

Summer 2021 Annual Track and Field Awards Presentation

Conservative Club, Hornchurch - 19 November 2021

(text of presentation speeches from Tony Benton & Claire Brennan)

Good evening everybody and welcome on behalf of Havering Athletic Club to the presentation of the track and field awards for 2021. The main business of the evening concerns the performances of our current generation of athletes, and some possible future club all-time greats.

The COVID disrupted very short summer season in 2020 meant there were no awards last year and this year's awards also reflect a summer season with a late start after a winter of lockdowns and all leagues organised on local basis with no promotion or relegation which served to show just how strong the club are locally as our teams and athletes have excelled again this year.

It's difficult to pick the highlights but here are just a few! The Combined Senior Men's and Women's National Athletics League team won all four fixtures of their London Championship Division to rank in the top 20 clubs nationally. Both the Under 13 & Under 15 and the Under 17 & Under 20 Youth Development League (YDL) teams won all their three local fixtures, as did the Eastern Young Athletes League team – so all young athlete teams finished the summer unbeaten.

Club athletes came away from the Essex Championships with an amazing record 80 medals and 15 club athletes competed at the prestigious English Schools Championships, with five winning medals in their events. Such are the standards in the club that some national medal-winning and record-breaking athletes have missed out on awards tonight. Without a doubt, the future indeed looks very bright.

So, this evening is the chance for us all to celebrate these successes and to recognize the superb efforts of our brilliant team of Club Coaches, our Team Managers, our Officials and all the numerous other volunteers who give up an enormous amount of their time to ensure that athletes are able to do their best when it matters.

There are three categories of award in each age group where we have the **Club Best Performance Track Award**, the **Club Best Performance Field Award** and also the **Team Member Award** - all of which have been selected by the respective team managers who we know have had some very difficult choices to make after such a great season.

The presentations will finish with some special awards chosen by the club committee for top performances achieved outside the league system.

Our Club President Claire Brennan will again be presenting the awards this evening and will be saying some kind words from the respective team managers about each of the winners but before handing over to Claire I'll make the first group of presentations to the Masters Women - myself.

First of all – an apology. Our usual award plaques are still on their way from China due to well-publicised supply problems, so as you can see from the table behind me, we won't be able to give most of you're a trophy to take home this evening. We do however have one available for individual photos! We'll get these to the winners as soon as we have them, probably in the New Year.

As with last year, we will announce and tell you a little about why each award winner has won their award and then invite them all up together for a photo.

- The first award tonight is that for the **Masters Women** on the **Track** which goes to an athlete who picks up this award for the first time after joining the Masters' ranks last year. She was regular in club senior teams, competing in seven of the eight SAL & National League fixtures at 800m, 1500m and 5000m, notching up victories in four of these. She set a new club W35 record and PB in the 1500m, and recorded the second fastest best all time for a club W35 in the 800m, 3000m and 5000m. We're sure to see much more in future years from...**GINTE BAILEY**.
- The **Masters Women** on the **Field** award goes to an athlete who has been a regular at these presentations for many years and has now reached the W40 category. She competed in six of the eight SAL & National League fixtures, winning her favoured 400m hurdles in all of these but it is her performances on the field that we recognise tonight. After several years with numerous pole vault clearances at 2.60m, in August she improved her best to 2.70m, the second best ever by a club veteran, recording three SAL wins and two NAL second places at the event, also scoring well in the high jump and javelin. She set club W40 records at 400m hurdles and high hump and was ranked in the top four nationally in three events in her age group. The winner is our President...**CLAIRE BRENNAN**.
- Before handing over to Claire the **Masters Women Team Member** award goes to an athlete who has been a fantastic club servant and the winner of many awards in her 25 years as a Havering AC member. An injury-free season saw her line up in seven of the eight SAL & NAL fixtures, competing in the 400m each time and posting her fastest time for 12 years. She was also a regular in the 4x400m relay, hammer & discus and even filled a gap in the shot to support the club cause. Another valuable and committed squad member who always gives her best, the winner is of course...**NINA BRENNAN**.



