

WIMBORNE A.C. NEWS



Spring/Summer 2021

ATHLETICS RETURNS *Glyn Davies*

Well, the good news is that we are back training again, albeit within the current covid guidelines. Judging by the feedback from coaches, athlete attendances have been very encouraging and the weather has been in our favour in April. We are operating a number of sessions both at QE Leisure Centre and Blandford, details of which can be found on our website www.wimborneac.co.uk. If you are in any doubt about the content or suitability of a particular session, please email the appropriate coach for further information.

For the time being please ensure you continue to book into each session and take suitable precautions regarding covid regulations. Each session is £2 regardless of venue and group.

We thought it might be useful to reiterate the age groups of athletes which will also provide a pointer as to which competitions/leagues they are eligible to participate in (the cut off age date is 31 August).

Under 11 = school years 4 & 5

Under 15 = school years 8 & 9

Under 13 = school years 6 & 7

Under 17 = school years 10 & 11

TRACK & FIELD FIXTURES AND COMPETITIONS

The table below is compiled from the current information available but be aware that some diary dates are provisional due to the ever-changing regulations.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event/League</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>Team</i>
29/30 May	EA Combined Events Champs	Bedford	U20/Seniors	
12/13 June	South of England Champs	TBA	U20/Seniors	
13 June	Wessex Young Athletes League	Swindon	U11-U17	Wimborne AC
19 June	Dorset Schools Champs	King's Park	Various	School
19/20 June	England Athletics U20/U23 Champs	Bedford	U20/U23	
20 June	Southern Athletics League	Yeovil	U17 to seniors	Team Dorset*
26 June	Dorset County Champs	King's Park	U17 to vets	
27 June	Youth Development League (Upper)	Guildford	U17/U20	Team Dorset*
3 July	Dorset County Champs	King's Park	U13/U15	
4 July	South West League	Yeovil	U13 to seniors	Wimborne AC
9 July	English Schools Champs (Seniors)	Manchester	Years 12/13	Dorset
10 July	English Schools Champs (Inters)	Manchester	Years 10/11	Dorset
11 July	English Schools Champs (Juniors)	Manchester	Years 8/9	Dorset
11 July	Wessex Young Athletes League	Winchester	U11s to U17s	Wimborne AC
17 July	Youth Development League (Lower)	King's Park	U13/U15	Team Dorset*
17/18 July	England Athletics Senior Champs	Bedford	Seniors	
25 July	Youth Development League (Upper)	Winchester	U17/U20	Team Dorset*
1 August	South West League	Yeovil	U13 to seniors	Wimborne AC
7/8 August	England Athletics Champs	Manchester	U15/U17	
14 August	Southern Athletics League	King's Park	U17 to seniors	Team Dorset*
21/22 August	South of England Champs	Kingston	U13/U15/U17	
28/29 August	English Combined Events	Manchester	U15/U17	
29 August	South West League	Yeovil	U13 to seniors	Wimborne AC
4 September	Youth Development League (Lower)	Portsmouth <i>tbc</i>	U13/U15	Team Dorset*
5 September	Youth Development League (Upper)	King's Park	U17/U20	Team Dorset*
11 September	Southern Athletics League	Salisbury	U17 to seniors	Team Dorset*
19 September	Wessex Young Athletes League	Basingstoke	U11 to U17	Wimborne AC
25 September	South West League	Yeovil <i>tbc</i>	U13 to seniors	Wimborne AC
26 September	South West League	Exeter <i>tbc</i>	U13 to seniors	Wimborne AC

* Team Dorset fixtures consist of athletes from an amalgamation of local clubs. They are Poole AC, Poole Runners, Dorchester AC and Weymouth & St Pauls Harriers and ourselves.

VOLUNTEERS *Glyn Davies*

As ever, and especially when we are taking teams to competitions, any help you can offer e.g., pit raking, etc., is greatly appreciated and takes the weight off the coaches. We have been informed that matches may not actually proceed if there are insufficient officials/helpers to cover key duties. Thanks.

MEMBERSHIP *Glyn Davies*

The situation on membership has been a little disjointed because of the timings and duration of the lockdown periods. If you are in any doubt regarding your membership status please email Richard Nunn at richardnunn@talktalk.net. Please be reminded that to be fully insured for WAC sessions and to compete for either the club or Team Dorset, you need to be a member.

THE UNDER-11s SESSIONS *Paula Hine*

The under-11s have once again returned to training since lockdown with great enthusiasm and commitment from both the coaches and the athletes. The sessions are proving to be more popular than ever and the waiting lists are getting longer. We are delivering two sessions a week, on a Wednesday evening from 6.00 to 7.00pm, and on a Saturday morning from 9.15am to 11.00am.

We are currently preparing the children for some Quad Kids events this season where they compete in a 75m sprint, 600m run, long jump and a vortex throw. As more and more of our athletes become members of the club I am hoping that a number of them will get the opportunity to compete this summer.

