

## THE 2018 SEASON

The 2018 Reunion marked a momentous year for UK hammer throwing. The many highlights include:

Commonwealth Gold for Nick Miller with an historic throw over 80m. His winning throw of 80.26 ranked Nick third in the world on distance – the highest UK Senior world ranking since 1926! Nick was also second in the inaugural World Cup and a finalist in the European Championships before succumbing to injury.

Mark Dry won a super-competitive bronze in Gold Coast with 73.12, amazing resilience after so many injury issues, while Taylor Campbell, Dempsey McGuigan and Osian Jones were all well placed. Chris Bennett threw 75m early season and made the European team for Berlin while USA-based Joe Ellis threw 73.80 and tied the UK indoor weight throw record. Jake Norris and Craig Murch threw 70m for the first time this year

80m was also breached for the first time by a UK Junior thrower, as Jake Norris threw 80.65 to win the World Junior title – the first UK man to do so (Sophie Hitchon won the women's title in 2010). Jake was over 80m in three competitions and over 76.95 in five more. With the senior hammer he's gone into completely uncharted territory for the UK junior, with 73.24 and six other comps beyond 70m. Jake is the world's number one junior on distance with the 16lb in 2018 – the first ever time a UK hammer thrower has held this status.

Jake had company in the World Junior finals with Bayley Campbell coming a really fine eighth, and his great season (73.75 pb) saw him into the European Junior top ten for the season. Both are coached by Paul Dickenson. Ben Hawkes also made 70m this season.

On the women's side there was massive change in the rankings as Sarah Holt, Carys Parry, Susan McKelvie and Myra Perkins left the stage as competitive athletes. While Sophie Hitchon (now married) remained well on top of the rankings (and came second in the World Cup and 8<sup>th</sup> in the European Championships), several first-time 60m throwers moved up the lists including Becky Keating, Pippa Wingate, Kayleigh Presswell, Amy Herrington and Annabelle Crossdale. They will look to close the gap next year.

The women's junior age group saw the best UK throwing for four years, with GBR international Katie Head at 59.63 and Alice Barnsdale at 59.35, so they will also be chasing 60m in 2019

Great results were recorded at U17 level. Three guys – Kenneth Ikeji, Sam Gaskell and Shaun Kerry were closely matched at the top of the men's lists while Charlotte Payne led the girls list, with Kirsty Costello and Phoebe Baggott also over 60m. The U15 lists were led by Jack Halpin in the boys list, and Lara Moffat and Lily Murray in the girls.

Much credit is due to the throwers, and to the coaches and parents who help and support them. Many coaches are members of the Hammer Circle and provide a vital service at the Reunion and throughout the season.