



# Jubilant Johnson comes of age with European bronze

## Athletics

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**Newham & Essex Beagles look like they have unearthed another young star in the shape of Karl Johnson.**

Selected for the European under-18 Championships in Győr, Hungary, Johnson wore the Great Britain colours with distinction as he made his way into the final of the 400 metre hurdles.

Coached by former World Championship medalist Tony Jarrett, the Newham youngster has come of age over one lap at what was the biggest competition of his athletics career.

Johnson won his heat in 52.56 seconds and then won his semi-final with a new personal best of 51.88 to book a place in the final, which proved to be an incredible experience.

"I knew it was going to be a fast finish to the race because that's what happened in the semis," he said.

"I knew they were going to push me all the way. I knew I'd have to bring my best performance on the day if I was going to win a medal."

As they went down the final straight, two athletes pulled away to cross the line together, but Johnson held on for a brilliant bronze medal. What's more, his new personal best of 50.90 was the British under-18 record and placed him in an incredible ninth place in the senior UK rankings.

"Coming off the final hurdle, that's the hardest I've ever run off it," he added.

"I could see them all coming, but I couldn't finish fourth at a championships. I'm so happy to get my place on the podium."

The joint winners were Martin Fraysse of France and Daniel Huller from Hungary, as both clocked 50.63 seconds to share the gold medal.

It was a splendid performance from the Newham athlete and he looks to have a great future.



Karl Johnson was delighted to win a bronze medal at the European under-18 Championships in Hungary. Picture: BRITISH ATHLETICS

Another young Beagle who is looking for international success this week is Katie Head.

The hammer thrower has travelled to Tampere in Finland for the World Junior Championships.

Head has a personal best of

59.87 metres which she set back in May of this year.

Coached by her father Paul, who is a former international hammer thrower himself, she is ranked as number one in the UK for under-20 athletes.

The 18-year-old Beagle will

compete in the hammer qualifying event on Thursday, where she will hope to qualify for Saturday's final.

Newham & Essex Beagles have a great track record for success on the international stage and it looks like that is continuing.

## sport

### Leyton Orient

**Leyton Orient head coach Justin Edinburgh is looking forward to seeing how his team cope with the challenge of taking on Benfica B on Saturday evening (7.30pm kick-off), writes George Sessions.**

The O's landed in the Algarve on Monday afternoon ahead of a six-day training camp in Portugal, which will finish with a friendly against the prestigious side.

While Orient will not be playing the Benfica first-team, the 'B' side ply their trade in the division below the Champions League regulars and have produced several talented youngsters over the years.

In the current Benfica B team is Ola John, who has played on loan at Wolverhampton Wanderers and Reading, plus former Arsenal forward Chris Willock and both could line up against the O's this weekend in Albufeira.

Although it is a million miles away from what matches in the National League this season will be like, it will provide the squad with an unusual challenge.

"When you get the opportunity to go abroad and play one of their teams, you have to take it," said Edinburgh.

"It will bring something different to what we have to come up against week in, week out, so tactically, physically and mentally it will be a different challenge for us, but we will look forward to it."

After going toe-to-toe with Benfica B on Saturday, Orient will fly back to England on Sunday and get ready for their third pre-season game of the summer.

On Tuesday (July 17) they travel to National League South side East Thurrock United and another tough encounter can be expected at Rookery Hill in the 7.45pm clash.

The O's will play three clubs from the division below in pre-season with games coming up against Concord Rangers (July 21) and St Albans City (July 24) and Orient's head coach explained how each match is important.

Edinburgh added: "Everything we've done for this pre-season isn't done willy-nilly. We have thought about it. The fixtures we have are ones which will be testing and realistic to what we can expect to face in the season."

Orient were without Alex Lawless (hip), David Mooney (mouth) and new recruit Dale Gorman (ankle) for their 7-0 win at Harlow Town on Saturday.

Ex-S Stevenage midfielder Gorman is still a couple of weeks away from full fitness, but both Lawless and Mooney will aim to be back shortly.