

WIMBORNE AC NEWS Spring 2020

FROM THE CHAIRMAN Jason Hall

Well I never thought that we would find ourselves in a situation like we are facing today across the entire globe. We certainly are living in difficult times and I'm sure you would all agree that our thoughts must be with those in real difficulty and those worried for the health of their loved ones. As an athletics club we have always pulled together no matter what the circumstances and it has been so nice to see this continuing during the COVID-19 shutdown. There are plenty of suggestions for how to keep fit on our Facebook pages and even though we cannot meet up face to face we are certainly keeping in touch on social media.

As we receive news of the progress of COVID-19 and any additional restriction, but also when we see things returning to normal, we will make sure everyone is kept up to date on the latest advice from the government and athletic organisations. We will do this via social media and occasional updates to all like additional news letters to all. The important point to remember through all of this is that the health and safety of our athletes, coaches, helpers and all of their families will always be our number one priority.

Remember you are not trapped at home....you are safe at home.... and if you have any suggestions for keeping us all going in these exceptional circumstance please share them.

On a slightly lighter note, I'm not normally one for taking too much notice of Horoscopes. However, I have just seen this one and can't believe how accurate it is!

Look after yourselves and keep safe.



ROAD RUNNING *Nick Solomon*

It seems a world away, but back in November we staged the 22nd Wimborne 10. Almost 500 runners from all over Dorset and beyond gathered at Pamphill Green to be sent off by a musket salvo from the Wimborne Militia.

This year we also staged a 1 mile wheelchair sprint on the closed section of road. There was a closely fought battle between the two competitors Chris Feeley and George Fripp with Chris eventually taking the honours.

In the main race the first runner home was Chris Alborough of Poole AC in a time of 0:54:24 and the first lady was Charlotte Bunch of Poole Runners in a time of 1:04:56. The first WAC man was Damian Huntingford and first WAC lady was Sarah Orr.

Each year we make a donation from the race entries to a charity and this year we were able to donate £1500 to Gogirls a charity that supports women with gynaecological cancers

No sooner had the signs and equipment been put away but planning started for our next event the Wimborne20. This is a gruelling three lap course around Gaunts Common and has been billed as a training run for London or spring marathon.

The event was held on March 1st. In the run up to the race several other races had been cancelled because of the weather. This resulted in a flurry of late entries and number changes as competitors sought a suitable race to finalise their training plans. In 2017 we had to cancel our race because of snow and in 2018 it nearly became a duck race due to the torrential downpours but this year we were greeted with blue sky and near perfect race conditions. The race was won by Joseph Donworth of Frome Running Club in a time of 2:00:28 and the first lady was Susan Duncan of Weston AC.

The road runner's awards evening was held in January and three of the awards are nominated and voted for by our members. The winners this year were Julie Gosling who won the Frampton Cup, Chris Heckford who won the Road Master Award and Chris Wood who won the Marathon Award.

Chris Wood broke the club marathon record in April and again in October. You can read his story of his record breaking exploit on the website: <https://www.wimborneac.co.uk/chris-wood-breaks-his-marathon-club-record/>

Normally at this time of year we are gearing up to spring marathons and an array of half marathons, 10k and other races. With the current Coronavirus restrictions all events in the coming weeks are either cancelled or postponed. Nonetheless people are finding novel ways to maintain their fitness despite the restrictions imposed upon them the latest being The Garden Marathon – 1000 laps around this course. Any takers?



ENDURANCE : CROSS-COUNTRY & INDOORS *Ian Kennedy*

Our cross-country season kicked off on the last weekend in September. Up until Christmas-time the main focus were league races (both Wessex and Hampshire), once into the new year the major championship races were upon us. In the Wessex League we had two champions – Minty Stubbs (U20) and Damian Huntingford (Vet), there was silver for Ben Martin (U17) and bronze for Evie Fuller (U11) and Charlie Davies (U17). Team-wise the under-13 boys and under-17 men were Wessex League Champions with our under-15 girls and veteran men claiming silver, whilst bronze went to under-11 boys and girls and under-15 boys. A fantastic 38 WAC athletes finished in point-scorer positions for the teams that made the podium in the Wessex League. In the bigger pond of the Hampshire League it was an excellent year for our under-17 men where they were the third placed team.

