

TAC Masters update 4th April 2024

BMAF Road Relays 25th May Mallory Park

We now have complete teams in M35 and W55. Probable M55 and almost W45. Need more responses for W45 and M45. Keep your availability coming even for complete age groups, reserves or mixed age group teams can be made.

SCVAC Kent Track and Field League

Due to Swanley AC dropping out of the league, we now have a Men's B team in Div 2. Richard Christian will be managing this team in conjunction with Mark McAllister who manages the A team. Athletes can compete for either team during the season, but only one or the other at a meeting.

No club can have two teams in the same division.

All details re dates and timetables are kept up to date on <http://scvac.org.uk/track.htm>

European Masters indoor Championships Torun.

Ian Crawley M60 Gold

Ian reports.....

It is getting more difficult to write something original about my international athletics journey; which is essentially the same event and in this case the same place as before.

But in words of Gary Kemp - Luck has left me standing so tall ... Gold.

At last, the thing that I have been chasing for several years now - a gold medal at a major championship. On Thursday I finally won the European Indoor Pentathlon M60 in Torun Poland. This was my third visit to Torun and it has become my happy place as I now have 2 World Bronze medals and a European Gold medal for my troubles spread over 5 years and 2 age categories.

In the build up I was plagued by all my usual doubts and second thoughts about attending as a sore hamstring and poor training form in HJ and Shot made me doubt my chances; but if you don't go, you won't know. So travelled at a civilised time on Monday allowing 2 clear days to get settled. Unusually Ryanair failed to rip me off for any extra charges which I suppose I should have seen at the time as a good omen.

A long entry list of 27 was whittled down to 24 by the start, which is a fairly low pre competition attrition rate for multievents. Of these there looked to be 7 contenders for medals; but as luck would have it they began to drop like flies. The first name crossed off

the list was either super human or had submitted a Decathlon score for the form guide. As it turned out it was the later and even that was probably over optimistic. Next I saw a hamstring spinning into the crowd during the Long Jump competition on Tuesday which belonged to another contender. Then there were five.

So I had the usual early night before the comp - and also as usual slept badly. I have piled so much pressure on myself over these events it makes it difficult to be relaxed. The saving grace was being up needlessly early for a breakfast of grapefruit, porridge and apple and a cholesterol-fest that would give a Doctor a heart attack. This may sound like a bad idea but this kind of breakfast together with regular nuts, raisins and bananas throughout the day really works for me. I had a relaxed walk to the arena 2 hours before a very civilised 1230 start and apart from my niggley hamstring felt very good physically and mentally super positive.

My worries started during the warm up when I felt my hamstring tighten up on my final hurdles warm up run at speed. But things took a positive turn in the call room as there was no sign of the pre event favourite who had won a silver in the LJ and recently broke the European 60H record. This was a huge disappointment; but I recovered remarkably quickly. Then there were four.

I went out and after an almost inevitable false start raced a reasonably 60H; not as fast as I had confidently hoped, but slightly faster than last year at 10.44. Amazingly this was second fastest and not 300 points behind as I had feared. Not that I knew this at the time as I had resolved to focus exclusively on my own performance and not to look at other people's scores until just before the last event. This after Italy in the summer where watching the competition completely derailed me.

Then disaster almost struck as again I felt my hamstring grumbling during my first practice long jump. So I did no more practice jumps and had no choice but to go for it on my first attempt. I thought at the time that it was only 50:50 that I would make it to the end of the competition. As luck would have it I produced a very good first jump 4.85; again better than last year but at the cost of more hamstring pain. At this point I decided to change tactics and rather than chase top performances in every event I would just manage the competition. Taking further jumps risked making matters much worse with likely little extra distance to be gained. So I checked all the scores, realised I was in the lead so opted to pass my second jump and watched and waited. Nothing happened in the second round to change things except another contender (who had narrowly come 4th in the LJ) pulled up injured and out. And then there were 3, perhaps only 2 as another contender had quietly slipped down the standings. I passed my final attempt in a mood of growing optimism.

Shot Put was consistent with recent training - mediocre - but at least it was over 11 on the final attempt. The guy in second closed the gap to about 100 points equivalent to about 3 HJ heights. I thought at best he would manage 1.54 in HJ so 1.45 would see me into the last event about level on points and there was no way I was going to let a gold medal get away in the 1000. I didn't know how my hamstring would hold up so came in really low - 1.30 - for safety and I reasoned I'd only have to manage 6 jumps at best and at worst just have to keep jumping somehow if he kept jumping. As it was he seemed to be having injury issues

of his own and failed before I did so a height of 1.45 saw an increase in the lead. Rather stupidly I let exuberance get the better of me and attempted to go higher - unsuccessfully.

