

TOUGH OPENER FOR LASSWADE SENIOR ATHLETES

In a tough early season fixture as part of the Scottish Athletics(Mens) League (1st. Division), Midlothian's Lasswade Athletic Club had to fight hard for every point scored in their first match of the summer at Grangemouth Stadium on Sunday.

In a league revitalised by promotion to division one from last season of two Glasgow clubs, Victoria Park and Giffnock North, and the return to senior men's competition after an absence of several years of Kirkintilloch Olympians and Kilbarchan to division two, nothing was taken for granted. However with several established athletes unavailable or injured, it was a team which showed many changes from that which finished last season on such a high note.

A shaky start to the day in the hammer was rectified by good points by John Grant and Fergus Nimmo in the pole vault while Colin Menzies, team captain in the absence of Ross Finlayson in Australia, opened up his campaign with a sixth place in the 400metre hurdles. Scott Anderson was as dependable as usual in the 'A' 800metres while Stuart McIlreavy made a welcome return from injury sustained in the equivalent meeting last year in the 'B' event. Barney Phillips and Kirk Smith (used to longer distances) stepped up to the mark to cover the 1500m and scored high points with fourth and fifth places respectively in that event.

Greg Loudon and Dean Philip were our most successful athletes of the day on the track, both scoring second in their 400m races and then part of a victorious 4x400m relay squad with Stuart McIlreavy and Alastair Dalgleish. The latter athlete had combined with the ever improving Charlie Carstairs to cover the 200m A and B events. Mark Malone, long jump, 100m and sprint relay suffered a disqualification for a false start in the individual sprint but this did not put off Carstairs who scored a third place and a personal best in the B event.

Eddie Kopystynski had a good hammer competition to finish 7th A and John Grant and John McComish covered the shot, discus and Javelin. The high jump was successful for the Midlothian outfit with Dunbar's Robert Ferguson scoring a fine fourth in the A event and new man Jordan Charters from Dolphinton first in the B before he anchored the 4x100m relay squad of Malone, Carstairs, and Danny Nicol to a very good fifth spot.

The day finished well for the Midlothian team with Niall Sheehan running strongly in the 5000m to finish fifth and was well supported by Sean Gaffney who recorded a personal best time to take third in the B race---and then that final event the 400 relay, where Greg Loudon brought home the baton first for stirring win.

Despite a lot of fine performances and a great deal of effort and team spirit the Lasswade team had to settle for sixth place on the day behind runaway winners Aberdeen 364 points, Edinburgh 269, Central 259 (last season's champions), Victoria Park (Glasgow) 242, Arbroath 236, Lasswade 206, Pitreavie (Fife) 191 and Giffnock North 178. Team manager Andrew Sobik while acknowledging the hard task in front of his athletes was none the less full of praise for the application and commitment of his squad and is confident that the necessary improved team performance can be achieved at the second meeting which is on Sunday 22nd. May back at Grangemouth.