



Newham & Essex Beagles women face the camera at their UK League meeting in Sheffield. Picture: NEB

Ohuruogu has a last hurrah with Beagles; men's team hand Harriers a rare defeat

The UK Women's League match in Sheffield proved to be an emotional one for the Newham & Essex Beagles as former World and Olympic champion Christine Ohuruogu returned to where it all started.

The 34-year-old recently announced her retirement from the sport, but could not resist one last hurrah with the club where she grew up before conquering the world.

For Beagles coach Tim Mundle it was certainly an emotional day.

"I have to admit there was a little tear in my eye," he said. "She was just one of the girls again. She came on the coach, she ate breakfast with the rest and she was laughing and joking with them. It was fantastic to see."

"She spoke to me about six

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weeks ago about doing one last run for us, so I let her know when this one was and when I heard her sister Victoria was running I thought she'd come along too.

The former Olympic 400m champion ran the anchor leg of the 4x400m relay to complete her Beagles career and though the team didn't win, it was a suitable swansong.

"I think everyone in the crowd knew what was happening and they gave her a big round of applause," said Mundle.

It was a day of returning athletes with Demi Bromfield coming down on the train from Lancaster where she has just completed her degree to take part for the first time in two years.



Christine Ohuruogu with her 4x400m relay team-mates. Picture: NEB

The javelin star threw an excellent 39.26 metres for second and was delighted on her return.

Kirsty Smith is another who has been away and so her win in the B triple jump with 11.05 metres was a great result as Victoria Oshunremi was third in the A string.

Katie Head returned close to her best in the hammer with third place after the disappointment of the English Championships, while there were second and third places in the high jump for Stephanie Ugbo and Lucy Gascoyne.

Finette Agyapong is off to the European Championships in Berlin this week, but she was in Sheffield to complete a sprint double in 11.55 in the 100m and a league record of 22.14 in the 200m.

Victoria Ohuruogu won the 400m in 54.91, while there was a surprise for Mundle in the 1,500m as new athlete Katie Thornberry came home in first place.

"I can't remember the last time we won a 1,500m," he said. "We were missing a few like Grace Jenkins on the day, so we could have got more points, but all in all I was pleased."

"Shelley Jameson always tells me she is not good enough, but she picked up six valuable points and Adele Stach-Kevitz came down from Glasgow on the day, competed in three events and got back on the train again."

"It is that sort of team spirit that is so important and to see Christine as part of that again was fantastic."

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Newham & Essex Beagles finished their British League season in style on Saturday as they stormed to victory at Barnet, writes Dave Evans.

It was the first time champions Birchfield Harriers had been beaten in three seasons and showed just how much potential this Beagles squad has.

"I think we have turned the corner," said team manager Rowan Griffiths.

"The plan was to target Thames Valley and Cardiff to stay ahead of them, so I am delighted with the win. Everybody came together and got us the points."

"We seemed to be in front whenever the scores were announced, but I still didn't think we would win it until the end."

There were excellent performances on the day, with important wins and plenty of second and third places to keep piling up the points.

"There was a superb personal best in the 400m metres for Thomas Somers, while Jack Roach won the long jump and then ran to the other end of the field to do the high jump – he seems to enjoy that event even more," added Griffiths.

"Jayme Rossiter and Rory Chesser raced each other in the steeplechase and ran away from the field for a double, while Niall Flannery said to me before the meeting that he was happy to do any event and that was just brilliant for

us."

There were wins on the day for Matt Baptiste in the B discus and Alex Warner in the B hammer, while it proved to be a remarkable day for Marlon Hogg-Williams.

"We put him in the B 200m to ease him in and he went and won it from lane one which is not easy," said Griffiths.

"Then he anchored the relay team to another victory. It is not many athletes who can claim two wins on their British League debut."

It has certainly been a promising season for the Beagles with some fine contributions from a number of new athletes.

"I think George Armstrong in the discus has been superb," said Griffiths. "He won the English Championships last week with a massive personal best and though he was coming down from that this week, he still scored some good points."

"He and Jack Roach have been excellent all season."

Victory on the day means the Beagles finished fourth overall for the season.

"We are on the up," said Griffiths. "We are a little short in the jumps, so if we can find a couple more people during the winter then we could challenge."

Match score: Newham & Essex Beagles 356; Birchfield 321; Woodford Green 315; Shaftesbury 304; Thames Valley Harriers 260; Cardiff 269; Sheffield 222; Swansea 130.



Newham & Essex Beagles' Thomas Somers set a 400m personal best in the British League. Picture: NEB