

The inaugural UK Schools Games held in Glasgow saw 2 young Stratford AC Triple Jumpers Chris Bartlett and Amanda Evans compete for the West Midlands regional athletics team alongside gymnasts, fencers, swimmers and table tennis players, in an environment designed to create the atmosphere and living conditions of what they might expect in the 2012 Olympics. The competition for the West Midlands youngsters came from the other 8 English regions, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Chris, who was also the boys team captain, led by example in the Inter Boys Triple Jump and having just been nursed back to fitness from a troublesome leg injury, he improved in every round, apart from a marginal 2nd round no jump, to leap into medal contention with 14.15 in the 5th round.

By improving his lifetime best by an amazing 37cm to 14.41m, he snatched victory in the last round of a compelling competition to score an upset victory over Trevor Okoroafor from the South East region, who had previously beaten Chris in the English Schools and AAA UK championships earlier this summer.

A stunned Chris, said that “although my run up wasn’t brilliant, I knew the jump was big, but I had to wait for what seemed like ages for the distance to come up on the scoreboard. When 14.41 came up I was absolutely stunned”. He added “it’s a great feeling to win and I’m so pleased my family were there to see it, but now I’m having a short rest and then its back to a hard winters training to hopefully keep me on the pathway to London in 2012”.

Amanda had had an “amazing week”, after being called up as a late replacement in the Inter Girls Triple Jump only a week previously. Her Triple Jump season had effectively finished 4 weeks earlier in the AAA UK championships, but having been given the opportunity she was determined to get herself ready and did extremely well to adapt herself both physically and mentally to what was a massive occasion in such a short space of time.

She opened the competition with a modest 9.79m and in the 2nd round leapt to her best jump of the competition of 10.22, despite running into the strongest headwind of the weekend, but it wasn’t quite enough to get into the final and she finished 12th.

Amanda said, “I had a really good time, and although I was a bit disappointed with my performance, it’s been a great experience being with the other athletes. I’ve only started training and competing in Triple Jump this season and now going to Glasgow has made me more determined to go again to next years Games in Coventry”.

Chris and Amanda’s contribution helped the West Midlands team finish 2nd and finish the Games with the highest medal haul of any other team.