Thank you Tony and good evening & welcome to you all.

I'm going to start tonight with the Men's Masters age group.

- The **Club Best Performance** on the **Track** award by a **Male Master** goes to an athlete whose commitment to the sport has never diminished over an illustrious career spanning over 20 years. Combining both track and road competitions with outstanding effect, over distances between 3000m and the marathon, he has once again been outstanding in the NAL. In the 5000m he achieved a season's best time of 15m 7.90s, placing him top of the club's 2021 rankings and 13th in the UK M35 rankings, led by one Mo Farah. In October he broke the club marathon record which had stood for 30 years. We're looking forward to him continuing for many years to come, the winner is...**JAMES CONNOR.**
- Next up is the **Club Best Performance** in the **Field** award. There is Duracell, there's Ever Ready and the Energiser bunny. But they don't come close to our own power packed athlete, that has competed throughout all the age groups and keeps producing quantity with quality year after year. This year he competed in the SAL in the high jump, long jump, pole vault and all four throws. We also get to see three generations of his family at meetings supporting and cheering on Havering AC. We look forward to him helping out the team for many years to come as he's a true inspiration to others. Once again, the award goes to...**ARRON BONNING.**
- And so, I move on to the **Team Member Best Performance** award. It is a team manager's dream to see a seasoned athlete return to competitive action, not just for jumps and throws but being persuaded to help out the sprint relay team. He has gained valuable points throughout the season and to the delight of his wife, Natalie he has managed to remain uninjured! So, with a full winters training and the occasional cross-country, it looks like his son and a lot of youngsters had better watch out for 'Return of the Mark'. The award goes to...**MARK BISHOP.**



Next we have the senior women's award winners.

- The winner of the **Senior Women's Track Best Performance** award, not only takes the hurdles of her main event in her stride but also copes with the challenges of three young children and a job, while competing for the club with distinction. Her superb season not only saw her unbeaten in all seven of her sprint hurdles races at the SAL and National Leagues, but saw her improve her hurdles PB, ranking in the top 30 seniors nationally. She also added high jump points and regularly ran legs in both relays. A superb role model for our younger athletes, our worthy winner is...**CHLOE WILLIAMS.**
- The **Field Best Performance** award once again goes to an important member of club senior teams, who competed in six of the eight Southern and National League meetings this summer. Her efforts often saw her compete in all three of the jumping events and she always scored well to add valuable points for the club cause. Her results included numerous wins and second places that contributed to the club's strong performances in both senior leagues. We hope that 2022 will see much more of the same from...**ELLIE WATSON.**
- I move onto the **Team Member** award and once again the winner manages to juggle work, childcare and athletics challenges all after returning to training and competition following her maternity leave. Her fine performances saw her win seven of her eight 400m hurdles races in the SAL & National Leagues, placing second in the other. Her commitment to the club cause also saw her place first or second in her six sprint hurdles races and she regularly contested both relays for club teams, often just minutes apart. We're hoping that 2022 will bring an even better season for...**FLIC CLARKE**



- Next up are the **Senior Men** and the winner of the **Club Best Performance** on the **Track** award goes to a young man who continues to develop over a number of events ranging between 800m and 5000m. He was undefeated in both the National and Southern Leagues throughout the season, topping the club rankings in the 1500m and 3000m and setting new personal bests in 3000m (8m 39.12s) and 5000m (15m 25.3s). We're sure that, with a full winter and spring training behind him, 2022 will bring even greater rewards and record-breaking success for the worthy winner...**BEN DAVIS**.
- The award is for **Club Best Performance** on the **Field** which goes to a young man who once again led by example over all four throwing events. Despite his work commitments and restrictions in ability to train for the past two seasons, he continues to show outstanding dedication and commitment to his events and to the club for both National and Southern League teams. Topping the club rankings in three of his four disciplines it is clear that whilst not reaching his previous levels due to training restrictions, it is hoped that once he can resume training again he will have a major impact of the club's success in 2022. The well-deserving winner is...**DUANE JIBUNOH**
- The last award in this age group is the **Team Member** award. When you see this athlete's commitment in training, watching him listen and discussing sessions with his coach you know he is going to have a good season. A reliable and valuable points scorer in track and field for both the SAL and NAL, it was his positive attitude which earned him personal bests in the 200 & 400m. We look forward to him going faster, higher, stronger for many more years. The award goes to...**MATTHEW AGNIMEL**.



