

Master's Track and Field Athletics

Cup Final Victory for Worcester Teams

What started on a cloudy morning at Pingles Stadium at Nuneaton ended in splendid sunshine with crowning glory for both Worcester Men's & Women's Veteran track & field athletics teams. The Ladies & Men's Teams completed their season with a resounding victory in the prestigious Midland Vets Track & Field Cup Final. It was the first time in the clubs long history that both teams have won this event simultaneously. With both team victories Worcester managed to retain the Central Television Trophy for the combined scores for a third consecutive year by a resounding victory of 416.5 to Rugby & Northampton's 381 points.



With all the top Midland clubs being represented in the Veteran's Cup Finals graded from 'A' to 'C' dependant on league performance over the season. The eight team line up contesting the 'A' Final with Worcester included Rugby Northampton Lions, Stratford-on-Avon A C, Bromsgrove & Redditch A C, Cannock & Staffs A C, Telford A C, Leamington A C & Charnwood A C.

Both Worcester teams secured their place in the 'A' final with convincing wins in the four league meetings in the process of retaining their league titles.

All of the Midlands Premier Track and Field Clubs compete for this annual trophy and after thirty-six hard fought events covering age groups over 35, 40, 50, 60 & 70 Worcester's men's team were convincing winners by a considerable margin. This is the sixth Men's victory in Worcester's history with previous wins in 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008 & 2015 plus runner's up on numerous occasions. This is the second victory for the Ladies team their first being in 2014.

Such is the strength of the Men's squad, although missing eight of their regular athletes, the team still managed to outperform the opposition accumulating 221 points against Leamington's 191 & Rugby & Northampton's 190, a decisive 30 point winning margin.

Of the thirty-six events contested, Worcester's men had a top three placing in twenty-four, providing eleven individual victories, nine runners up and four third places.

Worcester's multi event star Pete Stewart was the pick of the field competitors and in excellent form, contesting six events and accumulating 40 team points on his own with victories in the pole vault & high jump, second in triple jump & shot, third in discus & fifth in long jump.

Worcester's sprint star Steve Buttler was in fine form easily winning M40 100 metres in 11.8 seconds, only a tenth of a second away from his club record, plus a storming leg of the 4 x 100 relay.

Richard Houchin in only his second season in Veterans athletics had a very busy day to take pride of place on the track, cruising around to easily win M40 400 metres.



Pete Stewart doing very well in the M40 Triple Jump



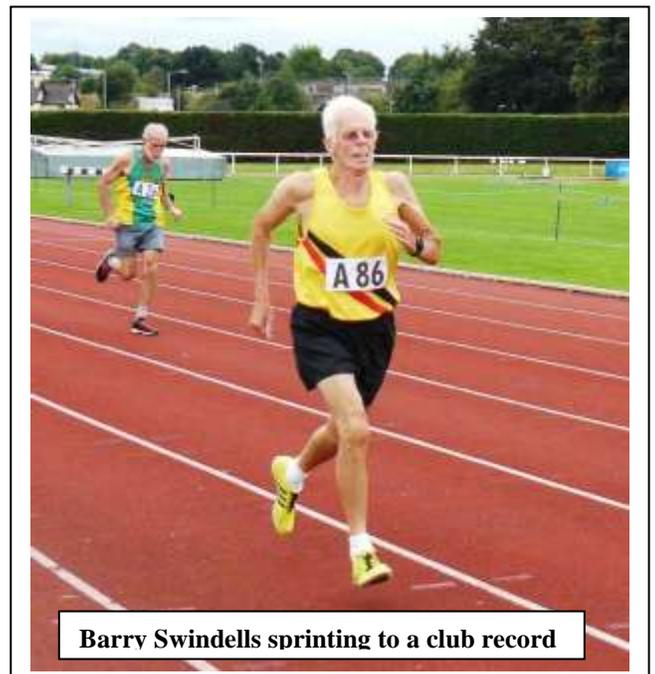
He followed up with a nail biting finish to the 200 metres to secure victory in a photo-finish (see photo on the left). Richard then showed great team support by competing in the 2Km race walk for the first time, to cover for absent colleagues.

Distance running star Derek Jackson in his first ever season of track & field at the age of 65, has re-written the clubs age records and showed his class to win both M60 800m & 1500m. Jackson also showed

great team spirit by stepping in at the last minute to make up the 4 x 400m relay team.

Middle distance star Barry Swindells demonstrated his versatility and sprinting ability to set two M75 club age records whilst finishing second in M70 100 metres and fifth in M60 200 metres despite giving away a seventeen year age advantage.

Multi-eventer and new recruit this season Henry Hopkins easily won the M50 Triple Jump, ran storming legs in both sprint relays and collected valuable points in M35 200 Hurdles & M50 100 metres.



