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British Athletics League Division One

Division One – standings after two matches

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Match 1, Sutton Arena, 7 May 2005.

Is a ninth consecutive league win possible?

Bill Laws writes:- Another season: with our men's squad going for a record-breaking, mind-boggling, earth-shattering, unbelievable ninth consecutive league win. And yet we were entering uncharted waters. It was our first home match for nine years (had we lost the skills to manage such a prestigious event?). We were using a new home track at Sutton Arena, and sadly it was our first match without the redoubtable team management skills of the late great John Jeffery.

Step up to the plate: Carl Lawton, our meeting manager, who pulled the whole exercise together including building a special elevated announcers box at the finish line, getting all data to team managers, officials and supporters, as well as arranging local hotels at concessionary rates for visiting teams. And on the day Alison Euridge from Partner club Sutton who provided all refreshments for officials and generally kept the back room staff content. And the verdict – a well-organised meeting - backed by the superb indoor facilities of Sutton Arena. No wonder BAL officials were talking of returning to this venue in 2 years time.

But the real action was outside. All teams were suffering from athletes still preparing for a long season and a Commonwealth Games in just nine months time. Just like last year the first fixture of the season was very much a case of who had returned from warm weather training and who had avoided injury. For Belgrave the position was better than last year where a disastrous fourth spot in match 1 had put the league result in doubt.

A huge single day points score from Scot Thompson

Scot Thompson opened with a pb in the hammer to back up a fine second place from the evergreen Mick Jones who has delayed his season to peak for Melbourne in 2006. Scot went on to amass 36 points from all four throws getting the statisticians scurrying for their record books to see if this was a single match points record by a Belgravian. A good start, followed by a hugely successful pole vault with Cameron Johnston getting silver and new member Joe Ive getting a B win and setting a new pb in the process. We were on our way. More near max points came in the long jump with season's bests from Bernard Yeboah and new member Adrian Philips who provided the second of our B string wins. Darragh O'Farrell guested to make it three 7 metre plus jumpers.



BAL Match 1 and Abdulaziz Rahman (2) of Birchfield/Sudan and Paskar Owor (1) of Belgrave/Uganda slug it out at the end of the 800 metres but it was Woodford Green's Matt Shone who had the best kick of all. Photo by Pat Mead.

More good news came as Kevin Brown made a cautious return after a season blighted by a torn patella tendon. Over 40, fluid drained off the knee the day before, knee locked in a brace and still this man flighted the disc to over 50m for more good points. But then, just as we were relaxing, Samson Oni twinged a knee warming up for the high jump leading to the pairing of our young decathletes, Kevin Sempers and William Sharman who together were to amass big points as the day progressed. The trip became a stumble, as evergreen veteran Paul Beaumont was our sole fit 400m hurdler. Fortunately he managed a valuable 6 points to edge up his all time points tally.

Middle distance boys plundered 98 points

But after this the track took off as joint team manager Alan Mead (moving effortlessly from his road duties to track) assembled one of our strongest middle distance squads, which made a magnificent contribution to an eventual victory. From 800 to 3000 s/c and 5000 the middle distance boys plundered 98 of the 112 points on offer. A powerhouse if ever you needed one - with Paskar Owor (new member) and Stephen Sharp getting silvers in the 800. Sharpy also forced a bronze in the A 1500 with another B win in the 1500 for Jonathan Blackledge, David Anderson also gained a bronze spot in the A 5000 as he returns to form after injury with new man Phil Wicks close behind for 2nd in the B. But the *piece de resistance* was the double victory for Kevin Nash and Tim Watson in the chase. Tim's result was noteworthy for his dive and complete immersion in the water jump, which put him at

the back of the field, and from which position he fought to gain the B win.

