

Triple medal haul for Worcester decathlete Ben Clarke

Ben Clarke of Worcester AC competed in the Senior Men Decathlon (100m, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump, 400m, 110m hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin, 1500m) at the England Athletics Combined Events Championships in Bedford on 25-26 May. A philosophy student at Sheffield University, Ben is currently coached in Sheffield by Mike Corden. As an U23 athlete, Ben was pitched against a strong field of 36 competitors from across the UK, including experienced internationals. On day one, he ran a wind-assisted personal best of 11.05 sec in 100m on the fast Bedford track. With the wind remaining strong throughout the day, Ben jumped 6.68m in the long jump and achieved 11.41m in the shot putt, nearly a metre more than his previous best. With his confidence high, Ben soared over 1.90m in the high jump and finished the day with 49.92 sec in the 400m and in 9th place overall. Day two of a combined events championships is all about building on day one, holding form and pushing on, and this is exactly what Ben did. He started day two with a personal best of 15.39 sec in the 110m hurdles, then threw a solid 32.30m in the discus. In spite of very difficult wet and windy conditions which saw many competitors fail to register a height, Ben cleared 3.76m in the pole vault. Another personal best in the javelin with a throw of 41.01m left one of Ben's best events until last. He clocked 4 min 20.59 sec in the 1500m, which was the fastest time of the day. Ben totalled a lifetime best of 6819 points (new decathlon club record) and finished in 8th place (overall) in the senior men's competition. Within the U23 age-group he took the silver medal as well as winning gold in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) competition and securing the Midlands regional gold medal. The senior men's decathlon was won by John Lane (City of Sheffield & Dearne AC, coached by Toni Minichiello) in a championship best performance score of 7786 points.



Deirdre Elmhirst, high jump coach at Worcester AC, who was in Bedford to support Ben, said "Despite being in the middle of his university exams, Ben performed to a high standard and achieved lifetime bests in 4 of the 10 events. This is a well-deserved reward for his hard training week-in and week-out. I continue to be impressed by Ben's dedication and achievements and am proud to play a small part by helping him with his high jump."

Ben commented "This was a good solid start to the season in spite of the challenging conditions in some events. My target was 6800 points, and I am especially pleased with my 100m, shot and hurdles performances. Placing second on the U23 rankings puts me a great position to be considered for the England team at the Home Counties International later this summer. It was an added bonus to share the BUCS podium with two of my Sheffield University team-mates."