The County Championships took place at Canford in December and 50 WAC athletes competed. We have two county champions Emily Shaw (U17) and Alice Sullivan (U20). An incredible 700+ young athletes took part in the Dorset Schools Championships. Once again Emily Shaw was county champion, and there were medals also for Holly Nixon (silver) plus Toby Butt and Marianna Sawyer (both bronze). From there some 23 WACers were selected to represent Dorset at the the South West Schools Championships. During this period Grace Copeland recorded the highest placing yet by any Wimborne athlete at the prestigious British Universities & College Sports Championships which took place in Edinburgh. Meanwhile Emily Shaw was 3rd at the South of England Championships and 4th at the 'Nationals'. Just six girls were to be selected to represent England at the World Schools Cross Country Championships in Slovakia, Emily's consistent performances earned her a call up. Sadly the World Cross Country Cup has fallen victim to cancellations brought on by the coronavirus. The cross-country season concluded in Dorset colours with the Inter-County Championships and the English Schools Championships over consecutive weekends. At the Inter-Counties 17 WACers were selected and competed, while at English Schools, where there were less age-groups, 12 took part.

Coronavirus also put paid to the end of season cross-country awards night. We have the trophies and they will be presented when the opportunity arises. A good number will receive Fidelity Awards for taking part in all the Wessex or Hampshire league races, those who managed all league races will get Super Fidelity. Our trophy winners are: Female Rookie of the Year – Isla O'Connor; Male Rookie of the Year – Tom Jackson (with an honourable mention also to Alex Kobayashi); Most Improved Female – Birdie Payne (honourable mentions to Evie Fuller and Imogen Rawles); Most Improved Male – Toby Butt (honourable mentions to Jay Dunn, Ollie Green and Jack Williams); Outstanding Female – Emily Shaw and Outstanding Male – Ben Martin (honourable mentions to Harry Butcher and Damian Huntingford). Team Of The Year goes to our under-17 men of Charlie Davies, Tom Fuller, Joel Green, Seth Lake, Ben Martin and Ollie Rawles. The Jean Frost Trophy is presented for outstanding contribution to the cross-country team and this year it goes to the Doran family. Seamus had not only earned Super Fidelity but had also taken on team management responsibilities by the end of the season, while Jack was our only under-13 boy to earn fidelity in the Wessex League.

Largely due to the performances of Piers Copeland, watching middle distance indoors over the winter has been thrilling. His big aim this year was to make the World Indoor Championships in China. This proved to be one of the earliest sporting fixtures to be cancelled due to the coronavirus. Any fears that Piers might lose his focus were quickly dispelled when he won over 1500m in Dortmund with a swashbuckling last lap bringing him victory (on paper he'd been a rank outsider). A week later he was competing in a high-class international field at the World Indoor Tour in Glasgow. He PBed here with a WAC club record (3:38.81) and was the best of the Brits. It was great to be able to watch this live on BBC1. This race places Piers 3rd on the UK 'All Time' list for an under-23 for an indoors 1500m. He is currently ranked No. 1 in the UK overall for the 1500 indoors. On the UK 'All Time' overall indoors 1500m list Piers squeaks into the top 20 at No. 18, just ahead of Mo Farah (19), Mo recorded his time in Olympic year, 2012. He wasn't done yet, Piers was in action a week later over 800m at the British Championships also in Glasgow. He had a tough qualifying draw, but he won his heat ahead of eventual champion Guy Learmonth. The final the following day was a dramatic affair with Piers' race being compromised by a faller. Despite this he was still able to claim the bronze medal and another PB and club record of 1:47.21. That same day Maddy Johnson was competing indoors in Sheffield where she won silver in the England Athletics U20 Championships over 1500m.

There were records broken elsewhere too by Endurance Squad members. On 4 January Grace Copeland lowered her own club record for a park run to 17:02 (at Poole), a fantastic achievement as she had not logged a result since May 2019 due to injury. Her brother Piers got in on the act at Cardiff on 14 March where he ran the fastest PB of the day in the UK with a time of 14:54, further strengthening his grip on the WAC parkrun club record. The weekend of 14/15 March proved to be the last weekend of sporting fixtures prior to the shutdown brought on by the coronavirus. There was still time for one more club record, on Sunday 15 March Alice Sullivan smashed her own PB by

more than three minutes at the Bath Half Marathon to claim the WAC club record for the first time, her time 1:31:58. All in all it's been an extraordinary winter for the Endurance Squad.