We're wild about Harry

Sprint sensation and new member Harry Aikines-Aryeetey ran pb's in both the 100 and 200 to put him well up the junior rankings. Both had legal winds and gave a few shocks to other juniors yet to return from training in warmer climes. This man has shown it can be done early season and at home; more to come. The sprint relays turned out to be two of the best quality races of the day with good points for Dominic Girdler and William Sharman. Set Osho added to our B string winning tally in the 400 but suffered as the electric timing failed. Tim Bayley looked rusty in the A but made amends in the long relay where he got the fastest split. Laurence Oboh made a welcome return in the sprint relay where he ran the second leg in tracksuit bottoms to protect an old injury. And another blast from the past - Andrew Bennett - made a welcome but not entirely "bling" free return to our long relay team. The team will need adidas sunglasses for match 2 if this wanderer returns. He was dazzling in white - an impression bettered only by another stunning win. Match 2 looked a lot more inviting now.

Our gratitude to our friends at Newham & Essex Beagles

But at the end of the winning day it was John Jeffery who remained in our thoughts. He was sadly missed by all of us at Belgrave as well as the other teams. Newham and Essex Beagles team members competed with claret lapel ties in tribute to John, which says much for the high regard in which he was held but equally importantly showed once again the great camaraderie, compassion and fellowship in this great sport of ours. Words cannot express our gratitude to Tony Shiret, Bob Smith and our friends at Newham and Essex Beagles for their kind thoughts.

100m: 2 H Aikines Aryeetey 10.62/1.2; 4 W Sharman 11.2 (manual time); n/s 4 J Regis 11.60/-1.8. 200m: 3 H Aikines Aryeetey 21.25/0.5; 4 J Hussain 21.57w/2.2. 400m: 7 T Bayley 49.70; 1 S Osho 48.5 (mt). 800m: 2 P Owor 1:52.26; 2 S Sharp 1:55.32. 1500m: 3 S Sharp 3:53.16; 1 J Blackledge 3:53.81. 5000m: 3 D Anderson 14:36.1 (mt); 2 P Wicks 14:45.7 (mt). 110mH: 2 D Girdler 14.33/-2.6; 2 W Sharman 14.10/1.5. 400mH: 6 P Beaumont 61.05. 3000mSC: 1 K Nash 9:05.43; 1 T Watson 9:27.60. 4x100m: 4 Belgrave 42.42 (K Sempers, L Oboh, W Sharman, D Girdler). 4x400m: 4 Belgrave 3:17.93 (G Selway 50.0, J Hussain 50.0, A Bennett 49.0, T Bayley 48.9). HJ: =4 K Sempers 2.00; =5 W Sharman 1.80. LJ: 2 B Yeboah 7.32/-0.6; 1 A Phillips 7.19/0.7; gsd D O'Farrell 7.08/1.1. TJ: 8 D O'Farrell 12.61/-0.9. 7 K Sempers 10.86/-1.5. PV: 2 C Johnston 4.80; 1 J Ive 4.60. SP: 3 C Gearing 16.15; 1 S Thompson 15.43. DT: 3 S Thompson 52.16; 2 K Brown 50.75. JT: 5 J Everard 55.45; 3 S Thompson 51.10. HT: 2 M Jones 69.90; 5 S Thompson 46.00.

1 Belgrave H 351; 2 Woodford Green wEL 322; 3 Shaftesbury Barnet H 272; 4 Birchfield H 271; 5 Enfield & Haringey AC 255; 6 Newham & Essex Beagles 254; 7 Border H 240; 8 Trafford AC 213.

Match 2, Thames Valley Athletic Centre, Eton, 4 June 2005.

It was one of those days ...

The second BAL match, originally scheduled to take place at Carlisle, was transferred to Eton and combined with the Division 2 match hosted by Windsor SE&H due to the winter flooding of the Border H home track. This placed a huge burden on Windsor Secretary Dennis Daly and the meeting officials and it is a great credit to them that the complicated two-match programme of events went off smoothly.

Belgrave team a number of key performers due to the next day's GB vs USA vs Russia encounter at Glasgow but nonetheless produced a number of superlative performances. These unfortunately were just not sufficient to withstand a Woodford Green with Essex Ladies match winning onslaught which took them to the top of the league, albeit by just 15 match points.