So going into the 1000 I had a 14s buffer on second with the only other pre-event contender left having fallen away during the day. Normally I have to run like a crazy man in the last event of a Pentathlon or Decathlon to haul myself back into contention, so to be in the lead with a buffer was an unusual luxury. I didn't know what to do and found myself as indecisive as Keir Starmer at a Women's Institute meeting.

It was a very odd feeling as I had spent the day in almost a daze of intense concentration, now with the end and the prize in sight I couldn't focus. Part of me wanted to blast it from the front but again I didn't know what the hamstring would bear so decided the wise choice was just track the second and third place guys. I abandoned this plan a millisecond after the gun as a few other guys set off at an easy pace at the front, so I followed them. As the pace was slow I started to think about winning the race and really felt like winding things up from a long way out. Again I got a grip of myself and only cut loose with 250 to go and took the lead. At the time I felt like Steve Ovett in the 800 at the Moscow Olympics, but on watching the video later it was more like Dave from Accounts trundling to the cake shop. Unfortunately a Swedish guy came back at me and denied me the win which is annoying me more and more in hindsight. As I crossed the line I knew I had won the competition. My overriding emotion was relief followed quickly by elation and unusually I didn't need hospitalising at the end.

It was a late finish but as there were 200m semi finals going on there was still quite a crowd of Brits supporting, including a large Dartford contingent, so the traditional multieventers lap of honour was very special although sadly not caught on the video footage.

No great celebration, I joined some Pole Vaulters for a single beer then back to Airbnb for another helping of Tuna Pasta and another sleepless night- excitement rather than nerves this time.

Friday was another gentle start with a leisurely but huge breakfast and walk to the track for PV and medal ceremony. The medal ceremony clashed with the call room for PV; it was quiet cool having to ask permission to skip the call room to go and collect a medal and then return to the PV area with it around my neck. As I waited behind the scenes and listened to another anthem being played for the preceding ceremony I felt quite emotional and had to give myself a talking to to make sure I did not blub during God Save the Queen.

Similar to last year I had not been near a pole since the end of the summer so the PV comp was for me just a bit of fun. I could still feel the hamstring so came in low and failed the first attempt. However, ended up with a respectable 2.95 so wasn't too disappointed.

I know this has been a bit long winded and drier than usual and but permit me a few reflections; believe me I could write a book, but it would be very dull.

My winning score 3636 was low by international standards; many top athletes were not there; and those that were there fell away. So on the day I was very lucky. Against that I

believe that at 100% fitness and 100% preparation 4000+ points was and is possible for me which would be competitive with anyone. And as Gary Player once said when told that he had been lucky “ It’s funny; the harder I work, the luckier I get”.

And I would say I have worked pretty hard for this over something like 7 years overcoming two major operations, the limitations of modest talent and an almost complete absence of fast twitch muscles by sheer bloody minded hard graft. If success can be defined as getting the best, the very very best, out of whatever god given gifts you have been given, then I feel I can claim to have succeeded and I’m pretty happy about that.

Ben Cole Southern 12 stage Relays

Ben Cole continues to show great form at the top level as he ran the 6th fastest long leg (8662m) in 25.56 on leg 9 for the Senior men at Milton Keynes.

Eastbury 10

Phil Coleman 39.55 nipped under 40 mins at one of his favourite races as he took part as an M60 for the first time. Dan Longhurst M40 35.50.

Bromley Vets 5 mile XC

An enjoyable low key event with 2 laps of an extended course through Sparrows Den woodland. Conditions had a bit of everything. Although not a purely masters event it tends to attract older runners due to the name of the organising club.

Mark Pk was 9th overall and Grazia Manzotti 5th lady. Scott Shurmer continues to make improvements and was 53rd, mid field and very much involved in a battle with 3 other athletes round the final field.



<https://results.racetimingsolutions.co.uk/results.aspx?CId=16269&RId=1783>

Hastings half Marathon

Dave Suddes 1.32.59 led the TAC masters home at Hastings. Derek Jee 1.36.14 and Rachel Fagg 1.46.03 on this challenging course.

Twin Lakes 20 Mile Milton Keynes

Hannah Smith (W45) ran 20.50.56 as she builds to her marathon. She gained valuable experience after an over exuberant first half.

Folkstone 10 mile

Dan Bradley 54.40 3rd and Harriett Woolley 1.06.51 both ran in tough windy conditions.

TAC Easter Monday open meeting

Plenty of masters took part to get their Track and field season of the ground and have TAC debuts. Some notable distance performances were Jay Smith PB in the 3k and Charlotte Warren strong showing in the 600m.

Plenty of sprint and field performances, unfortunately I do not have time to see who ran PB's or even club records.

<https://data.opentrack.run/en-gb/x/2024/GBR/taceom/>