

## **Southampton AC: Southern Athletics League Champions 2011!**

In the first season of the mixed Southern Athletics League, Southampton AC have been crowned as undefeated champions.

Having won their first four matches, Southampton travelled to Luton eager to maintain their unbeaten record. Due to holidays and injuries nearly 50 regular choice athletes were unavailable for selection, but this did not dampen the spirits of the team and it is testament to the strength of the club that nearly every event was enthusiastically covered by athletes ranging from under 17 to over 50!

Up against home favourites Luton, Blackheath and Norwich, Southampton stormed to victory, eventually winning by 20 clear points. However, the winning margin belies the effort involved and couldn't have been achieved without the willingness of everyone to become a 'multi-eventer'.

Emily Newton, Becca Carozzi, Catriona Witcombe and Emily Jenkinson dominated in the sprints and relays, as well as earning valuable points in several field events. Whilst Anna Stevens and Phil Hume wrapped up all the throws.

Débutantes Bryony Osbourn (1500), Juanita Jordan (4x100 relay) and Paul Warn (2k steeplechase) impressed the management team with their commitment and are exciting prospects for next season.

At the other end of the age spectrum, veteran multi-event specialists Derek Warn and Mark West recorded lifetime bests despite the damp conditions. Warn pole vaulted 2.70m for the first time and West improved his long and triple jump marks.

David Bolton had an exhausting day on the track, excelling in the 100, 200, 400m and 4x100m relay before anchoring the team home in the 4x400m. Nick Hunt was equally impressive in all the jumps.

In the middle distance events, training partners Russ Osborn (800/1500) and Nicci Blandford (1500/3k) recorded a first and a second place each.

Team managers: Tim Hall, Derek Warn, Pete Wareing and Jon Tilt were delighted with the result and are already looking forward to next season.

"We have a lot of good young athletes coming through and a great group of coaches helping them grow. The club has had a fantastic year and will continue to build on this success" said club chairman Richard Pearson.

On Saturday, Southampton AC travel to Derby for their final British Athletics League match with promotion already secured. The following Sunday the Vets team travel to Ashford in Kent for their first appearance in the Southern Counties final.