Erith KYAL Under 15 Boys Match Report

Team Blackheath and Bromley brightened the most overcast of days, by maintaining their lead in the Kent Young Athletes League at Erith Stadium. The team performance further demonstrated the strength and depth that is now building. A number of athletes made their debuts for the team.

There was one last minute selection headache however. Dave and Hanna would not be available to put up the Blackheath tent. A substitute team was hastily put together, and the Austridge family in an effort worthy of the A-Team got out the duct tape and got to work erecting the team shelter, Paul Patten making useful observations throughout. 42 minutes and 3 sore thumbs later HQ was set up and we were in business.

The KYAL is our development league and there are two great features of the league besides the opportunity to compete. Before the meeting starts coaches offer their services in selected events to give athletes a teach in. Paul Patten hosted the long jump class, and there were classes offered in sprint starts and shot put. The second great feature is the way the league encourages non-scorers, we took full advantage of this fielding extra athletes in the 800m, Long Jump, Hammer and Walk. All day in a small room above the stadium a dedicated team of officials work to collate times, register non scoring athletes, facilitate name changes, and even weigh equipment such as shot and hammer. This dedication allows our young athletes to achieve so much, and their work needs recognition. A thank you to you Wendy, and please pass one on to Brian and the team.

Once the coaching was complete, the first event was the Shot Put. Charlie Short and Frankie Scrivener with new techniques fresh in their ears provided 18 points to the team. Frankie’s best effort of 6.87m landed him 3rd in the A string. Charlie Short recorded 5.30m to finish second in the Bs. It was also Frankie’s debut at the event.

Meanwhile on the track two more debuts were about to be made for the team in the 80m hurdles. Charlie Scrivener was narrowly beaten into 4th in the A string despite a valiant sprint for the line (15.6). Lewis Stickings keeping up the family hurdling tradition with a 4th in the B string (16.1). The hurdlers added 13 points to the team total.

Back at HQ, however, a crisis was developing. A chronic shortage of pins. This would be tested to the limit by the next track event: the 2km walk. Blackheath very nearly came away with maximum points. Sporting their extra number: the walkers made their way to the start. The boys set off at a terrific pace, acting as a group. A strong finish saw Charlie Short home in 14:09.2, Lewis Warren in 14:10.1 and Harrison Parker in 14:10.5. The walkers added 22 points to the team total.

All the while competition in the U13 girls high jump was intense. So much so that events in the field began to over run. The under 15 boys High Jump which had meant to commence at noon didn’t really get started til nearer 1pm. It was a small blessing that the High Jump was located next to the throwing cage, as Henry-James Cowie could move between the High Jump and Hammer. However it meant that he had to sacrifice his High Jump spikes. The Jumpers also had to contend with an oversize opposition shot putter who insisted on scissoring the bar all the way up to 1.45m. In spite of this set back the Jumpers earned 17 points for the team, Coleman Corry finishing 2nd in the As, setting a new PB (1.50m). Henry-James’ 1.35m placed him 4th in the Bs.

In the Hammer James Lancaster and Henry-James Cowie took maximum points for Blackheath and Bromley. James’ best throw of 40.28m winning the As, Henry-James won the Bs with a distance of 26.29m. 24 points added to the team.

With events on an even keel in the field, at the track the 100m was about to start but the fastest man in the team was stuck in traffic! A quick reordering of numbers saw Harry Taylor step up to the A string, and Frankie Scrivener move to B. Harry came 4th in the As in 12.7, Frankie came 3rd in the Bs in 13.1. Together adding 13 points to the team total. Heartbreaking for Adefela on the one hand, but a relief to arrive to see his team mates do so well.

Back at HQ the pin situation was getting dire. It was heartening to see team members, boys and girls, mums and dads, coaches and managers, helping the athletes make do with what was available.

Over at the cage James Lancaster and Charlie Short were back on duty in the Discus. They took home 18 points between them, James 2nd in the As with 27.28m, Charlie 3rd in the Bs in 14.09 (scarily similar to his time for the walk). Charlie missed out on 2nd place by 1cm….!

In the 200m the boys added 12 to the team total, Harry Taylor 4th in the As in 26.3, Charlie Scrivener making his 200m debut came 5th in the Bs in 28.4, and Callum Myatt 3rd in the Cs in 30.80.

In the Long Jump Coleman Corry and Harry Keene were joined by non scorers Henry-James Cowie (4.94m), Lewis Warren (3.35m) and Lewis Stickings (3.71m). The Long Jump team added 9 points to the total. Coleman 6th in the As (4.14m), Harry Keene 5th in the Bs (3.37m). All the Long Jumpers were involved in the next two track events the 800m and 4 x 100m relay, and I have to thank the mums and dads at the pit who helped get everyone where they needed to be and back again during a hectic half hour for British sport!

For the 800m a large crowd had congregated around the Blackheath tent. In the main race Callum Myatt and Harry Keene lined up, men among giants. One of the features of the age group, competitors can be bigger than you, much bigger than you. However, no one quite has a stride like Callum Myatt, honed over a winter of park running (when it wasn’t flooded), and we know the Keene family has form. Callum (2:31.8) and Harry (2:38.7) blazed around the track earning 11 points for the team.

In the 4x100m regulars Henry-James Cowie, Harry Taylor and Adefela Lipede were joined by debutant Lewis Stickings. The boys ran a fantastic race, which was thrilling all the way to the tape. Finishing in the same time as the eventual winners 51.9, the relay runners were sadly denied first place, but still provided the team with 12 points.

25 points were provided to the team by the work done by our officials. A really big thank you to them. This placed the team 2nd overall on the day, being pipped by Medway and Maidstone by just 2 points. However the team’s margin (combined with U13 boys) over the series has now grown into a lead of 34 points over 2nd placed Tonbridge.

The next match in the KYAL is at Norman Park on Sunday the 15th of June. Hopefully with "home advantage" we can increase this margin further. We will need to, as the final match in the series at Gillingham on the 6th of July coincides with the London Youth Games at Crystal Palace. The KYAL will be thrilling to the end...