Next up is the **Under 20** age group.

- The **Women's Club Best Performance** on the **Track** award goes to a middle-distance athlete who decided to give the steeplechase a try this season and did both herself and the club proud in the process. The 'chase is hard enough at the best of times but to run this event on your own, against the clock, as she did a few times, is no easy feat. She also picked up maximum points in the 1500m at two YDL matches. Her steeplechase PBs were club Under 20 records, and her 2000m 'chase time ranked her in the UK Top 10. Thank you for always performing well and giving it your best shot, the winner is...**SYDNEY FOLEY**.
- And now for the **Team Member** award which goes to an athlete who competed in all three YDL competitions, as well as National and Southern League meetings. She regularly doubled up in both 100m and 200m sprints – improving her PBs – and was a valuable member of the 4x100m relay squads. She is willing to fill any gaps and picked up much needed points in the javelin and shot. Although she is one of the quieter team members, she plays a key role in the U20s team and is a reliable young woman who works hard for herself, her coaches and the club. Well done ...**EMMA RAMSDEN**.



- Now moving onto the **Junior Men's** age group and once again we begin with the award for the **Club Best Performance on the Track**. This goes to a multi-talented middle-distance runner and sprinter who competed well for the club in YDL, Southern and National Leagues, earning several first and second places. His season's best times for 200m and 800m saw him ranked club no.1 Under 20 for both events, and his 400m personal best of 50.13s, ranked him club no.1 by over two seconds! This very calm athlete was also a most valuable regular member of both relay teams, helping the squad to numerous wins. Well done on a great season...**REECE HARRIOTT**.
- The **Best Performance on the Field** award goes to another hugely talented and well-mannered all-round athlete who was a consistent scorer of valuable points in the YDL, SAL and NAL leagues. He competed in three of the four throws and was rewarded with PBs in all of them, measuring 43.99m for Javelin, 36.05m for Discus and 11.08m for Shot. He was club no.1 U20 at both Discus, Shot, Pole Vault and Decathlon, and ranked second at Long Jump and High Jump for good measure. He's also pretty good at hurdles and runs a good relay leg! The clear winner is ...**TOBY BISHOP**.
- The **Under 20 men's Team Member** award goes to an athlete who has shown great strength in the sprints up to 400m, improving his PBs in the 100m, 200m and discovering 400m as the season progressed. Ever-present in all YDL, Southern and National League meetings this season, he had three league wins and two second places, making a significant contribution to the team's success. He was also a regular member of both relay squads, often resulting in him running his leg in quick succession with very little recovery! He has been a reliable team member, who the team managers says is a pleasure to deal with. Well done ...**MICHAEL OKORO**.



Continuing to move down the age groups, we come back to the women and the **Under-17's**.

