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Athletics

After the euphoria of winning relay gold at the London 2017 World Championships, Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake quickly crashed to earth with a disappointingly lacklustre 200m performance at the Diamond League meet in Birmingham last Sunday, writes Ziad Chaudry.

It was just one race too many since the Worlds for the 23-year-old Newham & Essex Beagle, who faded to fifth spot in 20.46secs ahead of fellow relay world gold medalist Danny Talbot.

Turkey's world champion Ramil Guliyev finished strongly in the closing stages to claim a 20.17 second victory, ahead of American Ameer Webb (20.26) and Canada's Aaron Brown (20.30)

"That was a brutal race," admitted Mitchell-Blake, who said he will return to his training base at Louisiana State University, USA to get ready for next year's campaign. "Obviously the time wasn't that pleasing.

"It is an interesting one competing after a World Champs, but I just have to learn from it going forward. It has been a lot physically, but a lot emotionally too to recover from because there was a lot of energy used pre-champs and during the event. To get your energy levels back up ready to compete has been a challenge, but you want to do it for the fans more than anything.

"I may possibly do a few more races, I'm not sure as it has been a long season. I am going back to the US to train through the winter."

Mo Farah was Newham & Essex Beagles' only success in the Second City while the rest of his colleagues were all seemingly in the midst of a post-World Championship hangover.

Asha Philip, who picked up a relay silver in the women's 4x100m relay in London, was eliminated from her 100m heat, finishing sixth in 11.20.

And men's 4x400m relay bronze medalist Rabah Yousif finished a creditable third in the one-lap discipline, clocking a season's best 45.58 with fellow winning squad member Dwayne Cowan won.

Robbie Grabarz never got going during the men's high jump, managing 2.20m with London 2017 gold medalist Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim winning by a country mile with a world leading 2.40m.



Niall Flannery wins the 400m hurdles.



JJ Jegede is hanging up his spikes.

Beagles dreaming of the title after finishing runners-up in the British League standings

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Newham & Essex Beagles confirmed their place as runners-up in this year's British League, despite their depleted team having to settle for third place in the final match.

Birchfield Harriers won the match and took the title after triumphing in all four matches this season, but Beagles team manager Rowan Griffiths believes they can challenge next summer.

"I think we would have taken second place at the beginning of the season and there have been so many plus points this summer," said Griffiths.

"Birchfield have been consistent and solid all season. They had 29 athletes in Barnet on Sunday compared to our 22 and that was the difference I think.

"But I think if we can get our jumpers sorted for next season we can challenge them.

"Unfortunately Matt Roberts is having to give up through injury and JJ Jegede thinks he is too old, so we will look to replace them."

There were some good displays on the day with Niall Flannery leading the way with victory in the 400m hurdles as well as coming second in the sprint hurdles and helping the relay team to second place.

"Niall has not had a great season, but he is always there for us," said Griffiths. "He scored us a lot of points and now I think he is going to go away and build up



Mayo Osunsami of Newham & Essex Beagles in the sprint.

Pictures: CLAIRE JONES

over the winter to try and get his times back to where they were.

"There was no pressure on us so we had a relaxing day. The youngsters did really well. Emmanuel Sosanya has been running in the British League since he was 16 and he is experienced now, so when he stepped in for Rabah Yousif, he was certainly not overawed," said Griffiths.

"David Bolarinwa was not happy with his times in the sprints, but he still ran Leon Reid close in both of them."

Beagles finished behind

Birchfield and rivals Woodford Green on the day, but the manager was happy.

"I am really pleased," he said. "We have the basis of a good team and if we can improve over the winter then we can really have a go."

Griffiths also had some words for former coach Bob Smith, who died earlier in the month.

"I felt Bob was there in spirit on Sunday," he said. "There was a minute's applause for him and I think it would be a fitting tribute if we can go and win the league next year in his honour."

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Karl Johnson of Newham & Essex Beagles.

Newham & Essex Beagles grabbed three brilliant gold medals at the South of England under-15/under-17 Championships at Crystal Palace over the weekend.

Dolita Shaw led the way at under-17 level as she won a gold and a silver in the sprints with some superb runs.

In the shorter sprint, Shaw was second in her heat in 12.47 seconds, before moving up a gear to win her semi-final in 12.24.

And she improved that still further in the final where she clocked 12.21 to grab the silver medal.

Shaw also lined up in the 200m where she faired even better. Having won her heat in 25.20, she then stormed to victory in the final where she clocked a new personal best of 24.99 for gold.

Karl Johnson was in dominant mood in the under-17 400m hurdles where his gold-medal winning time of 54.36 was almost three seconds clear of his nearest rival.

The gold trail was completed by Jerome Henry who won the high jump with a leap of 1.82metres and was also third in the long jump.

Dennis Jefia was sixth in the final of the under-17 100m in a time of 11.39, while Rotimi Osunsami just missed a medal in the sprint hurdles, finishing fourth.

Others in action were Emmanuel Oke who was fifth in the triple jump, with Kwame Piesie in seventh, while Mya Miller-Thomas made the semis in the under-15 100m.

In the 200m, Ada Okuguni, and Sherelle Dalling both made the semis, where they were eighth and seventh respectively.