***LEIGH LOOKS AFTER NORTHERN ATHLETICS by Bill McGuirk***  
NORTHERN Athletics’ Track and Field Championships got underway after an absence of 18 months thanks in a big way to the staff of Leigh Sports Village and particularly Joe Galvin and Steve Jamson after the Senior and Under-20 event was switched from Wavertree, Liverpool at short notice.

Numerous factors meant that entry numbers were slightly down on previous years however, that didn’t take anything away from an exciting and enjoyable days sport.  
As is customary nowadays hammer competitions open proceedings and the sparse number of spectators dotted around the arena were treated to a superb senior men’s contest with Edward Jeans (Preston) winning with his third round effort of 62:25m. Kingston upon Hull’s Shaun Kerry finished in second place (56:67m) with Jason Robinson (City of Sheffield and Dearne) completing the podium places.  
The senior women’s contest was a nail-biting affair with City of York’s Maria Schofield leading until the sixth round when Hannah Blood (Sale), who had gone five rounds without a mark, managed to produce the one that matters to claim victory with a throw of 54:97m to snatch the gold medal with Schofield left to claim the runners-up award with 52:79m. Trafford’s Charlotte Stuchbury finished third with 37:81m.

Continuing with field action, the first to mount the winner’s podium was Michelle Robbins-Hulse (Trafford) who, in her first triple jump contest of the season, retained her senior women’s crown with a mark in the sand at 11:48m. In the senior men’s competition, again with only one competitor, it was Manchester’s Faisal Othman who claimed the gold medal at his first attempt at triple jumping, with 10:61m.  
In the senior women’s shot contest, victory went to Sale’s Shaunna Thompson with a put of 13:63m as she prepares for the British Championships/Olympic Trials in two week’s time. Derby’s Suzanne Palmer finished in silver medal position (11:85m) after a third-place finish in 2019. New Marske’s Kaitlin Enderwick was delighted to finish in third place (10:88m) after finishing just outside the medals on numerous occasions.

Victory in the under-20 women’s discus went to Isle of Man’s Tazmin Fayle (Manx) with a season’s best throw of 36:96m. Kingston upon Hull’s Holly Adams finished second (35:13m) and home-based Nicky Sanders (Leigh) claimed the bronze medal with 31:04.

Only five centimetres separated Mersey rivals Steven Jones (Liverpool) and Tom Kwissa (Liverpool Pembroke and Sefton) with Jones clearing 1:90m to Kwissa’s 1:85m.

The senior men’s shot contest was won by former Morpeth athlete Craig Charlton with a distance of 15:80m. Wigan’s Tom Smith finished runner-up with 14:28m and Scott Jones (Trafford) was third with 13:90m.  
In the under-20 women’s competition Derby’s Hannah Barnden came out on top with a throw of 38:14m with F35 competitor Emilia Russell (Kingston upon Hull) producing 33:43m for second place to finish just ahead of Holly Benson (Stockport) whose best was 32:55m.  
The in the same age group the long jump contest proved to be a close affair with Kiikii Brown (Leeds City) pulling out a fifth round season’s best winning jump of 5:49m. Stockport Track and Field’s Lucy Robinson finished with 5:44m for second place with Leah Howard (Blackpool, Wyre and Flyde) claiming the bronze award with 5:12m.

The under-20 men’s long jump title went to Wakefield’s Alfie Edwards with a season’s best 6:51m to relegate Luke Suarez (Southport Waterloo) into second place (6:40m) and Callum Hay (City of Sheffield and Dearne) into third (6:32m).

In the under-20 men’s javelin, victory went to defending champion Luke Robinson (City of York) with a throw of 53:60m with Jack Shingler (Wigan) finishing runner-up with 48:37m. Barnsley’s Dan Bradbury claimed the bronze medal with his 45:49m.

