



SUSSEX SCHOOLS ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

Report 2016 from the Chair: Judy Lasis

After a successful 2015, I thought we had possibly peaked in terms of SSAA team success but 2016 has proved to be an even more successful year for our Sussex Schools Athletes. January 2016 started with another very well attended and organised Sussex Schools Cross Country event, Chris Jones, as the event organiser, has a small but very important band of helpers, who set out the course and marshal the course and finish, thanks go to all those people but particularly Chris who pulls everything together. The car park at Brighton Rugby club was lined with minibuses and more than six hundred runners completed the Sussex Schools Cross Country championships in difficult conditions at Waterhall. Since these championships have been transferred to a mid-week event numbers have increased every year and 334 boy and 297 girl finishers is certainly a record for this century,

We took the top 20 from each race to run at the South East Schools Inter-county match at Bexhill in February, there were some excellent performances, including a brilliant team victory for the Junior (Under 15) girls team and individual gold for Joe Smith, silver for Martha Coyle and bronze for the Senior (Under 19) girls.

More than five hundred Sussex School athletes contested the Year 7 & 8 cross-country championships at Christ's Hospital, later the same month and we had a glimpse of the young talent for the future, 20 from each race were selected to represent SSAA later in March at the SE Schools Inter Counties in Basingstoke.

March we took a full team of 48 athletes to the England Schools Cross Country championships at Wollaton Park, Nottingham, the junior boys' team turned up trumps when they finished a splendid second in the team event. Joe Smith (Oakmeeds), who had won the South East Inter-counties at Bexhill the previous month, led the challenge with a splendid 12th place out of a field of four hundred plus runners beating County Schools champion George Poole (Eastbourne Coll), who also had a fine run to finish in 26th place.

Leo Brewer (Brighton College) also squeezed inside the Top Fifty placing 43rd and the scoring six all finished in the Top One hundred, which is a pretty good at this event, with Ethan Fincham (Angmering) 54th, Joseph Martin (Ardingly) 59th and Max Brazier (Patcham) 100th. Unfortunately some of our runners were disappointed on the day, especially as conditions were good.

May half term, Steve King and Leanne Buxton organised a successful Sussex and Surrey Schools Combined Events Championship, I think we would all like to see a few more Schools athletes giving this type of event a go, so it is down to the schools to publicise the event!

June: As usual Leanne Buxton organised a splendid Sussex Schools T&F Championships and we would like to thank all the Sussex Officials who helped run the events on the day.

A Sussex Schools team was selected for the SES Inter Counties from the top 3 in each event in the Junior and Intermediate age groups, they travelled to Carshalton in Surrey the following week, many of them were competing for Sussex for the first time and achieved PBs with the strong competition from the other Counties. Sussex had many more winners this year than previously and this may have been the added incentive of a few places still up for grabs to represent SSAA at the ESAA Champs in Gateshead in July. At the SES Combined Champs at Lee Valley, Snr. Matt Smith was a splendid 2nd and Alex Clayton, making his combined events debut just missed out on a medal in an impressive 4th place.

Next up was the English Schools T&F Championships in Gateshead; well I thought last year was the pinnacle, this year the team surpassed last year's excellence despite missing some of our elite athletes who were competing for England. The team spirit was brilliant and everyone bought into the goal of achieving points for Sussex with their very best efforts, hence we had so many PBs.

The highlight being the Senior boys team who made history when they won the E W Hanley trophy for the A group of counties, a tremendous achievement. Scoring 55 points the team of Jakes Binns, Rhys Turner, Finley Bigg, Stephen Ferroni, Joe Fuggle, George Turner, Jackson King and Scot Staples, finished just three points clear of Greater Manchester.

The Intermediate Boys team also did well finishing sixth of the 13 Counties in Group A while the Intermediate girls placed ninth, the Junior Boys and Senior Girls tenth and the Junior girls 12th.

Overall the medal count at ten was one of the highest ever with the total of five Gold medals, being the highest since 1958.

Two Sussex athletes were selected to compete in the Schools International event the following weekend at the Julie Rose Stadium at Ashford and they are Amber Anning (Roedean) in the 300 metres and Edan Cole (Cardinal Newman) in the Javelin throw

As you can see it has been a very busy year and for all the brilliant results above there is a team of unsung heroes, who are the organisers, officials and the team managers; I would like to thank everyone by name but the list would be too long and I might miss someone off! So thank you everyone as without you, we would not have a Sussex Schools Athletics Association holding events for the young athletes of Sussex and giving them the opportunity to represent their County at Inter County and National level.

We now need to look to the future, we have a very small band of SSAA officials running the Association and I think we only have one practicing teacher on the committee, this is not sustainable and we need 'new blood'! I want every teacher in Sussex to look out for teachers interested in athletics or ex athletes and ask them to contact me, the old adage 'many hands make light work' really does apply; the people currently doing the work need help, many are very capable of steering willing new comers but haven't got the physical stamina to be doing so much of the physical work!