



## Southampton Kings at the Park! BAL Match Kings Park Bournemouth 4<sup>th</sup> June

A solid all-round performance from our men's team saw them record their first win in a BAL match since 25<sup>th</sup> June 2005! The sprinters and hurdlers got the team off to a flying start on a very warm but blustery day which caused difficulty for most events. **James Forman**, in his first 400 Hurdles since 2008, started our campaign with a bang. His win in **51.68** was a personal best and won him the athlete of the match award. He was well supported by **Sean Adams** with a clear B string win. Adams later combined with BAL debutant **Fred Legah** to grab 3<sup>rd</sup> place positions in the A and B 100m Hurdles.

Sprinters **Jaryd Robinson** and **Norman Fullard** collected 36 of a maximum possible 40 points in the 100 and 200 metres. A 400m B win from **Aaron Bennett** followed double 800m victories by **Harry Fisher** (bravely leading all the way) and **Jon Slade**, in an event Southampton seem to have an embarrassment of talent at the moment.

The warm and windy conditions were tough for the middle distances, but 5000m runners **Matt Hibberd** (3<sup>rd</sup> A) and **Martin Johnson** (2<sup>nd</sup> B) battled well to keep Southampton in contention. In the 1500m **Russ Osborn** (4<sup>th</sup> A) hung on grimly in the home straight as the field closed down on him and **Gareth Klepacz** doggedly stuck at his task, finding the going tough after leading in the early stages. The toughest gig of the match was undoubtedly the 3000m Steeplechase, where **Tom Muddiman** and **Pete Davis** kept Southampton in touch during the hottest part of the day.

In the field, **Gary Newton** led in the heavy throws, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> in the shot and being just short of his PB when winning the discus in unhelpful winds. Our great team spirit was very much to the fore in the throws, with **Mike Small** still heaving out the Senior weight hammer respectably despite being in the M55 age group and **Phil Hume** covering all 4 throws in the B string. Versatile High Jumper **Matt Watson**, fresh from just missing out on a triple jump PB due to slightly excessive wind assistance, notched up a lifetime best 43.23m in the A javelin.

Apart from **Watson**, the jumps provided several highlights. **James Grocock** was squeezed in to 2<sup>nd</sup> in the long jump despite a great 7.51m effort, which demonstrated that the club's success was achieved against genuinely strong opposition. B string jumpers **Calum Bressington** (3<sup>rd</sup> long jump) and **Chris Bull** (returning to form in the triple jump, 2<sup>nd</sup>) provided good back up. Vaulters **Luke Hodgetts** and **Richard Humby** soared to A and B string wins on a day not entirely conducive to catapulting oneself to the height of a first floor window with the aid of a stick of fibreglass.

The 4 x 100m relay team safely avoided the usual carnage associated with un-rehearsed sprint relay teams to finish a fast closing third. The 4 x 400m team brought a fitting end to the match with a dominant victory for **Ben Winstanley**, **Forman**, **Slade** (fastest split of 49.2) and **Bennett**.

The winning match score of 250.5 gave Southampton a commanding margin of 17.5 points over neighbours Bournemouth. It was a day when wherever one looked a red and white vest was in the thick of the action being cheered on by team mates. The team are now braced for a challenging 2<sup>nd</sup> fixture on 2<sup>nd</sup> July at Barnet Copthall with the prospect of absentees due to clashes with the English Schools and Island Games. This is a golden opportunity for athletes wanting to break into the British League to step up to the next level and maintain our gathering momentum. Contact the team manager **Todd Bennett** for details of the next match.