

Sportshall Athletics Report 2019/2020

We held 3 championship/trials events in November and December, one at Wells Cathedral School and two at Yeovil College. 77 entries were received, 12 more than last year. Many thanks to Graham Norris and Wells CS for providing the venue plus student helpers, and also loan of their sportshall athletics equipment, all free of charge.

We chose 39 of those athletes to represent Somerset, comprising 3 teams, 2 boys and 1 girls team. Although we had sufficient girls for a 2nd team we felt that they were not strong enough to be competitive and to have an enjoyable experience.

We held 3 training events, one in December and 2 in January - all at Yeovil College, and all well attended.

The Regional Final took place at Wellsway Sports Centre on Sunday 26th January 2020. Team Managers were Oli Berry from TAC, Steve Njie & Saffron Butler from MAC, many thanks to them for doing an excellent job organising and looking after the athletes. Simon de Wilton (TAC) and I were also present at the final.

My thanks to all the clubs, to SCAA and SSAA for the T-shirt sponsorship money. All our athletes were wearing their Somerset T-shirts at the final. There was a small surplus left over after paying for the T-shirts and this was used to subsidise the increased Final entry fee and to pay for the medals that were awarded to the Somerset Sportshall Champions.

As always, competition at the Final was very fierce and it soon became clear that the results would be very close as always. The boys A team the Somerset Spartans came 1st with a margin of 20 points, and the Boys B team the Somerset Saracens came 5th. This is the 2nd year in a row that the Somerset boys have won the competition! The girls, Somerset Spartans, finished 2nd, just 19 points behind the winners! All the athletes without exception did the County proud!! They all performed with determination and confidence! As always, Somerset parents made a great deal of supportive "noise", we have a reputation for being the loudest!!

The boys had 1st places in speed bounce, standing long jump, javelin, chest push, standing triple jump, high stepper, obstacle relay, 1 + 1 relay, 4 x 1 relay, 6 lap paarlauf, hurdles relay, grand prix, and 2 + 2 relay.

The girls had 1st places in balance test, javelin, standing long jump, target throw, and high stepper.

A full set of results can be found at:

<http://www.sportshall.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SWNB20.pdf>

and:

<http://www.sportshall.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SWNG20.pdf>

Of the athletes who were picked to represent Somerset at the final, nearly half (49%) were not club athletes, see below:

Hambridge School Athletics Club - 3
Langport -1
MAC - 4
North Somerset AC -1
SSDC Junior Athletics Academy - 2
TAC - 7
Tri Club - 1
WCH - 1
YOAC – 0
No club - 19

1 of these athletes has now joined ACE.

My very grateful thanks to Simon for all his support, if he hadn't stepped in to take Graham Norris's place Sportshall would not have happened this year!

13 year 6 athletes have been invited to attend the SSAA Coaching days, and these same athletes were invited to attend a taster session at ACE. All 37 athletes who attended the final were provided with details of the Somerset clubs and encouraged to get more involved with the sport, as were the others who attended the trials.

Finally, I am pleased to report that Simon and I have agreed to run sportshall again next year but I am intending to step down after that, having been involved since 2011. Please can I urge clubs to try and find some volunteers who are willing to help, with a view to taking it on beyond next year. If this doesn't happen then sportshall athletics will come to an end in the County after many years. This would be a huge loss to Somerset athletics. Sportshall athletics is a great development tool. I can look around at many comps up to home international level and see athletes who started their competitive athletics as under 11 sportshall athletes, the most recent being Seren Rodgers!

