

Worcester Athletic Club

Successful Season for Worcester Vet's Track & Field Team

After winning the South Midlands Vet's League title Worcester AC's men's team headed to Nuneaton for the Regional Cup Final against the top teams from the East and North Midlands.

Even before the competition started, the Worcester AC and Union Jack gazebos plus the club's flying banner created a focal point that was easily the most significant club presence at the buzzing Nuneaton venue. The other clubs could see that we meant business.



Our main rival was the much larger club of Rugby and Northampton Lions but there were also threats from Cannock & Stafford, Charnwood and Birchfield Harriers. Undaunted by the challenge of these mighty clubs the Worcester men pulled off a superb win to take the regional title.

Richard White was in his usual indomitable form and secured comfortable wins in the M50 200m hurdles (30.5) and M60 400m (61.1).

Henry Hopkins (15mins 10secs) made a useful first appearance in the M60 2k race walk to take 4 points. Hugh Davies came second in the M40 race in 13 mins.



Richard White cruising to victory in the (M60) 400m

Ben Reeves had a busy day for the club. His performances in the M40 100m (12.1 pb), M35 200m (25.4) and M35 long jump (4.74m pb) all earned 6 points. His two appearances in the relays meant that he had competed in 5 events by the end of the day.



Richard Houchin was close to his best in the M50 100m coming second with a season's best of 13secs. He took another 7 points in the M50 200m in 26.85.

David Shaw took part in three events within an hour and a half but still managed to produce superb efforts in all three. His season's best of 13.6 in the 100m took third place. In the M50 long jump he crushed his younger opponents with a leap of 4.68m to take the win. He also appeared in the 4x100m relay.

David Shaw leaping to victory in the M50 Long Jump

Laurence Oldfield was in top form and won in the M70 100m (15:5) and M70 200m (32.8). In both of these his gritty determination allowed him to just defeat the R&N athlete who had taken the honours last year. Laurence's noble appearance in the high jump reprised an involvement in an event in which he had last competed 60 years ago. His jump of 0.93m took a valuable third place.

David Shaw, Richard Houchin, Henry Hopkins and Ben Reeves ran 51.7secs in a well oiled 4x100m relay to take fourth place.

Derek Jackson doubled up in the M60 800m (2.37) and M60 1500m (5.32). His carefully measured efforts in both, against considerably younger opponents, were good enough for 8 points in each event.

In the M35 800m race **Matt Moon** ran superbly into a strong back straight headwind to win in 2'05. In the M40 400m he only just missed out on another win with a time of 56.9secs.



Matt Moon running strongly in the 800m

Hugh Davies ran in the M35 1500m race. His time of 5mins earned 4 points.

In the M40 3000m **Damien Stokes** made a great debut for the club and gained us 4 points with a time of 11mins 1sec. Thanks for stepping in at short notice Damien.

In the M50 3000m **Nick Hitchings** ran a strong and intelligent race to take second place, comfortably distancing himself from most of the field over the last two laps.

Nick, Richard White, Matt Moon and Ben Reeves teamed up to win the 4x400m in 4mins 7secs with a defiant show of power to cap off a magnificent day on the track.



Ben Reeves bringing the baton home to clinch the 4x400 relay. A fantastic team effort guys.

In the Field Events Worcester were equally impressive. **Damon Cripps** had a remarkable day. His efforts of 33.06m M35 hammer, 9.66m M40 shot put and 30.14m M40 discus all took first place in events outside of his age category. They were all tight battles but in each one of them Damon managed to pull out a really big throw when it mattered.

In the M50 Javelin competition the stadium announcer proudly confirmed the presence of the M60 British Champion, an athlete from R&N Lions. He did indeed throw a great effort of 43.56m. However, it was not enough to thwart **John Reynolds** whose immediate riposte of 44.01m was close to a season's best and took the win for Worcester.

Robin Saunders made an excellent debut for the club in the M60 shot and hammer. Robin had never competed in either event before and yet with only a few weeks training had gathered enough skill in these highly technical events to earn 3 points in both with throws of 12.22m hammer and 5.94m shot.

Roger Garland managed to find time between captaincy duties and team photography to secure a fine second place in the M70 shot put with a last round throw of 7.48m that moved him up the GB rankings.

In the M35 high jump **Andi Cresswell** managed to beat his nearest rival by a huge 20cm with a great leap of 1.60m and win the competition. Andi's first involvement in the WAC Vet's Team in a points scoring role was augmented by an appearance in the M35 triple jump where he jumped 9.12 m to take 3 points.

Henry Hopkins put in three good jumps in the M50 triple jump and his best of 8.77m was enough for an excellent third place.

Sleeping Beauties

We had to chuckle early afternoon, because at athletics it is quite rare to see two married men sleeping together

So, well done to everyone on what was a really splendid day. I can't say enough how impressive it was to see everyone giving their all. We hope to see you all back again next year to build on this work and defend our local and regional titles with true Worcester AC resolve.

Many thanks to all the WAC officials who helped out on the day with field, track and time-keeper duties, to the volunteer helpers, supporters, coaches and our Team Managers.

We are very grateful.

It wouldn't happen without you.

Damon Cripps - throwing his way to maximum points in the M40 Discus



The Worcester Vet Ladies Team had also won the South Midland's League title, with three wins out of four fixtures. Although they headed to the Regional Final in good spirits, the Worcester Team members knew they had a tough challenge ahead of them.

First on the track was **Louise Kirby** in the (W50) 200m hurdles. Louise came 2nd in 39.2sec (pb) beaten only by GB Masters International Hurdler Julie Rogers from Birchfield Harriers. Louise had a very busy day as she also ran 800m (3'14) 100m (15.34) plus a leg in one of the relays – all carrying a slight injury.