Ever consistent Dave Hall earned valuable points with second in M35 800 & fourth in 1500 metres plus superb lead off legs in both sprint relays.

Graham Davison in his first season of Veterans athletics sprinted well to gain a hard earned third place in M35 200 metres plus storming legs in both sprint relays.

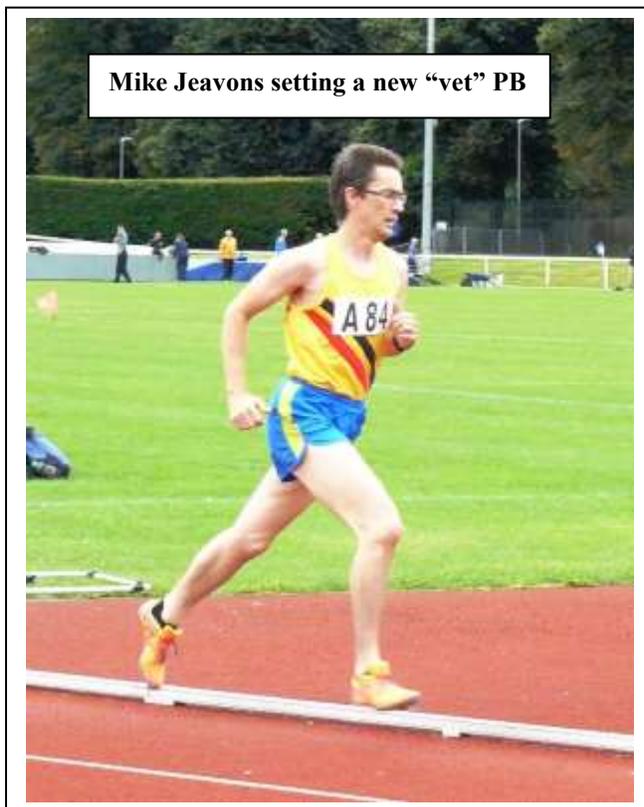
Worcester lead throughout the 4 x 100 metres sprint relay with Dave Hall

getting the team away well, Steve Buttler powered away down the back straight to hand over to Henry Hopkins with a sizeable advantage, who then ran a controlled bend to hand the baton to Graham Davison on the anchor leg who brought the team home ahead of a fast finishing Leamington quartet.

Mike Small, voted Male Athlete of the Season for Southern Division for his throwing expertise, took the M60 Javelin with second places in M60 Hammer & M50 Shot.

Alec Taylor collected a couple of good second places in M40 Javelin & High Jump plus fifth in M40 Hammer to gain a further 18 team points.

Martyn Cole continued his fine season and secured victory in M50 3000 metres setting a new club record in the process. Cole followed this up with a fourth placing in M50 400 metres.



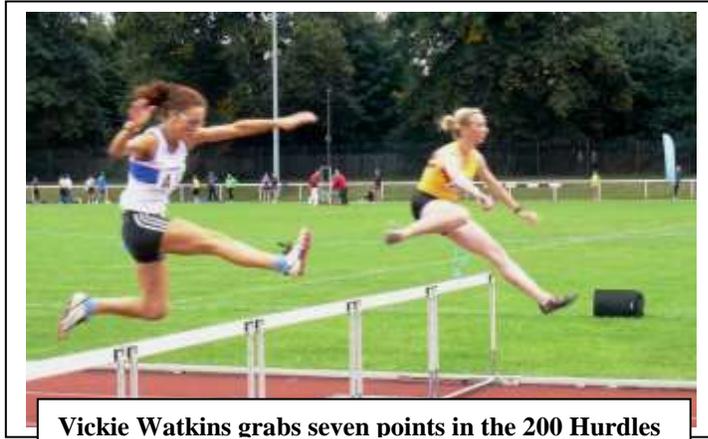
Mike Jeavons also in his first season of Veteran athletics knocked almost 30 seconds off his previous best in securing a well earned third place in the M40 3000 metres.

Team Manager Dave Hope competing in the M60 age group picked up valuable points with third place in the Pole Vault, fourth in 100 metres & fifth in both Long Jump and 2Km race walk.

The final event of the meeting was the 4 x 400 metre relay which made for an exciting spectacle. Dave Hall on the lead off leg got the team off to a flyer, handing over with 30 metres advantage

from Leamington. Graham Davison, out in front on leg 2, ran a fine solo leg to hand on to Henry Hopkins with an increased lead. Hopkins held the advantage on the third leg and handed the baton on to Derek Jackson, drafted into the team at the last minute to cover for an injured team mate, on the anchor leg.

