

Andrew Pozzi, Stratford AC's rising star, finally got the news he's been waiting for, and has become only the second Stratford athlete to be awarded a GB vest after being selected to compete for Great Britain at the IAAF World Youth (Under 18) Championships in Italy in July. The last 12 months has seen Andrew transformed from one of the top U17 multi- eventers in the country to a specialist sprint hurdler, and he has subsequently become one of the top ranked U20 athletes in the UK. On hearing the news Pozzi said he was "thrilled to be running for his country". He added "The U18 world championships have been my primary target for the summer after missing out on the Commonwealth Youths last year due to injury, and I'm hoping to double up at the European Under 20 Champs to be help in Serbia in late July, but my main focus is on the world champs and to at least reach the final".

More good news for the boy wonder came at the Midlands Senior and U20 track & field championships over at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham, but Andrew was far from being the only local success. There was some good opposition for Pozzi in the U20's 110m hurdles final, but a smooth controlled race saw him reach the European U20 standard and win the Midland Championship in a new PB of 13:83 seconds. The other Stratford athlete to gain gold was Joe Brocklehurst, as he took the senior men's 800m title with a brilliant performance. In one of the best runs from a Stratford senior on the track for a long time Joe took the race on from the front in his customary style, and despite being overtaken on the final bend he saw a gap, went for it and burst over the line ahead of the pack. A time of 1:52:88 only helped underline the dramatic progress that Joe continues to make.

Amanda Evans finished just outside the medals in both the 100m hurdles and triple jump (U20 women), but there were numerous positives to take from her performances. The multi-talented Amanda has been concentrating on the combined events this season, and the sprint hurdles has seen a 2-second improvement on her PB from this time last year, so a 16:60-seconds 4th place was perhaps not such a surprise. The triple jump was Amanda's specialist event until injury held her back, however with her fitness and enthusiasm for TJ coming back she leapt to a lifetime best of 11.01m, again just outside the medals, but it did give her the qualifying distance for the English Schools as ample compensation.

Not everything has gone Andrew Pozzi's way of late though, as the England Athletics U20 Open event at Bedford proved less successful. The cream of the UK's young sprint hurdlers were gathered, with Andrew ranked 3rd in the UK going into the championships, and despite a blip in the middle of his heat he still had enough pace and power to reach the final. Andrew was in the right shape to run a fast time and gain selection for said European U20's, but unfortunately things didn't go to plan in the final when he didn't react well from the blocks and then hit the first two hurdles. With sprint hurdles all about running with a high level of rhythm at pace, and being an unforgiving event, it's very hard to recover when you've hit one hurdle let alone two. Pozzi finished 7th and is now is sweating on gaining selection for Serbia.

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A beautiful evening on Saturday was a fitting backdrop for the Simply Run 'Stratford Summer 6', an annual 6-mile race that starts and finishes at Mary Arden's House in Wilmcote. The warm weather did take one or two casualties amongst the runners, but there were still 212 slightly sweaty souls who did make it back to the finish where Mayor Jenny Fradgley was on hand to present the prizes. The route is a classically simple lollipop-shaped one, with the road and hill going out of the village towards Aston Cantlow providing the stick bit and an anti-clockwise loop incorporating Mill Lane and Wood Lane providing an extremely tranquil top part. The course is definitely one that has a sting in the tail, with the return trip back up the hill providing a real test in the last mile for those tired limbs!

The race has also been part of the Warwickshire Road Race League for a few years now, so there is a pleasing range in standard from the more serious types to the large majority who are there to just challenge themselves and get a bit fitter and faster. Amongst the sharp end of things was the overall winner Paul Andrew (Northbrook), who recorded a fine time of 31:42 minutes and was always slightly pulling away from fellow Coventrian Scott Hazell (Godiva), with the final winning margin a fairly comfortable 31

seconds. The winning distance for the female honours was much greater though, with Vicky McKinnon (Wilmslow) recording 38:29 as she came in 18th overall, and this put her over 3 minutes ahead of Katie Samuelson-Dean (Cambridge). Both 3rd places – Phillip Critchlow (Beaumont RC, 33:27) and Theresa Woolley (Centurion, 42:10) – were actually veterans, but since runners can only claim one prize this left other age-groupers to claim some glory and quality time with Mrs Fradgley: M40-49 (Paul Davies, 35:16), M50-59 (Martin Booth, 37:01), M60-69 (John Dagnan, 39:57), M70+ (Graham Cooper, 50:41). And the women's age category winners: F35-44 (Jenny Jeeves, 43:12), F45-54 (Jane Coker, 42:29), F55-64 (Marilyn Maidment, 44:17).

Many thanks should go to the good people of Wilmcote and the trustees of Mary Arden's house for their hospitality, Tiddington Road's Simply Run for their sponsorship, Dawn Davies and Tony Jackson for all their organisational abilities, all of the many Stratford AC marshals and helpers for forsaking a run round, and to Mayor Jenny Fradgley for giving up her Saturday night to present prizes (and watch husband Ian drag himself round the course)!