



DOUBLE SUCCESS FOR WORCESTER'S VETERAN ATHLETES

Worcester's "over 35" Track and Field athletes enjoyed another tremendous season and both their men's and ladies' teams have secured the South Midlands league titles for a record **SIXTH successive year**.

With the final league match of the season being staged at the Worcester track near Nunnery Wood High School, they had home advantage and certainly made that pay.

The Men's Team – have strength in depth and for the final league fixture it was just as well, as over a dozen of the regular squad were unavailable due to injury, holidays or work commitments. Luckily they still managed to fill nearly all the slots on the busy programme, but so did their nearest rivals, Stratford AC and the Bromsgrove/Redditch club; in total, 8 clubs were contesting for points in each event.



Nick Hitchins in the 200m

First on track it was the 200m races. **John Steel** (M70) and **Henry Hopkins** (M60) came 1st and 2nd respectively to get the team off to a flying start. Sadly we had nobody at M50 due to a late withdrawal then at M40 and M35 **Nick Hitchins** and **Marc Flannery**, who are not really sprinters, kindly filled in to secure a few points for the team.

In the 800m races **Nick** was running again, coming 4th whilst in the M60 category **Derek Jackson** brought in maximum points with a time of 2'35.8 moving him to number 4 on the UK national rankings.

Derek was also competing in the 2k Race Walk where he was joined by **John Brook**. Together, they scored 10 points for the Worcester team.

In the 3000m races **Martyn Cole** (M50) **Dave O'Brian** (M40) and **Matt Fairlamb** (M35) all ran well finishing 2nd 3rd and 4th in their age groups. Both Dave and Matt were late additions to the team, filling in for athletes who were unavailable, so an excellent job guys.

Teamwork in the 3000m. Left to Right (WAC) Martyn Cole, Matt Fairlamb and Dave O'Brian



At this point in the match the Worcester men were in third position, trailing their two main rivals with 71 points. Stratford had 77 points and Bromsgrove/Redditch were leading with 78.

In the **Men's Field Events** the home team really seized control of the match, massively outscoring all other clubs.

In the Pole Vault (M40) **Pete Stewart** came 2nd with 2.50m whilst in the Discus **Marc Flannery** (M40) came 2nd and **Mike Small** (M60) secured maximum points with a superb throw of 38.50m which propelled him up the UK rankings.

Henry Hopkins (M60) won the Long Jump with 4.42m (see photo) then dropped down several age groups to compete in the M35 Triple Jump, coming 3rd with 9.82m against relative youngsters.

In the M40 Shot Putt it was **Marc Flannery** again, this time with 3rd place then it was time for the final Field Event of the evening, the M60 Hammer, where **Mike Small** threw a huge 35.51m to comfortably secure 1st place and maximum points.

The last event of the evening for the men's team was the 4x100m relay. The relay races are always good fun and this was no exception. Even though Worcester had a scratch team, they ran well and got the baton around safely, coming 3rd in a time of 55.8s. Unfortunately for Stratford, they dropped their baton so were classified as "DNF" and awarded zero points.



The final scores for the top three teams were **Worcester 127, Bromsgrove/Redditch 114, Stratford 112** so it was a fine victory for the home club, a victory made even sweeter as they also clinched the league title.



The Ladies Team – were virtually at full strength, so whilst it's never over until the fit lady sings, their performances excelled on the night and overall the team proved too strong for the opposition.

In the 200m **Maggie Crosswell** (W70) **Ros Townsend-Hope** (W60) **Angela Sonn** (W50) **Nicola Guiver** (W40) and **Cat Goulder-Davies** (W35) secured an incredible 36 team points out of a possible 40 to fire the Worcester team into an early lead - excellent performances ladies. This was a lead they were never to relinquish. In fact, as the evening wore on they increasingly tightened their grip on the match.



Gill Repton in the Race Walk

At 800m **Vickie Watkins** (W35) set a Seasons Best (SB) of 2'39.5 followed by **Becky Selvey** (W40) running 2'35.5 and **Ros Townsend-Hope** (W60) 3'01.4 for another SB. Amazingly, all three ladies won their age groups for maximum points.

In the 2k Race Walk, **Emily Seward** helped out at W35 whilst **Gill Repton** covered the event at W50. Both ladies came 4th in their age groups to secure valuable points.

In the 3000m **Cath Hutchinson** (W35) made her vet's league seasons debut, coming 2nd in her race. At W40 **Emily Seward** was competing again, once more coming 4th then **Liz Bowers** dropping down into the W50 age group ran 13'18.7 to knock some 12 seconds off her previous SB



More 3000m teamwork. WAC athletes, L to R Cath Hutchinson, Liz Bowers and Emily Seward

In the **Ladies Field Events** – Worcester again outscored the opposition, to further extend their already impressive lead.

In the W70 Long Jump, **Iris Holder**, returning from injury, took 1st spot with 2.73m (setting a new league record) then dropped down to the W60 age group to take 2nd place in the Triple Jump.

Gill Repton enjoyed a rare opportunity to perform in the W50 Hammer, where she achieved an SB of 17.00m. **Pam Price**, who is normally a track judge, helped out in the Shot Putt where she came 3rd for 6 team points.

The Team Captain, **Mel Garland**, had not entered herself in the sprints, so she could concentrate on Field Events. Dropping down two age groups Mel won the W35 Discus, then the W40 Triple Jump before also winning the W35 Long Jump, potentially competing against athletes 20 years her junior. However, being ranked number one in the UK at Long Jump (W55-59) she was brimming with confidence and cleared 4.53m, so from these three events Mel obtained 24 points out of a possible 24 for Worcester ladies!

Iris Holder's winning leap in the W70 Long Jump



The final event of the evening was the ladies 4x100m relay.

Angela Sonn got the team off to a good start, holding her own against some much younger athletes. **Nicola Guiver** ran an excellent second leg, handing over in second place. **Mel Garland** stormed around the top bend to take the Worcester team into the lead, then **Cat Goulder-Davies** sprinted down the finishing straight for Worcester to win the relay in a time of 58.2s. This is the fastest 4x100 time their ladies team have run in over 5 years and is within touching distance of the club record. Next time maybe?

When the results were finalised, Worcester ladies had scored a massive **146 points, with Stratford in second place on 109.**

Finally, a big **THANK YOU** to all Worcester's UKA officials and helpers who came along and made sure the evening ran smoothly, they included.....

Track – Pat Carpenter, Carole Clark, Pam Price, Corleen Knott, Derek Cowdrey, Wendy Bennett, Ian Atkins, Ann Perry and Debbie Parker

Field Officials, Announcer and Results – Alan Clark, Maggie & Chris Crosswell, Jan Timberlake, Pete Stewart, Claire White, Clive Spencer, Ron Smith and Andrew Peach



To summarise, both their men's and their ladies teams won this match and with it the South Midland Vet's league titles. This qualifies both teams to go forward into the **Regional Finals** which are due to take place in **Solihull on Saturday 1st September**. If Worcester can manage to get their strongest men's and ladies teams to these Regional Finals, they must be in with a real chance of a top three finish; beyond that, let's wait and see what happens on the day, but anything is possible.....



**Worcester Vet Ladies winning relay team (Left to Right)
Angela Sonn, Nicola Guiver, Mel Garland and Cat Goulder-Davies**