We have a friendly and committed team of coaches working with the under-11s, but if there are any parents out there who can spare a few hours a week and would like to come and join us please don't hesitate to come and speak to me at the end of a session or drop me an email.

WAC! We are superstars!

ENDURANCE SQUAD ROUND-UP *Ian Kennedy*

We've just passed the first anniversary of the first of the covid lockdowns and, with the aid of widespread vaccination and lateral flow tests, slowly things are opening up again. The date of the initial lockdown sticks in my memory clearly as the last weekend of full competition prior to it was the English Schools Cross Country Championships in Liverpool where a number of Wimborne AC athletes represented Dorset. Since then there have been sporadic returns to action in some form or other as restrictions have eased at various times. While we head into the 2021 track and field season with some constraints still in place we are looking forward to a much fuller summer of competition than last year. Locally the season has kicked off with open meetings at Yeovil, and the 'sold out' notices in advance of those events are an indication that the athletics community is up for it. I've been hugely impressed by our athletes' commitment to training even when there was such limited opportunity to compete. Finally our athletes have the chance to show what they can do again.

This year's English Schools Cross Country Championships took place between 15 and 28 March as a 'virtual' event. It wasn't just covid that made it an extraordinary year, it was also the results of the Dorset athletes. From a team point of view, over the six age-groups Dorset have come second in England (*only London did better* ... they'll have a bigger pool of athletes!). Dorset finished a top 10 county in every age-group, and in five out of six of those we were top five! This included a win for the Senior Girls' team (half of that team's scorers were Wimborne AC athletes). Wimborne's best individual performance came from Emily Shaw who was second Senior Girl nationally. In the Inter Girls event Wimborne's Birdie Payne, Sarah Graham and Anabel Townhill were Dorset's top three. Here's how our athletes placed within the Dorset results: *Junior Girls*: 4th Isla O'Connor, 5th Evie Fuller, 8th Imogen Rawles; *Junior Boys*: 1st Jack Williams, 6th Toby Butt, 9th Joe Ruscoe; *Inter Girls*: 1st Birdie Payne, 2nd Sarah Graham, 3rd Anabel Townhill, 8th Lauren Hancock, 9th Selene Corran, 14th Charlotte Wordsworth, 16th Hebe Hunter; *Inter Boys*: 4th Jay Dunn; *Senior Girls*: 1st Emily Shaw, 4th Sophie Cook, 5th Harriett Townhill, 8th Emily Wood; *Senior Boys*: 1st Ollie Rawles, 4th Tom Fuller. Very well done to our athletes, but also well done to Dorset Schools Athletics Association, its team manager Gavin Rusling, and many of the county's schools for their commitment to the competition.



British Athletics/Getty Images

In the past year athletics at an elite level has, for the most part, been able to continue ... naturally with extra restrictions in place. This has enabled Wimborne AC's Piers Copeland to compete ... he's certainly made the most of the opportunities laid before him. As we headed into 2021 Piers targetted the European Athletics Indoor Championships, he headed off to Manchester Sportcity on 13 February where he secured a place in the UK's top 20 'All Time' list for 1500m indoors. A week later, also at Sportcity, he won the 1500m British Indoors Selection Trials. On 4 March Piers was in Poland where more than 50 of Europe's best athletes were vying for a place in the 1500m final. He knew that a top two place in the qualifying heats would guarantee safe passage to the final. He claimed second in a 1500m qualifying heat which was the fastest in the history of the European Indoor Championships. His time was also faster than that of the winners from the other heats. Piers recorded a highly creditable 5th place finish in the final on what was his debut at senior level for Team GB (he's still only 22 years-old).

So what are Piers' Olympic prospects? His current best time for the 1500m is three-tenths of a second shy of a Team GB 1500m qualifying time for the Olympics in Tokyo. In the UK, the men's 1500m is enjoying a renaissance and is now one of Team GB's strongest events, so the competition for the team places is intense. This is illustrated by the fact that the times Piers has already recorded would have given him a qualifying time for both London in 2012 and Rio in 2016, but he'll need to find a little more in order to get to Japan. In the coming weeks he's competing in meetings that give him the chance of recording the time he needs, the first of these is the Diamond League meeting in Gateshead on 23 May. If Piers does make the time he will then also need to finish in the first three at the British Championships at the end of June. It's an exciting prospect that we have a Wimborne athlete this close to making an Olympics, but you have to go back to the glory days of men's British middle distance running in the 1970s/1980s to find such strength in depth for Britain in the men's 1500, so the challenge Piers faces remains a formidable one.

Go Piers! Go Wimborne!!

ROADRUNNING Nick Solomon

The WAC roadrunners are back training at their summer venue of Pamhill on Thursday nights. Competitive events are few and far between with race organisers reverting to virtual events while covid restrictions limit mass starts. However some regular local events are planned over the coming months such as Puddletown Plod, New Forest Marathon, Sturminster Newton Half Marathon and the Upton House Summer Series. It is also anticipated that parkrun events will recommence from June 5th.