

The first match of the very competitive Heart of England league for Stratford AC Juniors took place in Rugby against good quality teams from the host club, Amber Valley, Tamworth, Solihull, Halesowen, Dudley & Stourbridge and Tipton. The team had a day of mixed fortunes with both the U15 and U17 girls teams decimated with other commitments and injuries, however the team still managed to finish a splendid 3rd overall on the day with the U17 boys winning their age group and the U13 girls just missing out on 1st place by 1 point.

In the U17 men Stefan Ellis was 1st in the 100m and also 1st in the long jump B with a PB, Mark Turner had a good day with PBs in the shot and javelin and a 2nd place in the 100m hurdles and Jack Harrison had a PB in his long jump and 2nd in 100m. The middle distance runners are making a big impression this year for the team, with hard their hard training paying off, as Dan Wright finished 2nd in both the 400m and 800m B races with PBs. Jonty Wilson came 2nd in the 1500m with a massive PB and achieved another one when he finished 2nd in the 800m, both of which were highly competitive races. Seb Croft is improving all the time in the high jump and jumped 1.75m, while James Clark and Chris Bartlett turned in their usual first class performances. The team confirmed their supremacy at this age group by subsequently winning the 4x100m relay by a huge distance.

The U15 boys found the competition tough but as usual Andrew Pozzi showed his class with PBs in the 80m hurdles and 100m, as well as winning the high jump. Matthew French had a good day with PBs in all his events (80m hurdles, javelin and shot), Sam Taylor had a PB in his 800m run and James Johnston, Bryn Stretton, Jack McMullen, James Allinson and Marco Rodrigues all made good contributions to the team effort. The young U13 boys team also found the competition hard but George Gravestock, Patrick Featherston, Michael Suren, Matthew Toms, Jack Allinson and Oliver Snow all gained valuable points for the team, with the best performances coming from Liam Dowd, who gained a 1st place in the shot and a 2nd in 100m.

In this competition there is a combined U17/Ladies team meaning the standard is high, but the ever-dependable Amanda Evans had a good day achieving PBs and 2nd places in the 100m and long jump. Elinor Ward, Katherine Washbrook and Iesha Martin made up the remainder of the team with some solid performances in what was a very depleted age group.

Again the U15 girls were short of some athletes but Emma Stubbs, Emma Laws (PBs in 100m and 200m), Amy Bruland, Ella Rahimi and Emma Copham (PB in 1500m) all performed well.

The U13 girls team really put together a very strong team performance and saw wins for Eleanor Johnston in 100m, Georgie Evans in the high jump, Rebecca Pozzi in long jump B and Lauren Stephens in javelin B. Hannah Noble, Isobel Burn, Kate Taylor, Emily Lewis and Sara Copham all did well to gain 2nd or 3rd places, and the quality of the sprinters saw a comprehensive win in the relay.

There is a separate competition for the U11s, and the girls' team of Molly White, Ellen Scholes, Georgia Holden and Hannah Taylor came 3rd and the boys team of George Mitchell, Alex Grant and Troy Stephens came 4th.

Neil Hawkins and Joe Brocklehurst travelled up to Manchester last week to take part in the latest in a series of open meetings that the prestigious British Milers Club organise in order to promote middle distance running in the UK. There were 4 races and Neil was in the B race and Joe the C race. Neil took it on after the first lap but unfortunately lost concentration and got boxed in with 200m to go, having to work hard to regain the lead coming off the bend. A 2-metre winning margin and his second best time ever (1:53:23) cemented a productive evening, and would have actually put him in the middle of the A race. Joe's race was paced to 57 seconds at the bell, when he was in 3rd place which he held until the last 60m when he tied up and dropped a place. Again, a time of 1:55:96 made for a rewarding trip.