching sunny day, much like the first YDL fixture of the year at Kingston on the 5th June. It was therefore fitting that the weekend marking the end of a successful Walton AC Academy term saw such a strong cohort of U13s help propel Walton to 2nd place overall of the six teams in the division, together with a number of strong individual performances from the U15s. An ideal day for sprinters and field eventers where many personal bests were achieved across the board, even if it was a bit on the warm side to expect the same in middle distance events. Nonetheless, we saw strong performances and good racing in the 800m upwards all the same. Valuable experience as we don't get to choose the weather!

Towards the end of the afternoon, we were treated to a new *CLUB RECORD* in the **U13** boys 4x100m relay team with a clear win ahead of G&G in a time of 56.07 by the quartet of **Riley Barton, Logan Jacques, James McAvoy** and **Josh Parr**. Earlier the four had run the 75m sprint, with **James** and **Riley** securing good wins in fast times of 10.39 and 10.72 respectively, and **James** also impressing earlier on with 20.43 over the 150m distance. **Riley** in the meantime paired with **George Barker (U13)** and together achieved top club points in the javelin, with both **Josh** and **Logan** long jumping (**Logan** having also started the day off with a good run in the 75m hurdles). **Leon Froude (U13)** made up the sprint events for the boys with a convincing win in 21.5 over 150m in his race, then displayed his versatility by winning outright the shot put with 7.46m, ably assisted by **George**, who between them clinched top club points equal with G&G. The four Walton girls: **Poppy Beaumont (U13), Layla Drury (U13), Amy McLoughlin (U13)** and **Francesca Weal (U13)** all had great races over the 75m distance clocking 11.01, 11.17, 11.29 and 11.80 respectively – with **Poppy B.** and **Francesca** running the longer 150m sprint event in fast times of 21.86 and 22.72 seconds.

As well as the U13s displaying some fine sprinting, the U15s all set new personal best (PB) times in their respective 100m and 200m distances. For the girls, the sprinting came from **Oluwatobi Aderoju (U15), Dara Popoola (U15)** and **Mia Chandler (U15)**, all further improving their previous times, ahead of the boys that secured a competitive clean sweep in the 100m event for Walton, each winning by a good margin in their respective races. **Xavier Taylor (U15)** running as 'A' string achieved an excellent new PB of 11.95, **Billy Guest (U15)** - in his first ever race for the club - clocking a fast 12.30 - and **Oliver Brown (U15)** 12.57, after having earlier placed 2nd in the high jump with 1.55m. Together with **Isaac Amankwaah (U15)**, it was a very strong quartet running a fast 4x100m relay time of 48.96 – clear winners. **Isaac**, keeping it all Walton, had also earlier outright won the 200m event in a new PB of 26.2 and later together with **Luke Oryem (U15)**, the two boys showed great form in an exciting race to the line to both finish in their respective times of 42.60 and 42.37 over the longer 300m distance.

Going back to the start of the day it was great to see a full complement of hurdlers racing in the U13 for Walton, with **Layla** and **Poppy Wilson (U13)** going for the girls and **Logan** and **Paul Webb (U13)** going for the boys – all accumulating good team points in the process. **Layla** improved her PB with 13.14 for a clear 2nd place in the 70m hurdles event and while the U15 event was thinner on the ground all round, this was more than made up by **James Queen (U15)** who ran an extremely smooth and technically strong race for his easy win, clocking a fast 12.06 for the 80m hurdles.

Moving onto the middle distances there was plenty of competitive spirit and strong running in the hot conditions, with strength of character on display with a few also stepping up into the relay teams at short notice to complete the teams where injury niggles prevented the original pick to all perform. **Poppy W** was a star, called upon a short while before the start of her 1200m to complete the girls 4x100m as the 3rd leg runner, together with **Layla, Olivia Barnes (U13)** and **Poppy B** to see the girls run a good time of 59.44 behind an exceptional G&G quartet. **Poppy W** first ran 4:38.4 for her 1200m with both **Layla** and **Olivia** having run strong 800m races earlier in the afternoon with 2:41.4 and 2:42.3 respectively. In the boys 800m event both **Paul** and **Alexander Wigmore (U13)** went well for Walton with **Paul** in his first 800m for the club, a gritty run to finish in a strong time of 2:35.2. The older age group saw **Ama Kwateng (U15)** have another good day of racing with 2:44.9 in the 800m before also competing in the 300m and finally making up the team for the 4x100m relay team (together with **Dara, Oluwatobi** and **Mia**), the team clocking 58.74. Congratulations also to **Lana Duric (U15)**, first time in the 800m, bravely battling the hot conditions for her first outing. Both 'A' string runners for the club over the 800m & 1500m respectively [**Ella Henderson (U15)**, 800m and **Evie Bedford (U15)**, 1500m] showed their experience, consistency and composure running very fine times of 2:33.3 and 5:13.5 (the latter a win for **Evie** in the 1500m).

Onto the boys U15 middle distance a trio from Walton all ran competitively over the 800m with **Zach Dredge (U15)**, and **Sam Dobson (U15)** recording their first club mark of the year over the distance in good runs of 2:26.6 and 2:34.0, together with **Harrison Kwei (U15)** showing consistency in his third 800m race in 2:28.2. Having seen **Evie** win the girl's 1500m race before them, **Christian Boyd (U15)** and **Lewis Bainbridge (U15)** both ran well in a competitive boy's 1500m field, with **Christian** running sub 5 for the 2nd time this year in 4:59.2 and **Lewis** in his first club track outing clocking 5:14.2. Both boys showed great resilience with little rest to step into and support the longer 4x300m relay, running good relay legs together with **Luke** and **Isaac** who chased in the Woking quartet on the final leg for a time of 3:00.9.

Finally, among the best of the field event performances of the day within the U13 competition **Chiamaka Brown (U13)** won the high jump with 1.35m before racing over to the long jump achieving a mark of 3.68m, joined by **Francesca** jumping equally well with 3.65m, and then **Chiamaka** completing her day with a strong throws performance recording 22.28m in the javelin event.

All in all, 2nd place overall was a fine team performance, setting up for a good finale of the season at the final fixture scheduled for the 4th September. A huge thanks to parents who helped with officiating in the allocated field events of long jump and shot put throughout the day. Tough under the beating sun but many thanks for your enthusiasm and positivity.

PHOTOS BELOW



Left to right: Olivia B, Poppy B, Layla and Chiamaka. A handful of the club U13 top performers receiving their athletic awards from prior competitions in events including the hurdles, 100m, 200m, 800m, 1500m, javelin, shot and high jump.



James (U13) winning the 75m in a speedy 10.39



Oluwatobi (U15) throwing the shot for her 2nd PB of the day



Layla (U13) chasing in her first 800m, with a fast finish for 2nd place in 2:41.49