

Superb second place start by Beagles' British League men

Athletics

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Newham & Essex Beagles made their best start in the British League Premier Division since they won the event as they finished a superb second in the opening fixture in Swansea.

And team manager Rowan Griffiths thinks they have a great chance of wresting the title from reigning champions Birchfield Harriers.

He said: "It was an excellent performance on the day, despite a number of gaps in the team.

"I think we were missing more than Birchfield were, with no-one in the steeplechase for example where we normally do well.

"We lost by 30-odd points, but with just a couple of athletes back, we would have made up those points and more.

"I really think we have a chance to win it this season. We have given ourselves a chance by finishing second instead of having to come back from fourth or fifth most seasons."

The Beagles were also lacking in their usually strong sprints, but it was in the field where they scored strongly.

"Emmanuel Stephens has damaged his quad and could be out for the whole season, while David Bolarinwa is not ready for outdoor running yet, but the guys who came in did okay," said Griffiths.

"We are very strong in the field events, with some excellent talent who scored heavily."

There was a fine double in the discus where George Armstrong won the A event with a throw of 56.96 metres, while Matthew Beatty added B honours with 50.68m.

Harry Hughes was impressive in winning the javelin with 74.34m and team-mate Joss Foot added B honours as well with 62.67,



George Armstrong made a winning start to this season's British League season.
Picture: CLAIRE JONES

beating his rivals by over 12 metres.

Jack Roach finished second in the long jump, but was unable to take part in the high jump, while Thomas Head was third in the hammer with Alex Warner finishing second in the B event.

New boy Jonathan Ross also had a good day.

Hailing from Atlanta originally, he is studying at the University of East London and won the sprint hurdles in 13.91, while he was also second in the B 400m hurdles.

Christian Von Eitzen also performed well with second in the A 800m, where Dan Mees won the B event, and he followed that up with victory in the B 1,500m.

Eoin Pierce won the A race and Griffiths has been impressed by his efforts, adding: "He has really improved over the winter. He is like a different athlete and training with Josh Trigwell has certainly helped him."

Trigwell finished fourth in the A 3,000m race, where Dale

Clutterbuck picked up maximum B points.

Youngster Emmanuel Sosanya had a good second in the B 400m, while the 4x400m relay team also stormed to victory and there is still room for improvement when the squad is boosted for the next match.

"Rabah Yousif sent us a message from Yokohama where he was in the World Relays, saying he will be back for the next meeting and we should have others back in the steeplechase, high jump and the sprints," said Griffiths.

"We were without Ben Snaith and Thomas Somers at the weekend and they would have scored plenty of points for us."

The next match is at Barnet on June 9.

Match result: Birchfield Harriers 349; BEAGLES 311.5; Harrow 293; Shaftesbury Barnet 257; Woodford Green 252; Cardiff 239; Blackheath & Bromley 228.5; City of Sheffield 227.

Athletics

There were medals galore for the Newham & Essex Beagles athletes who took part in the Essex Championships in Chelmsford at the weekend.

Leading the way were the young sprinters as Joel Pascal battled to wins and records in the 100 and 200 metres.

On day one, Pascal clocked 10.67 seconds for not only a personal best, but also a championship best and gold.

He followed that up on day two in the 200m where he managed another personal best of 21.71 for a second gold.

In the under-15s, Ossari Acquah won the 200m in style with a new best of 23.87, while for the girls, Aleeya Sibbons struck gold in the under-17 100m, in a new best of 12.08.

In the under-13s, Karis Wilson won a fine gold in the 100m with a new best of 13.52m, as Chenoa Acquah

claimed bronze.

Sariyah Shoyelu-Armstrong was second in the under-15 100m in a new best of 12.42, while there was a bronze for Dolita Awala-Shaw in the under-20 100m, in 12.15.

Nathaniel and Noah Hanson were in the medals too.

Nat won under-15 high jump gold with a leap of 1.65 metres, while he also won the long jump and took 300m silver.

Brother Noah claimed bronzes in the 80m hurdles and the 300m.

Christopher Thompson added an excellent long jump gold at under-13 level thanks to a personal best of 4.90m, while Aaron Ashmead-Shoye won the under-17 triple jump with a windy 14.6m.

It was an excellent championships for the young Beagles and bodes well for the summer.



Newham & Essex Beagles Joel Pascall won two sprint golds at the Essex Championships, while Aleeya Sibbons was also celebrating victory.



Bowls

Central Park had a tough week on the greens as they were thumped by North Greenwich and Silverthorn in different competitions.

Last Wednesday saw the first Cribbs Triples League match of the season, with Central losing out on all three rinks.

Ken Cutts, Pam Oldham and Dave Tydeman were leading 7-4 at one stage against John Crabb's North Greenwich trio.

But they lost 10 of the next 11 ends to lose out 21-8.

John Plunkett, Eddie Grigg and skip John Lapping were always chasing and though they won eight ends, they still lost 22-11.

On the other rink, Kevin Liffen's team raced into an 8-0 lead against Phil Davos, Sue Flynn and skip Jim Grummett.

Park hit back to get into the match, but in the end lost 20-14 to leave the final score at 63-33

with all eight points going to the visitors.

Saturday saw Silverthorn make the trip from Walthamstow for an Ilford & District League match and it proved another tough day.

Plunkett, John Lapping and Colin West trailed only 7-5 at one stage, before Barry Holbrook's boys battled home 18-12.

It was even closer on the next rink with Harry Morley, Grigg and skip Tracy Hicks handily placed at just 11-10 down after 13 ends.

But it was Silverthorn who held their nerve to run out 20-12 winners.

To round things off, Cutts and his team of Derek Oldham and Alan Dobson gave up a 7-5 lead as they lost the next seven ends and eventually went down 21-11 to leave the overall score at 59-35 and no points for Central Park again.

sport

Basketball

Vince Macaulay has scooped the honour of being crowned Molten Ed Percival BBL Coach of the Year after guiding London Lions to a historical and landmark campaign.

Macaulay, who also won the accolade more than a decade ago, delivered the first ever BBL Championship title in the history of the franchise,

completing a silverware double, with Lions having also landed the BBL Cup earlier in the campaign.

"I'm delighted to win the award - 11 years apart is quite a gap, but this is a reward for all my coaching staff, the players and our fans," Macaulay told BBL.org.uk.

"Winning the league is a huge achievement for us. The

improvement on last year, our highest finish, going one better, making it to those Finals, it's tremendous for London and I'm proud of everyone."

Macaulay, who also led his side to the BBL Trophy final, where they lost out to London City Royals, was the overwhelming winner in the race to secure the gong - dominating the votes cast by all BBL clubs.