- The **Club Best Performance** on the **Track** award goes to an athlete who has made another excellent contribution this season. She represented the club in eight league matches, where she won all eight of her middle-distance events. She scored PBs in the 800m (ranked 32nd UK), the Mile (8th), 400m and javelin. To cap a great season, and to further demonstrate her versatility, she was a member of the 4x300m relay team that posted a new U17W club record. Critical to the team's success, a leader by example, always humble and a pleasure to manage, congratulations to the deserving winner...**NATALIE SEWELL**.
- The **Best Performance** award on the **Field** goes to an athlete who has really progressed in her specialist event of discus, improving to a national ranking of 24th. She was ever-present across the club's 10 league fixtures, covering not only discus, but also pole vault, javelin and hammer. She was first or second 19 times in her 27 events and also made the club all-time list at pole vault and hammer. A brilliant team member who is versatile and committed and is always willing to step up and deliver crucial points for the team. Much appreciated by her team manager and team-mates alike, the deserving winner is...**KATIE ENNIS**.
- And so, I come to the **Team Member** award which goes to an adaptable athlete who delivered very solid performances throughout the season. Representing the club at 200m & 300m as her mainstay, she also took on the hard-to-fill triple jump on four occasions, posting a PB each time and scoring extra points which were pivotal in helping her age group to narrow victories on at least two occasions. To cap an excellent season, she was also a member of the record breaking U17W 4x300m relay team. She is a fantastic team member, who made a significant contribution to the team's success and very deserving winner...**LUCY NATTRASS**



- In the **Under-17 men's** age group, I'll begin once again with the **Best Performance** on the **Track** award which goes to a sprinter who has competed well for the club in the EYAL, YDL and SAL league, earning several first and second places. His 100m PB of 10.99 seconds puts him third on the U17 all-time list and contributed to him earning a bronze medal in the 100m at the UK School Games. He's an excellent long jumper and his PB of 6.71m also puts him sixth in the U17 all-time list. A regular member of the very successful sprint relay team, he was also the 2021 Essex County Champion in the 100m and long jump. Well done on another fantastic season...**DENZIL ACHI.**
- The **Best Performance Field** award goes to another hugely talented all-round athlete who specialises in the throws, where he competed in all four throwing events and was duly rewarded with PBs in all of them. His discus throw of 43.12m and hammer throw of 42.39m place him fourth and sixth respectively on our extremely competitive all-time list for the Under 17 age group. He also scored valuable points in the EYAL and YDL, where he mostly earned first places. He now moves up to the U20's age group where we are sure he will continue to do well. The clear winner is ...**PATRICK MCLEAN-TATTAN**
- The **Team Member** award goes to another athlete who has shown great strength in the sprints and long jump, improving his PBs in the 100m, 200m and long jump. He was present in all EYAL & YDL meetings this season and gets on with what he is asked to do without any fuss, always giving of his best. A fantastic team member who has made a significant contribution to the team's success this season and is sure to go from strength to strength with another season in the U17s. Well done... **REECE MALCOLM.**



And now I move down to the **Under-15** age group and begin with the **girls**.

- The **Best Performance** on the **Track** goes to an athlete who finished the season as the top ranked club u15 sprinter at 100m, 200m & 300m. After joining from Bexley in April she grew as an athlete as her confidence levels rose and she became a committed team member, present in all EYAL & YDL fixtures. As well as her main 300m event she was also part of the 100m and 300m relay teams who were first or second at every meeting. She saved her best for last and at the Club Championships she won all three sprint events in new PBs. Congratulations and best of luck in the U17s, to...**MIRIAM ADEBAYO**.
- The **Best Performance Field** award goes to an athlete who was a massive points scorer for the Under 15 girls. One of the first names on the team sheet, she competed in all the EYAL and YDL meetings and was always in the top three in the Hammer, Shot, Javelin and her best event Discus. She won Discus silver at the Essex Championship and also won for Essex at the Southern Inter Counties with a new PB. We hope this award goes some way to settling her nerves and shows her how much faith and belief we have in her at the club. The outstanding winner is...**TILLY BUNN**.
- The **Team Member** award goes to goes to a young lady who showed her all-round abilities by competing at nine different events plus a pentathlon during the season. She competed in five of the six fixtures and was a big points scorer in 75m Hurdles, 300m, Long Jump, Shot Putt and her favourite event High Jump – where she is now ranked third all-time U15 girl with 1.60m. She also went on to represent Essex County and Essex Schools at pentathlon. A reliable team member who always encourages the others to do well and a great role model, who the team manager says is a pleasure to have in the team. The sky is the limit for...**RUBY TILLSON**.



