

The indoor track and field season has started with some encouraging performances for some of the junior athletes at Stratford AC.

Athletes at last weekend's Birmingham Games, held at the National Indoor Arena, were using the new track for that has been laid for next months European Championships, and several juniors took advantage to compete on it for the first time.

Charlie Burn literally sprinted to the top of the U17 UK "Power of 10" 400m rankings with an outstanding run, and demolished his previous personal best in the process. He powered into the lead after the first 200m, and just kept accelerating all the way to the finish of his heat to record 50:47 seconds. The previous day he warmed up for the 400m by running in the 200m, and finished with an indoor PB of 23:39 seconds.

Bryn Stretton had a very good weekend in winning the U15 boys' 400m in a time of 62:53 seconds, and then finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the long jump with a best round of 4:75m, and then ran 26:91 seconds in finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in his 200m heat.

With limited technical training behind them the horizontal jumpers performed well, with Andrew Pozzi competing for the first time as an U17 in the triple jump and finishing with a very respectable 12:48m. Amanda Evans performed consistently in the U17 long jump, finishing with an improvement on her indoor PB to 4:72m, while Georgie Evans and Katie Taylor both competed in the U15 long jump and finished with personal bests of 4:42m and 3:73m respectively.

Andrew Pozzi also competed in the 60m hurdles and despite a difficult start recovered to finish strongly, while Seb Croft had his first outing of the year in the U17 high jump and finished with 1:70m to kick start his season.

Long jumper Ryan James had a rare outing in the 60m, and after winning his 2 heats in very quick times he came up against Olympian Christian Malcolm in the final. Even though Ryan again improved his time, to 7:03 seconds, he finished in the deserved bronze medal position.

---

The previous weekend saw the first part of the Midland Indoor Championships, which was held for the first time at the indoor facility at the Regional Athletic Centre at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium. Andrew Pozzi won bronze in the U17 long jump with 5:88m, Bryn Stretton won silver in the U15 boys' long jump with 4:79m and Amanda Evans leapt 4:67m for an indoor personal best. Georgie Evans just missed out on the bronze medal in the girls' U15 high jump on count back, but still produced a PB of 1:40m. Pozzi then competed in the 60m hurdles and despite running a PB of 8:97 seconds he just finished outside the medals in a very close race, whilst his sister Rebecca finished 4th in her heat in a PB of 9:30 seconds.

---

Sixteen Stratford U13 and U15 youngsters represented Warwickshire in the Norwich Union UK sports:hall Regional Final held in Worcester, against teams from Birmingham, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire & Worcestershire. All the Stratford athletes contributed to the overall Warwickshire performance, with all 4 teams finishing 2nd to a very good Birmingham team.

There were some superb individual performances, not least Andrew Pozzi who finished an agonising 2 points away from being crowned best U15 all rounder. Despite this he won gold in the standing triple jump, silver in the shot and was a tenth of a second outside of the medals in the 2-lap race. Other U15 medallists were Matthew French, who won gold in the speed bounce (10th overall) and Sam Mason-Brown who won silver in the 2-lap race (11th overall).

Sarah Woollacott was also just outside the medals in the U15 girls' all round competition, but only by a single point after winning gold in the speed bounce and silver in the 4-lap race. Emma Laws ran well in the 4 x 2-lap teams' 2nd place.

Anna O'Leary won gold and Katie Taylor the bronze in the U13 girls' speed bounce, and Georgie Evans won silver in the high jump with 1:35m. Anna, Katie and Georgie were joined by Isobel Burn to win gold in the obstacle relay, and Eleanor Johnston and Chloe Adams were a single place away from medals in their events.

Matthew Toms was the only medal winner, silver in the speed bounce, in the U13 boys' team, but along with George Gravestock, Henry Warrender, Oliver Snow and Jack Allison they collectively performed very well to give Birmingham a run for their money.

Team manager Sandie Evans said "All of the Stratford athletes made a significant contribution to Warwickshire's success, both boys and girls, and all the team responded to the challenge and raised their performances on the day".