

Northern Athletics Senior & Under 20 Champs Day 1 Report 22 June 2011



There was a fitting curtain raiser to the Northern Senior and U20 championships at Sport City Manchester, one of the 47 events that make up the McCain UKA Challenge series, as the men's hammer competition brought together the 1-2-3 from last year's Challenge final in Cardiff. It also saw another head-to-head between the Commonwealth Games silver medallist Alex Smith (Sale H) and bronze medallist Mike Floyd (Sale H). Floyd, who came into the competition with a season's and life-time best of 71.15m (the first time he has gone over 71.00m), took the lead in the very first round with 69.60m. He

extended his lead in the 2nd with 70.25m and then in the 3rd threw a new lifetime best of 71.73m. If Alex Smith was to defend the title he took last year it was going to take something near to his Commonwealth Games throw of 72.95m. On this occasion his best in the 5th round of 70.74m was not quite good enough and Floyd took his 11th Northern title. James Bedford (Birchfield H) took bronze with a best of 65.90m. Sarah Holt (Sale H) won the women's hammer with a best of 62.73m. Alan Toward (Gateshead H) successfully defended his Northern U20 discus title with a best of 48.99m, just short of his season's and PB of 49.00m. In the U20W javelin and SW triple jump, Danielle Bentley (Sale H) and Kelly Hilton (Wigan H) respectively also took their second northern titles.

[The stand-out performance on the track came from Jack Meredith \(Liverpool H\)](#) in the U20 110mH. The World Junior bronze medallist and UK U20 record holder has not had the smoothest start to his

season. But he put that all behind him, dominating the final with a superb piece of hurdling that saw him stop the clock at 13.69 – inside the Euro U20 qualifying mark and a time that erased the 1993 CBP of 13.90 from the record books. The women's event final saw an equally impressive piece of hurdling from Ashley Heslby (Liverpool H) who



successfully defended her title and in the process equalled her lifetime best of 13.50. In finishing 2nd, Zara Hohn (Wakefield & D), who crashed out of last year's UKA Challenge final with a bad hamstring tear, looks to be slowly recapturing the form that saw her reach the Euro U23 semi-final.

[The women's 100m promised much as the defending champion Louise Bloor \(Trafford\) lined](#)

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[up alongside Bernice Wilson \(Birchfield H\)](#), 60m semi-finalist at the Euro indoor championships, Annabelle Lewis (Kingston upon Hull), last year's silver medallist and Hayley Jones (Wigan H), the fastest women in the field with her 2010 clocking of 11.46. After 50 metres it became clear that it was down to a battle between Bloor and Jones and over the closing 20 metres it was Bloor who held the upper-hand and she crossed the line in a new PB of 11.57. On Day 2 she will seek to successfully defend her 200m title. Wilson finished 3rd in 11.84. Euro U20 100m finalist and 4x100m bronze medallist Andy Robertson (Sale H), who had already this season run within the Euro U23 qualifying time of 10.40, took the men's title for the second successive year in 10.71. [As expected Shaunna Thompson \(Sale H\) dominated the U20W final wining in 11.97](#) and like Bloor she will be looking to take the 200m title on Day 2. Jordan Toth (Holmfirth H) took his first Northern 100m title in 10.89 in a very close contest with last year's U17 champion Ben Shields (Rotherham H).

In the men's 400m [Hary Doran \(Liverpool P S\) produced the best judged finish of the day in the longer sprints](#).



Until the final 20 metres it looked like David Riley (Gateshead H) was going to take gold. But Doran produced a superb finish to grab gold in a new PB of 47.51. In the women's equivalent Harriet Pryke (Manx H) successfully defended the title she won in 2010 and with a dominant performance clocked a new PB of 54.92. In the U20W 400m Laura Shanley (Liverpool H), last year's Northern U17 300m champion, took the U20 title and looked both delighted and a little shocked as she glanced at the trackside clock to see it stopped at 56.37, a big improvement on her best of 58.05 set earlier this season.

Another finely judged finish by [Nick Hooker \(Leeds City\) saw him take 1500m gold in 3.52.51 from David Forrester \(SHS\) 3.52.68](#). Elle Baker (Stockport H), who had not run a 1500m since 2006 having taken silver at the AAA U23 championships in 2005 and finished 6th that year in the Euro U23 5000m final, won the women's 1500m continuing the good form that she showed at the Northern and National 6 Stage relays.

Reporter: Adrian Christmas ©

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Photos

Top Mike Floyd,

Middle Finish of Womens 100m

Lower tight finish in Mens 400m as Doran takes title