Next up was the 2000m Race Walk. Although we couldn't find an athlete to compete at W60, in the W40 category **Cat Hutchison** did us proud coming 2nd in 13'32 and scoring a "*Magnificent Seven*". Cat was soon back out on the track for (W35) 3000m where she finished 4th and the (W35) 1500m where she came 6th.

Sadly we were missing a few athletes due to other commitments, hence Cat offering to help the Team by covering extra events. She had a big smile after her final race, plus a large pocket full of points for Team Worcester.

Sara Saunders was another busy lady, starting with the (W40) 800m where she came 4th in 3'00. Then it was back on track for a leg in the 4x100m relay and again for the 4x400m relay.



Sara Saunders maintaining her style in the (W40) 800m



Cat Hutchison in the W35 3000m

Nicola Guiver tackled the (W40) 100m and came up against Elena Ruddock, the former European and World Masters Champion. Nicola came 4th with a season's best of 14.77sec. An hour later Nicola returned for the (W35) 400m securing another 4th place and useful Team points, plus helped in both relays.

Another athlete with four races and a hatful of Team points was **Angela Bryant** who took on the (W60) 100m winning in 15.62sec, the (W50) 200m coming 2nd with 33.78sec plus the (W60) 400m coming 3rd and a leg in the 4x100 relay.

Iris Holder dropped down an age group to cover the (W70) 100m, coming 2nd in 20.43sec

At (W60) 3000m **Ros Townsend-Hope** achieved 6 points with a 3rd place finish, then was back for the younger (W50) 1500m which she completed in 7'32. Two tough races, but boosting our Team points tally.

Amy Pinkney ran an sb of 29.84sec in the (W35) 200m in a race won by a former International sprinter, then came back for each of the relays.

In the 4x100m relay **Angela, Amy, Sara and Nicola** produced a truly storming performance in returning a time of 58.08, one of the quickest times ever recorded by a Worcester Vet Ladies team. On the day they were overhauled down the finishing straight by former World Champion, Elena Ruddock from Rugby & Northampton



At 4x400m the relay team was...
 <<< *left to right*
Sara, Nicola, Amy and Louise.

They safely got the baton around in second place for 7 valuable Team points in a time of 5'13

And so to the Field Events.....

The Worcester ladies couldn't find athletes to fill W35 Pole Vault, W60 Hammer or W70 High Jump, yet we still out-scored all other clubs except R&N Lions.

Iris Holder got things off to a good start in the (W70) Shot Put coming 3rd with 4.72m. Iris followed this up with 4th place in the (W60) Triple Jump competing against much younger athletes, potentially up to 20 years her junior.

In the (W35) Hammer **Ruth Wells** achieved an excellent 20.30m (sb) then (W40) Javelin of 21.50m and (W35) Shot Put of 8.05m in some close fought battles for position/points. Excellent throwing Ruth and a real boost for the Team.

Amy Pinkney, as well as sprinting, managed to compete in the (W35) Long Jump which she won with a leap of 4.08m for maximum points. Amy subsequently sported a well earned massive grin!

Just look at the style/effort captured in the photo. Wonderful.



Louise Kirby was our replacement entry in the (W50) Long Jump, kindly standing in for injured Team Captain, Mel Garland. Louise cleared a solid 3.56m in an event won in just 3.58m. Next time Louise, next time!

Covering the (W60) Shot Put in the absence of the injured Gill Repton, **Ros Townsend-Hope** registered a distance and added 3 points to the Team total.

Mel Garland, although unable to run or jump due to injury, managed to hurl a 1kg Discus 17.53 for 3rd place and 6 Team points. This was a bit down on Mel's normal (fully fit) performances this season, but was still too strong for several of the other athletes.

The (W40) High Jump was contested by **Clare Gratrix** and contest she certainly did, coming 2nd with 1.25m and only narrowly failing at 1.30m. Clare then moved to the (W40) Triple Jump where she registered 7.44m, just 1cm more than the athlete from Birchfield Harriers – nice one Clare!



There was short a wait before the Cup Final results were announced, but during that period there were several presentations made with regard to the vet's league divisional titles.

Worcester AC were awarded the **MVTFL (South Midlands)** titles once again, men and women, as we are the League Champions for 2022. **Hugh** collected the men's award and **Mel** the women's award.



I was given the job of announcing the male and female **Vet Athletes of the Season** for South Midlands. The women's award went to **Elaine Ledden of Stratford** for scoring a massive number of points for her club and setting PB's in no less seven different events during the season. The men's award went to our very own **Derek Jackson**.

Derek had competed in all four league fixtures plus the Cup Final, being undefeated all season racing within his own age group, or even when dropping down to race against younger athletes in the M60-69 age category. Nominations for these awards are generally made by the Team Managers of each club.

When it was then time for the presentation of Regional Cup Final awards, our women's team were announced as having come 2nd out of the 23 clubs eligible to compete for the trophy. This is an amazing achievement for a club the size of Worcester. With the men having won the regional title and the women coming second, the Veteran athletes from Worcester AC certainly know how to punch above their weight.

We have seen a fantastic set of results throughout the season, culminating in “the big one” the **Regional Cup Final**, where we witnessed a massive amount of excellent performances across the disciplines and across the age groups. We also had several athletes who were making their Cup Final debut who will hopefully have enjoyed a tremendous day of vet/masters athletics.



ALL PHOTOS (EXCEPT THIS ONE) BY ROGER GARLAND



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