- Now it is the turn of the **Under-15 Boys** and the winner of the **Best Club Performance Track** award goes to a versatile athlete who often competed in three track events and a relay on a single day. A big part of the team's success, he made the all-time top 10 in his favoured 800m event but quickly added success at 300m, where he now holds the second fastest ever 300m time, with an impressive 37.8s. His team managers describe him as a polite well-mannered boy who always puts in 100% effort, shows dedication, and provides support to his fellow team members. Good luck moving up to the U17 age group next season, this year's award goes to...**DANIEL LAMMAS**.
- The **Best Performance** award for **Field** events goes to an athlete who only recently joined the club but has shown great potential. He had an impressive haul of first places for the Javelin, in both the EYAL and YDL leagues, and also helped the team to gain points by throwing the discus. After winning a silver medal at the English Schools Championships, he achieved his season's target of 50m in September, improving this twice more, to rank fourth on the club all-time list, and finish fourth in the UK. He is a very competitive individual who has been a pleasure to manage. We wish you much luck in the Under 17's ...**BOBBY WILLIAMS**.
- Finally, in this age group, I come to the **Team Member** award which has been deservedly won by another athlete who has had a great season, going above and beyond for the club cause. He not only achieved several maximum points in his main discus event, but also helped the team competing in the hammer and 1500m, often at short notice and without hesitation. The team manager describes him as an asset to the team who is sure to do well in the Under 17's next season. Well done to...**MICHAEL TESI**.



Finally, it's the turn of the youngest age group, the **Under-13s** and thank you for waiting so patiently for your awards.

- I begin for the final time with the **girls'** awards and the **Best Club Performance** on the **Track** award, which goes to a dedicated sprint athlete who can always be relied upon to bring home valuable points for the club. She was ever present in league matches and recorded three wins in the YDL and six in the EYAL. She's so talented that having misplaced her spikes at Dartford she ran in her sister's, winning the 75m to rank second on the club all-time list! She also made the club all-time lists over the 100m and 150m distances, won county medals at 100m and 200m, and was ranked in the top 12 nationally over 75m and 150m. There's much more to come in the Under 15's from the humble...**FISOLA FAGBADEGUN.**
- The **Club Best Performance** award for the **Field** events in this category goes to an athlete who was the club's top javelin thrower. Scoring maximum points in the event in every league fixture, she often had to rush over to the javelin after competing in her middle-distance event. At the Essex Schools she won javelin silver and at the County Championships improved her PB by nine metres to rank fifth on the club all-time list. She always demands the best of herself, demonstrating such passion for athletics, and with huge smiles with every PB. The deserving winner is...**SCARLETT WOODS.**
- The **Team Member** award goes to an athlete who always scored highly. She is a talented athlete who won three times in YDL and four at EYAL. Besides county medals at 200m and 800m, she also made the club all-time list at both those events and the 75m. She is a valuable team member who created and led the mass warm up that created a team feeling among the girls, many of whom were new to the club. And when she was forced to give up her regular second leg spot in the relay squad, due to injury, she cheered the team on from the stands. The future is bright for...**LEILA JONES.**