The under-20 men’s Discus brought the curtain down on the first day’s action and it was a personal triumph for North Shields Poly’s James Wordsworth who produced a lifetime best of 49:58m to move to number three in the Po10 rankings. Josh Knox finished in second place (39:79m) and Jamie Hopkins (Liverpool Pembroke and Sefton) was third with 28:75m

On the track the senior women’s 400m was run as a straight final with Liverpool’s Emma Alderson stopping the clock at a season’s best of 55.87s. City of York’s Charlotte Stamp produced a pb of 56.51s for second place with Wakefield’s Rachel Crorken completing the one-two-three in 57.35.  
Only two athletes faced the starter in the senior women’s 100m hurdles with victory going to reigning champion Danielle McGifford (Wigan) in 13.93s with Leeds City’s Katie Joyce claiming the silver medal with a new pb of 14.26s.  
The under-20 women’s sprint hurdles was much more competitive with the leading two athletes producing huge pbs – unfortunately wind assisted. Victory went to Gateshead’s Phillipa Ellis in 14.19s with Southport Waterloo’s Stephanie Robertson finishing in silver medal position in 14.86s. Stockport Track and Field’s Myah Booth finished third in 15.07s.  
David Naylor (Crewe and Nantwich) claimed victory in the under-20 men’s 110m hurdles in a time of 14.90s with Morgan Williams (Leeds City) finishing second in 15.20s and Oliver Adnitt (Kingston upon Hull) third in 15.33s.  
In the senior men’s equivalent victory went to Harry Maslen (Ilkley) in 14.93s with title holder Curtis Mitchell (Preston) a close second recording 14.97s.  
The senior men’s 5,000 metres had the all three medallists dipping under 15 minutes with victory going to David Devine (Liverpool) in 14:44.29 with Grant Anderson (Stockport) producing a huge pb of 14:48.91 for second place while Robbie Brown (City of York) in his first-ever outing over the distance on the track, claiming third place in 14:49.47.

The under-20 women’s 1,500m was a delight for the Wirral club’s supporters with victory going to Keira Brady-Jones in 4:36.73 with team-mate Ellen Mary Kearney following her home in 4:37.91 as Robyn Greenaway (Cleethorpes) claimed the bronze award with 4:43.39.

Bingley’s Alexander Thompson claimed the under-20 men’s 1,500m title in a time of 4:00.88 with Blackburn’s Ben Makin finishing in second place (4:01.96) and Robin Regan (Eden Runners) crossing the line in bronze position in 4:02.38.

The senior men’s 1,500m was won by Blackburn’s Callum Davidson in 3:55.11 with Luke Minns (Blackpool Wyre and Fylde) finishing runner-up in 3:56.66 as Mark Bostock (Wakefield) claimed the third podium place with 3:57.74.

Next up was the senior men’s 3,000m steeplechase and it was a confident George Lewis (East Cheshire and Tameside) who claimed victory in 10:15.57. Blaclburn’s Marc Hartley finished second (10:37.98) and Benjamin Read (Preston) kept going to be rewarded with third place in 13:02.29.

After the endurance events it was the turn of the speed merchants who had earlier in the day contested heats and first up was the under-20 women’s 400m and it was a success for Kingston upon Hull’s Jodie Martin who returned 57.01s. Harrogate’s Isabelle Bloom won the battle for second place over Durham City’s Tia Anderson, Bloom stopping the clock at 57.54s against 57.56s for Anderson.

The under-20 men’s one lap contest was next on track and victory went to Middlesbrough Mandale’s Sam Tyers in a new pb of 49.48s. Benjamin Verbickas (Crewe and Nantwich) finished in second place in 50.07s with Nathaniel Dyas (Hallamshire) completing the one-two-three in 50.24s.

The senior men’s 400m title went to Sale’s Rory Keen who finished strongly to record 49.13s and pip Morpeth’s Matthew Waterfield (49.57s). Keen’s team-mate Cameron Duff claimed the bronze medal with 50.48s.

The under-20 women’s 100 metres was next up and it was a winning run by Gateshead’s new junior international Joy Eze who recorded a new pb of 11.61s. Trinity Powell (Manchester) in second place also ran a life-time best of 11.78s as did third-place finisher Hilary Gode (Leeds City) with 12.13s.

Louie Hinchliffe was a comfortable winner of the under-20 men’s 100m in a time of 10.83s. Liverpool’s Demi Ologbon finished second in 11.22s to claim silver while Longwood’s Lei-vann Rio McGillvary Allert (Longwood) was a close-up third in 11.24s.

The final track event of the day was the senior women’s 100m and the gold medal went to Wakefield’s Leonie Ashmeade with a winning time of 11.82s. Jarrow and Hebburn’s Nicola Caygill finished runner-up in 12.01s with defending champion Danielle McGifford (Wigan) finishing in third place in 12.26s.

\*THANKS go to all the officials, the first aid team and the Leigh Harriers’ tea ladies who, without their input, the championships could not go ahead.

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