The COVID-19 restrictions have put paid to club group sessions for the time being. The WAC Endurance Squad has been working hard to maintain its fitness ready for when competition returns. There has been a greater concentration on strength and conditioning, which is relatively easy to do at home, and we have been writing sessions for squad members to do on their own. One of the sessions we have employed is a 3km time trial, we have two venues for this, Bytheway Field in Wimborne and Stour Meadows in Blandford where the squad members go down as individuals at a time that suits them. Athletes record times on the 3km courses and are then given a time handicap. This makes it possible for anyone in the squad, regardless of age or gender, to come out on top. Piers Copeland, now a Nike-sponsored athlete, has put up prizes for the top runner at both Blandford and Wimborne of brand new Nike running tops. We are very grateful to Piers for this tremendous act of kindness and generosity. Thank you Piers, it is very much appreciated.

SPORTSHALL *Paula Hine*

As the Sportshall Athletics season has now drawn to a close it is time to report on the highlights from both the three league meetings and the county championships. All of the matches have taken place locally at the Canford School on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Sportshall has a reputation for being loud and chaotic but FUN, and this season has proved to be no different. Over fifty young WACers have competed and many have joined the club and worn the red vest for the first time. It is important at this stage to recognise and thank the team managers, officials and parent helpers who have made this season possible.

Despite Athletics being predominantly an individual sport, I see Sportshall as very much a team event. As team manager I strive to cover all the events at every match with the athletes who are available to compete on the day. To this end, despite very strong opposition from Bournemouth AC this season, I am pleased to announce that Wimborne are indeed winners of the league in all four categories boys and girls under 11 and under 13 age groups. The strong and committed under 13 boys squad won every match and never looked like losing. The under 13 girls squad won match 1 and 3 with a slight blip in match 2 just before Christmas when many were not available to compete. Both the boys and the girls under 11 teams were second in the first match of the season but went on to win match two and three as more athletes joined the squad and practice at training started to pay off. Sportshall Athletics is such a great introduction to our sport and I have been delighted to see so many young WACers enjoying the competing experience. Well done Wimborne!

January saw the Sportshall county championships and as a club we had a few outstanding performances that need to be recognised. Starting with the under

13 boys' team it is Woody Van Der Feltz who kicked us off with a win in both the 2 lap and 4 lap races. Alfie Fry and Jack Jones were just behind him in second place in the 2 lap and 4 laps respectively. The boys 4x2lap relay team, Lucien Booth, Jack Jones, Joe Ruscoe and Alfie Fry were also winners. In the field we had no champions but four boys gained second place honours: Woody in speed Bounce, Alfie in Long Jump, Lucien in Triple Jump and Jack in Vertical Jump.

With the under 13 girls it was in the field that we had our best results. Lola Sainsbury continued her unbeaten run with a win by over a metre in the shot putt event. She was ably supported by newcomer Mollie Gennard who finished third. Eva Welstead bounced her way to a win in the speed jumping event as well as second place in the triple jump. Hermione Callaghan and Brooke Williams finished a very credible joint third in the vertical jump event. On the track Isabelle Hawker continued her fine performances in the 4 lap event this season with a second place in the 4 lap event. Eva Welstead was unfortunate not to make the final of the 2 lap event, through no fault of her own an error with the results prevented this from happening, she was however correctly awarded third place overall from the time she ran in the heats. Our relay team also went on to win the 4x 2lap race – congratulations to the girls: Martha Dewar- Cutts, Isabelle Hawker, Lola Richardson and Eva Welstead.

I am delighted to report that in the under 11,s over /under relays where the athletes run over hurdles and under tunnels the enthusiasm for this exciting and fun event meant that Wimborne AC were able to enter two boys and two girls teams and we finished first and second in both – undoubtedly the highlight of the afternoon for me. It is in the field events that the under 11's had their best results. In the boys' speed bounce event Harry Ryan and Leo Welstead were first and second respectively. The balance beam proved to be a highly successful event for our club with James Fleming winning the boys event with a maximum possible score, Florence Van Der Feltz and promising young newcomer Elsie Gray also finishing first and second in the girls competition. Nicholas Leung had a fine third performance in the target throw event, Elsie Walker came fourth in the chest push and Jenny Charlwood was fourth in the soft javelin event.

A number of our young athletes were selected to represent Dorset in the regional championships in Torbay in March. Esther Brooks, Finlay Carvell, Harry Ryan, Finn Richardson, Leo Welstead, Woody Van Der Feltz, Max Chater, Alfie Fry, Jack Jones, Eva Welstead, Hermione Callaghan, Lola Sainsbury, Isabelle Hawker, Lola Richardson and Jakob Roberts. Unfortunately but understandably this event was one of the first to be cancelled in the Athletics calendar.

Here's to the next Sportshall Season!!