Despite giving away almost a thirty year age advantage, Jackson ran his heart out but was just pipped in the closing stages by the fast finishing Leamington quartet and had to settle for a well earned second place.



Vickie Watkins grabs seven points in the 200 Hurdles

Victoria Watkins set the tone for the Worcester Ladies Team with an excellent run in the first race of the day, the (W35) 200m hurdles, finishing second with a lifetime best time. She followed this up with fourth place in the (W35) 400m with a season's best time as well as running a leg in each of the relays (4x100 and 4x400).

Emily Seward set a lifetime best time in a very competitive (W40) 800m where she secured third place, then came fifth in the (W35) High Jump, covering for a missing athlete, in an event she had not attempted since her school days, over 20 years ago! Seward also ran a leg in the 4x400 relay.

Rachel Ward slowly recovering her form following a serious injury, came third in the (W50) 800m and followed this up with fourth place in the (W50) 1500m



Ros Townsend-Hope in the 400m gets the better of the multiple record holder Angela Copson

Ros Townsend-Hope (W60) was kept busy coming second in the 100m (season's best) and first in the 400m (season's best and new club record of 79.5 sec) before helping out in the 4x400 relay.

In the (W40) 100m sprint Cat Goulder-Davies came third in a race won by a European record holder, Eleanor Ruddock. In the 200m, Goulder-Davies again came third, just behind a current World Champion, Joanne Frost - yes, the standard was high! Goulder-Davies also completed a leg in the 4x100 relay.

Our European and World medalist Iris Holder was another athlete that achieved a maximum, winning the (W70) 100m and remaining at the top of the UK rankings. Iris then dropped down to (W60) to secure third place in the Long Jump and second place in the Triple Jump.

Mel Garland giving it 100%
in the W40 Long Jump



The Team Captain, Mel Garland, hardly having time to sit down all day, led from the front in her first competition back following a hamstring injury and secured an incredible 48 points towards the team total. Garland won both the 100m and the 200m sprints in the W50 category. In the field events she stepped in to cover for another athlete in the (W50) High Jump, where she came first, the (W40) Long Jump where she came third and the (W50) Javelin where she was fourth. Garland also came second in the (W50) Shot Putt, third in the (W35) Triple Jump and completed a leg in the 4 x 100 relay.

The (W40) 3000m saw Amanda Steer run a season's best, but it was only good enough for fifth place, such was the standard of the competition.

Becky Freeman also ran a season's best, this time in the (W35) 1500m, as well as legs in both relays.

In the 2K Race Walk Worcester's Wendy Bennett obtained maximum points in the W40 category with a season's best time, whilst at W60 Liz Bowers came third, again with a season's best performance. Bowers had earlier competed in the (W60) 3000m finishing second behind the World Champion, Angela Copson, more than a minute ahead of the third placed athlete.

In the (W35) Hammer, Worcester were represented by Marion Loveridge who achieved maximum points with a throw of over 34mts. She followed this up with third place in the (W40) Shot Putt plus another third place and a season's best performance in the W50 Discus.



With no athletes to compete in the (W60) Hammer throw, Pam Price (W70) was called upon to represent the club against some younger competitors, yet still managed fourth place, five match points and a beaming smile.

The Worcester ladies managed an excellent third place in each of the relays (4x100m and 4x400m) in spite

of missing several of their "club record setting" relay team members, such is the strength of the squad.

From the 31 events in their competition, the Worcester ladies achieved 24 top three finishes, including 8 first places.

The team had already enjoyed a personalised celebratory cake (topped with an edible team photo) to commemorate winning the Midland League, South Division - the ladies team not having lost a single league match in over 4 years. It now looks as though a further celebration will be required. Suggestions on a postcard please

Men's team scores: Worcester 221, Leamington 191, Rugby & Northampton 190, Charnwood 182, Stratford 161, Telford 82, Cannock & Staffs 82, Bromsgrove & Redditch 81 points.

Ladies team scores: Worcester 195.5, Rugby & Northampton 191, Stratford 129, Cannock & Staffs 119.5, Bromsgrove & Redditch 118, Telford 112, Charnwood 80 & Leamington 80 points.



Worcester AC capture Midland Vet's Gold!!

At the conclusion of the meeting Worcester's Team Managers Mel Garland & Dave Hope were presented with the Cup Final Trophies together with the shields for the league titles, which were won earlier in the season. This was followed by the presentation of the Central Television "Gold Cup" for the combined scores. This is the third consecutive year that Worcester has held this prestigious award.

Finally, a big "thank you" to all those that help behind the scenes, to make this sort of success possible, the coaches, the officials, family members, the team managers, training partners - everyone that contributes, in whatever way- thank you.