



EAP Leiria International Throwing Meeting

29th & 30th July in Portugal

After two years of groundwork the Hammer Circle, with funding from England Athletics and donations from members, established a team of junior hammer throwers to experience international competition abroad. For most of them it was the first time they had competed overseas, without parents and even the first time travelling abroad.

The team were selected at the English Schools Champs in Birmingham this year comprising of eight U20 Hammer Circle members:- Bayley Campbell, Ed Jeans, Jacob Roberts, Katie Lambert, Olivia Stevenson, Anna Purchase, Alice Barnsdale and Katie Head accompanied by Dave & Diane Smith.

The athletes travelled from East Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Essex and Berkshire and all managed to arrive at Luton Airport in plenty of time (closest ones arrived last). The early arrival proved necessary after one athlete lost their passport between our meeting point and the departure gate, another with two cabin bags contrary to the info sent out, enough toiletries to open a shop and a boarding pass that wouldn't scan. After that the journey went smoothly with an hour and half transfer from Lisbon to Leiria but was not the best World Championship preparation for Canadian Shot-putter Tim Nedow who had waited six hours for our arrival at the airport to share transfer bus. After settling into the Hotel the group went out for food and retired early after the long journey and the hot weather.

After breakfast next morning we had a team meeting and covered the necessary information related to the meeting, to look after and support each other at the event and whilst out and about around the town. The athletes were also advised to review their competition preparation and how things can go wrong and how they will approach situations and their actions. This proved relevant for the junior men's comp which I will come to later. Bayley proposed himself as Team Captain which proved to be a worthy nomination. There were a few groans from the crowd when they were told that the bus for the airport on the Monday left the Hotel at 06:00.

Self-funded Jack Lambert competed as the sole competitor in the U16 comp but he joined with the Senior Elite Women and was suitably mentored and mothered by Carys Parry from Wales and went on to produce a PB of 62.83m.

The U20 Women took on the challenge of international competition and focussed on beating Wales' thrower Amber Simpson. Amber proved to be a worthy exponent pushing the Hammer Circle contingent (all English) on to good performances and finishing a creditable 4th. Alice set the standard with her opening throw of 56.04m, a personal best by 2cm which, as in the English Schools, proved unbeatable on the day. Some of the girls were disappointed for not achieving PBs which seemed to be a negative pressure restricting their delivery of superior performance.

The day drifted on and the night crept forward as the U20 men prepared to compete. As the competition progressed the temperature fell, so did a section of a temporary stand requiring and ambulance for an injured person and the daylight disappeared. These distractions would not be

normal but certainly raised the awareness of things that can happen and the lads competed exceptionally in the circumstances. The Comp had similarities to previous Hammer Circle Reunion comps held under car headlights in the middle of the night without sufficient clothing for the temperature.

On the Sunday the temperature had once again risen to a nice hot sunny day and the girls all competed well in the Senior Ladies comp with only the small margin of 83cm separating the five Hammer Circle squad and justifying our decision to take them all. The competition was won by Carys Parry with a respectable 63m.

Another Hammer Circle member, Osian Jones, competing for Wales threw a life time best to break the 70m barrier in the Senior Men's Comp which was also a qualifying distance for the Commonwealth games.

We managed to get all the athletes there and back safely with massive experience for some and great fun and friendship forged between all.

Many thanks to the individual members that supported the trip and the generous support from England athletics making this a successful and memorable trip for all the athletes hopefully motivating them on to the next level and the future development of our sport.

Results

U16 Men – 4kg

1st 62.83m Jack Lambert

U20 Women - 4kg (12 competitors)

1st 56.03m PB Alice Barnsdale

2nd 55.10 Katie Head

3rd 55.02m Katie Lambert

4th 54.35m Amber Simpson (Wales)

5th 54.22m Anna Purchase

6th 52.77m Olivia Stevenson

U20 Men – 6kg (8 competitors) in the dark

1st 75.52m Daniel Raba (Hungary)

2nd 66.29 Bayley Campbell

3rd 65.28 Ed Jeans

4th 61.44m Ruben Antunes (Portugal)

5th 61.03m Jacob Roberts

Senior Men – Saturday

1st 70.29m Tshepang Makhetha (South Africa)

2nd 70.00m Osian Jones (HC Member) first time at 70m and Commonwealth qualifying for Wales

U18 Men – 5kg

1st 71.25 Bayley Campbell

2nd 55.67m Jack Lambert

3rd 53.29m Carlos Costa (Portugal)

Senior Women (11 competitors)

1st 63.52m Carys Pary (Wales)

4th 54.33m Alice Barnsdale

5th 54.15m Anna Purchase

6th 53.56m Katie Head

7th 53.53m Amber Simpson (Wales)

8th 53.53m Katie Lambert

9th 53.47m Olivia Stevenson

Senior Men - Sunday

7th 55.81m Ed Jeans

Medals

3 x Gold - Jack, Alice & Bayley

3 x Silver - Katie H, Bayley & Jack

2 x Bronze - Katie L & Ed