- Finally, I come to the last three age group awards, those in the **Under-13 boys'** age group and the **Best Club Performance Track** award goes to a talented young middle-distance runner. He won all A string EYAL 800m races and was second in all A string 1200m at YDL, also finishing first or second in the High Jump in both leagues. His 800m time of 2m 14.89s placed him second on the club all-time list and fifth in the UK, while his 1500m PB of 4m 38.62s is third on the club all-time list and ranks eighth in the UK. At the Essex County Champs he added gold in both 800m and 1500m. A committed team member who the team manager says was a pleasure to manage. The worthy winner is...**FINDLAY MCLAREN.**
- The **Club Best Performance** on the **Field** award winner is a polite young man who went from strength to strength during the season. From winning javelin at the first YDL on his club debut, he competed in all EYAL and YDL meetings, also improving his discus and long jump during the season, earning him eight first places. He won javelin gold at the Essex Champs with a new PB and bronze at the Essex Schools Champs. On his 12th Birthday at the last EYAL meeting he improved his javelin PB once more, to a UK leading 38.45m, ranking him fourth in the all-time list and as you can imagine there were smiles and cakes all round to celebrate! Good luck in the U15's...**ZAK WILLIAMS.**
- The final **Team Member** award this evening goes a young athlete who grew in confidence and ability this season. He competed in all EYAL and YDL meetings with ten firsts, five seconds and a third. Scoring valuable points for the team, he was a regular in the 4x100m relay and at the Essex County Champs he won bronze in both 200m and 800m. His versatility saw him finish the season ranked second in 150m and discus, third in 75m, 200m, 800m, 1200m and 1500m. An invaluable member of the team who can be relied upon in every way. The deserving winner is...**SHEA SWEENEY.**



That's the end of the age group awards but before we let you loose on the buffet, I will hand back to Tony who will introduce some **Special Awards** presented by the Club Committee.

[TONY]

The final three **Best Performance Awards** have been chosen by the Club Committee for performances outside the usual Club League competitions, particularly at national and international events.

- The first of these is for **Males** in the age range **U13 –U17** and the Committee had no difficulty in choosing the outright winner, who was head and shoulders above other contenders. He opened his season with a new club Under 17 men's best in the 300m hurdles, added the club 400m hurdles record soon afterwards, before turning his attention back to the sprint hurdles, where he added the 100m hurdles record with a superb 12.91s when winning the English Schools title in July. This was the fastest time in the UK in 2021 and 15th fastest of all time. He also won gold in the England Athletics Championships in August and silvers in the UK School Games and in the Schools International representing England. His fourth place in the English Schools Octathlon won him another England selection – his third such honour – and in two weeks he will compete at the Indoor Schools International in Glasgow. An exceptionally focused athlete and an outstanding talent, who moves into the Under 20 age group with confidence where he already plans to make an impact. Congratulations must go to...**JACOB BLANC.**



- Next, it's the **Female Best Performance** in the age range **U13 – U17** and again the winner's achievements made her an easy choice. Ever since she was an Under 13 and Under 15 her talents have always shone through, but this summer after concentrating on the 300m hurdles she stepped up to another level. After posting a series of impressive early season times, she broke the club record in winning English Schools 300m hurdles gold in July and she went even faster when adding England Athletics gold in August. But nothing prepared us for her winning performance for England at the Schools International in September when she won with a new Championship best and the third fastest all-time performance of 41.60s, just a fraction outside the British record. For the record she also added superb performances at 200m, 400m, 80m hurdles and long jump too. Her outstanding ability is matched by her modesty and with another year in the U17 age group the sky's the limit for the hugely talented...**STEPHANIE OKORO**.



- Now to the last presentation of this evening, the award for the **Male** age group from **U20 to Masters**. This award gave the Committee some debate, choosing from a number of athletes achieving excellent performances, including several new club records. The winner already has a fine track record on the national stage with a series of medal winning performances at the England Athletics National Disability Championships and MENCAP National events, which have contributed to his place on the British Athletics Paralympic Development Academy. A regular in club senior teams, it is appropriate that the performance that wins him this award tonight was set on our Hornchurch track at our Club Open at the start of May. His excellent 1 min 59.20s clocking for 800m was not only the leading UK time at the event this year by an athlete in the T20 category, for athletes with Intellectual Impairments, but was also an English National record, and the fourth fastest ever by a Briton in this category. We're delighted to present this award to the deserving winner...**KIERAN O'HARA**.



That is officially the end of the formal proceedings and we'd like to invite all the award winners to the front for a group photo please. The buffet is now open!