It started so well

It started so well with a unique max points total in the 100m and 200m by Graham Beasley and junior international Wade

Bennett-Jackson. Graham produced an early season legal sub 21 sec. clocking in the A200 while Wade produced two legal outdoor pb's in both the 100 and 200m. Graeme Oudney found a lot of attention focused on the A 800 and almost had the scalp of Mo Farah as he produced his best race to date in Belgrave colours. In the B 800 Darren Gauson overcame a bad case of being boxed in to gain a last stride win in a slow run race. Lost points in the 400 and an unusual collapse by Stephen Sharp in the 1500 soon brought us down to earth. Young tiger Jonathan Blackledge bettered a leg weary Stephen who had raced a 10km the week before (why?) and another young tiger Phil Wicks bettered the classy Dave Anderson in the 5000m. We missed Kevin Nash in the chase where Tim Watson finished a creditable 3rd and Bruce Barton valiantly strove for points in the B.

Twenty points down the "Swanny"

The throws, uncharacteristically, were like the curate's egg – good in parts. Kevin Brown and Leith Marar produced two second places in bad conditions for the discus and Mick Jones produced a likewise position in the A hammer, backed well by John Osazuwa who had returned from overseas duty with the British Army just two days earlier and hadn't picked up a hammer for six months. James Everard threw a pb in the javelin to beat an out of touch Tom Dobbins. But it was the shot where we came unstuck as Chris Gearing failed to get a messenger to the team managers that he was unwell and Scot Thompson was competing in Norway. Twenty points down the "Swanny".

... and the jumps were similar

And the jumps were similar with only the long jump coming up to expectations. Seni Majekodunmi sensed a pull during warm up for the triple leaving Farel Mepandy to provide useful points. Cameron Johnston withdrew from the pole vault with an achilles problem and decathletes William Sharman and Kevin Sempers combined to cover gaps including the high jump where again Samson Oni had reported injured.

And to cap a very unfortunate day Dominic Girdler trailed in the high hurdles A race following his blocks slipping and hitting 6 hurdles. He was harshly judged to have deliberately knocked them down and was disqualified. But the ubiquitous William Sharman showed what might have been by winning the B event. The only mention to be made of the 400 hurdles was that once again our sole representative was veteran Paul Beaumont.

So although the team managers had made efforts to strengthen the weak events from match 1 it was a host of misfortunes which combined to bite them on the derriere.

Sadly, towards the very end of the match, President Gerry North fell up the stadium steps and finished up in hospital with some nasty head injuries including a suspected broken nose. He was back at home that evening, although in an extremely battered state. It was one of those days.

100m: 1 G Beasley 10.43w/3.6; 1 W Bennett-Jackson 10.45/1.4. n/s 1r1 L Oboh 10.72/1.8; 7r2 G Selway U20 11.34/1.6; 1r3 J Hussain U20 10.94w/3.5; 4r3 K Adjepong 11.24w/3.5. 200m: 1 G Beasley 20.92/0.1; 1 W Bennett-Jackson 21.19/1.4. 400m: 7 A Bennett 49.06; 5 J Hussain 49.49. 800m: 4 G Oudney 1:51.77; 1 D Gauson 1:53.58. 1500m: 2 J Blackledge 3:50.63; 4 S Sharp 3:58.74. 5000m: 3 P Wicks 14:31.80; 2 D Anderson 14:46.55. 110mH: dq D Girdler; 1 W Sharman 14.22w/2.2. 400mH: 8 P Beaumont 69.7. 3000mSC: 3 T Watson 9:12.02; 7 B Barton 10:38.64. 4x100m: 3 Belgrave 41.94 (D Girdler, G Beasley, K Sempers, W Bennett-Jackson). 4x400m: 5 Belgrave 3:18.51 (W Sharman 49.4, G Selway 49.7, K Sempers 50.3, A Bennett 49.1). HJ: 3 K Sempers 2.00; 6 W Sharman 1.80. LJ: 2 A Phillips 7.23w/2.2; 2 D O'Farrell 7.12/2.0. TJ: 3 F Mepandy 15.12. PV: 3 J Ive 4.70; 4 W Sharman 3.40. SP: 8 D O'Farrell 11.80. DT: 2 L Marar 51.60; 2 K Brown 48.14. JT: 6 J Everard 58.93; 2 T Dobbins 58.16. HT: 2 M Jones 68.53; 3 J Osazuwa 55.47.

