

Five athletes from Worcester Athletic Club represented Hereford and Worcester Schools at the English Schools Track and Field Championships, held at The Alexander Stadium, Birmingham, on July 9th and 10th.

The Championships are the high point of the year for athletes up to 19 years of age in England, and it is a fine achievement to be selected. County Champions Joseph Kinsey (Nunnery Wood High School - Intermediate Boys 400m), Olivia Merry (Tudor Grange Academy - Intermediate Girls Long Jump and Relay), Holly Wootten (Royal Grammar School - Intermediate Girls Javelin), Alice Wright (Kings School - Intermediate Girls 3000m) and Alex Bradnick (Persore High School - Intermediate Boys 200m and Relay) were members of a 25 strong team taking part.

Joe Kinsey was unlucky to draw an inside lane for his heat. In his first year of competing at 400m, and in an age group where he is a year younger than his rivals, the Midland Counties Silver medallist gave a good account of himself running 51.96 seconds, just outside his personal best (and the club record which he already holds)

Holly Wootten, the Bronze Medallist from the Midland Counties Championships, was just outside the qualifiers for the final 3 throws of the javelin competition, with a best distance of 32.79m. The windy conditions were difficult for throwing, and as soon as the event finished Holly had to rush off to go on a netball tour with her school. Clearly a multi-talented girl as she's also a very good 800m runner.

Olivia Merry jumped 5.18m to come 11th in the Long Jump final in her first Championships at this level, and later that day ran the 3rd leg for the 4x100m relay team. This was the first time any of the County management team could remember having a girl's relay team, and the girls ran well, despite having another team blocking their lane on the 2nd to 3rd leg change over! Having only taken up athletics 2 years ago, Olivia shows what can be done if you are dedicated and know what you want to achieve.

Alice Wright made up for the disappointment of missing out on a medal by less than a second in the Junior Girls 1500m in 2009 by running an excellent race, in a personal best time, to come 3rd in the Intermediate Girls 3000m. It was Alice's first time under 10 minutes for the distance, and adds to her collection of medals at national level for Cross Country. The performance is even more remarkable when taking into account that Alice is a first year in this age group, competing against girls a year older. Alice now goes on to represent West Midlands in the UK Schools Games in September.

Alex Bradnick won his heat of the 200m and was drawn one lane inside the favourite from London. 22.19 seconds after the gun, he had finished in second place, to add to his National Indoor 200m Bronze medal from February. The performance has earned him a place in the West Midlands team for the UK Schools Games in September, and also the Schools International on July 17th in Glasgow –

representing England. In the relay Alex ran 3rd leg, with the team repeating their 5th place in the final from 2009, but in a time of 42.99 seconds – 0.62 seconds faster than last year, and a County record.

The achievements of these five athletes are due in part to the expertise and dedication of their coaches who also deserve mention. They are (in alphabetical order): Mike Bennett (coach to Olivia Merry and Alex Bradnick), Carolyn Franks (of Cheltenham Harriers and javelin coach to Holly Wootten), Roger Turner (coach to Joe Kinsey) and Dave Walker (coach to Alice Wright).