



Havering AC Dave Memorial Open Hornchurch Sunday 6th April

Club athletes came out in numbers to start their summer season in style as the club hosted their annual curtain raising event the Spring Warm Up Open at Hornchurch on Sunday in bright but chilly conditions.

The popular event which has been renamed the Dave Naylor Memorial Open in recognition of the legendary club coach who passed away in January this year, attracted a bumper entry of over 300 athletes, half of them from the home club. The meeting also saw many of Dave's family members in attendance to honour his memory at the track where he spent countless hours coaching over almost five decades.

There were three club records and many other fine performances to celebrate.

Ayla Baker showed that she has wintered well by adding almost five metres to her PB to set a new Under 15 Girls' javelin record with her 35.63m throw, which also ranked her third in the club Under 17 rankings.

Another club record to fall came in the Women's 100m hurdles where Chloe Williams' 14.38 clocking improved her own age W35 best, and was her fastest since 2022. Ahead of her Ruby Tillson dipped below 14 seconds for the first time with her time of 13.94s to close in on Zoe Hughes' club U20 record of 13.78s dating back to 2017.

The third mark came from Nina Brennan whose 18.66m discus throw was the best on record by a club W40.

England Athletics Under 17 Men's 1500m gold medallist Freddie Rowe came within a few strides of improving his recent club U17 1500m record, with his 3m 59.23s effort, and he will go much faster as the chilly wind took the shine off many performances. Also likely to go much faster is Poppy Vines, still only 14, who sliced eight seconds off her best in winning the women's 1500m with her 4:52.64s clocking as will Orla Friell who improved by six seconds to 4:54.76s, both girls ducking under five minutes for the first time.

The league season gets underway next Sunday (13th) when the Eastern Young Athletes team face a short local trip to Thurrock's Blackshots arena. The performances of the club youngsters on Sunday, many of whom have not competed in club colours before, will be a great help to the team managers in selecting their teams to get their campaign off to a winning start.



Members of the Naylor Family at Hornchurch on Sunday (Credit: Sue Deane)