1 Woodford Green wEL 358; 2 Belgrave H 314; 3 Newham & Essex Beagles 290; 4 Birchfield H 275; 5 Border H 246; 6 Shaftesbury Barnet H 238; 7 Trafford AC 234; 8 Enfield & Haringey AC 231.

National Junior Athletics League

Southern Premier Division (Men)

Match 1, Mayesbrook Park, 24 April 2005.

100m: 1 H Aikines-Ayeteey 10.91/-2.3; 4 J Regis 11.75/-2.4. 200m: 5 J Hussain 22.57/-1.9; 1 H Aikines-Ayeteey 21.86/-1.5. 400m: 1 S Osho 48.69; 1 G Selway 49.73. 800m: 8 L Sargeant 2:22.68. 1500m: 7 T Barry U17 4:30.33. 110mH: 2 Z Sandell 16.08/-2.0. 400mH: P Cowling dnf; R Collier dnf. HJ: 7 J Eving White 1.75; 4 Z Sandell 1.75. LJ: 1 B Yeboah 7.05/-0.2; 3 Z Sandell 6.02/+2.4. TJ: 3 J Eving White 13.26/+2.1. PV: 3 Z Sandell 3.65; 2 J Eving White 3.35. SP: 8 R Collier 10.48; 5 C Scott 10.34. DT: 1 C Scott 44.84; 7 R Collier 25.91. JT: 7 Z Sandell 39.03; 4 J Eving White 37.14. HT: 3 C Scott 49.64; 8 P Cowling 19.11. 4x100m: 4 Belgrave 45.18 (J Regis, S Osho, L Sargeant, 4 J Hussain. 4x400m: 1 Belgrave 3:23.51 (H Aikines-Ayeteey 52.3, G Selway, 50.5, J Hussain 50.7, S Osho 50.0).

Teams: 1 Enfield &H 275; 2 Shaftesbury B 271; 3 Blackheath &B 269; 4 Harrow 248; 5 Windsor SE&H 233; 6 Belgrave 207; 7 Bournemouth 194; 8 Havering M 187.

Match 2, Ashford, 22 May 2005.

Chris Scott in good form

With half the team competing for GB Juniors at the Loughborough international we were always going to be up against it at Ashford and trailed in last place for most of the day until a flurry of good points in the final events hoisted us above Havering Mayesbrook.

Chris Scott was outstanding in the throws, just a little way down on his hammer best as he missed 50m by a whisker, but set a new personal record in the discus where he proved to be our only winner of the day. A new high jump best came from Roy Collier and he also equalled his best in the pole vault. Multi-eventer Zé Sandell made a big contribution to our overall score and Martin Marshall made a bold effort to win the steeplechase, only to get run down in the last 300m.

It wasn't a good day for sprinting. A huge headwind added nearly a second to the 100 and 200 times but Jason Hussain certainly made his presence felt among a crop of outstanding speedsters.

100m: 4 J Hussain 11.7; 8 J Regis 12.6; n/s 4r1 L Sargeant 12.2; 5r1 R Ghandour 12.2; 5r2 M Flores U17 12.9. 200m: 4 J Hussain 22.9; 7 L Sargeant 24.0. 400m: 7 D Campbell 53.7; 6 R Ghandour 53.9. 800m: 6 J Harrison 2:04.5. 3000m: M Flores U17 dnf. 110mH: 3 Z Sandell 17.2. 400mH: 4 Z Sandell 58.2. 2000mSC: 2 M Marshall 6:23.9. HJ: 8 R Collier 1.80; 3 Z Sandell 1.80. TJ: 2 E Ewulo 14.16. PV: 3 Z Sandell 3.80; 2 R Collier 3.35. SP: 7 R Collier 11.18; 2 C Scott 11.09. DT: 1 C Scott 48.08; 3 R Collier 31.97. JT: 5 Z Sandell 43.06. HT: 3 C Scott 49.99. 4x100m: 7 Belgrave 46.5 (J Regis, E Ewulo, L Sargeant, J Hussain).

Teams: 1 Shaftesbury B 301; 2 Enfield &H 280; 3 Blackheath &B 268.5; 4 Windsor SE&H 248; 5 Harrow 237; 6 Bournemouth 180; 7 Belgrave 167; 8 Havering Mayesbrook 139.5.

Brent Division (Women)

Match 1, Perivale, 24 April 2005.

100m: 1 A Onoura 12.2; 3 M Flores 15.9. 200m: 1 A Onoura 26.0; 5 M Flores 33.8. 400m: 2 L Collier 66.6; 3 M Flores 82.5. 800m: 3 L Collier 2:39.1; 1 G Williams 2:42.3. 1500m: 2 I Ainsworth 5:06.9; 1 G Williams 5:33.6. 3000m: 1 I Ainsworth 12:17.2; 1 S Dolfe 13:53.7. 100mH: 1 S Kemp 19.5; 1 S Dolfe 28.2. 400mH: 1 S Kemp 80.8; 1 S Dolfe 86.1. LJ: 4 L Collier 3.89; 3 M Flores 2.93. SP: 1 C Sanderson 6.91; 2 G Williams 5.09. DT: 1 C Sanderson 22.36; 2 I Ainsworth 14.49. JT: 3 C Sanderson 15.83; 2 A Onoura 12.55. HT: 3 I Ainsworth 12.55; 1 S Kemp 9.76. 4x100m: 4 Belgrave 55.0 (M Flores, S Kemp, L Collier, A Onoura). 4x400m: 1 Belgrave 4:27.2 (G Williams 68.0, S Dolfe 67.2, I Ainsworth 65.5, L Collier 66.5).

Teams: 1 Belgrave 215; 2 Hillingdon 168; 3 Wycombe Phoenix 144; 4 Thames Valley 92; 5 Vale Of Aylesbury 86.

Match 2, Milton Keynes, 22 May 2005.

The Famous Five

Our depleted team of just five girls made an outstanding attempt to win the match and only narrowly failed. Star of the team was Imogen Ainsworth who took almost maximum points with her 1500/3000 double but amazingly scored almost as high in the discus and hammer!

Gemma Williams ran a startling 67.7 for 400m hurdles - a time that seemed even more impressive when it was discovered that the runners had started on the 800m line and had thus run considerably over distance. But seeing that her best for the flat race is just about the same we can only assume that the time was returned incorrectly by the timekeepers and was more likely 77.7.

100m: 4 M Flores 16.0. 200m: 2 L Collier 29.6; 2 M Flores 34.0. 400m: 3 G Williams U17 68.1; 2 M Flores 82.4. 800m: 1 G Williams U17 2:45.9. 1500m: 2 I Ainsworth 5:15.9; 1 L Collier 6:25.2. 3000m: 1 I Ainsworth 11:04.3. 400mH: 1 G Williams U17 77.7. LJ: 3 L Collier 3.99; 2 M Flores 3.41. SP: 3 C Sanderson U17 6.87; 3 L Collier 5.72. DT: 1 C Sanderson U17 21.06; 1 I Ainsworth 16.01. JT: 2 C Sanderson U17 15.75; 2 M Flores 6.55. HT: 3 I Ainsworth 13.45. 4x400m: 2 Belgrave 4:35.6 (G Williams U17 68.5, C Sanderson U17 70.7, I Ainsworth 69.1, L Collier 67.4).

Teams: 1 Wycombe Phoenix 269; 2 Belgrave 196; 3 Vale of Aylesbury 131; 4 Thames Valley 112; 5 Hillingdon 46.

An early bath for Tim Watson



This terrific shot of Royal Marine bandsman Tim Watson making a splash in his first 'chase of the season was taken by John Bulpitt at the opening British Athletics League match. Believe it or not, Tim went on to run 9:27.60 to win the B race!

Unfortunately this wasn't Tim's only mishap of the day. After the race he visited the Medics room to ice a bruise on his leg - and as he was leaving, someone swung open a heavy fire door right in his face and he ended up with a lump on his head the size of an egg.

After the picture appeared on our website, enquiries were made by New Zealand Runner and USA's Track & Field News who were both interested in making a feature of it.

We offered a prize to the person who came up with the most amusing caption. There were no fewer than 34 entries and the winner came from David Anderson:

"With a new BMW to pay for, the coin thrown into the water jump soon caught Tim Watson's eye."