

Mansfield Harriers travelled to Bedford for their second fixture in the British Athletics League and proved that they can mix it with the big clubs.

Having qualified for this prestigious league for the first time in the club's history Harriers now sit only one point off the promotion slots.

An incredibly tight match saw only thirteen points separating second and fifth place. The match went all the way to the last event of the day, taking a new club record and victory in the 4x400m relay to give Mansfield the second spot behind overall victors Glasgow City.

With two matches, away at Glasgow and at Guernsey, remaining Mansfield sit in third place on eight points behind leaders Glasgow (11pts) and Channel Islands (9pts) with their nearest rivals being Victoria Park and Bedford & County, both on six points.

Along with the victory in the 4x400m Relay there were eight individual wins for Mansfield. Greg Millar and Richard Woolley made it a double in the Javelin, Millar throwing a new PB of 54.47m to win the A string, Woolley taking the B with 45.96m. Woolley combined forces with brother Matt to take useful points across the throws events.

Steve Lisgo made a welcome return to racing for the club and, along with James Mee, took maximum points from the steeplechase. Lisgo also finished second in the B string 800m whilst Mee was fourth in the 5000m and in the B string 1500m, Danny Barkes finishing third in the A string in 3:57.99.

Chris Brown made up for last weeks disappointment at Birmingham with victory in the A string 800m in 1:54.36 whilst Paul Wright took the B string 400m in 50.74s.

Martin Cook was third in the A string 400m and also came out on top in the B string Triple Jump – his jump of 13.20m being equalled by the Glasgow athlete but Cook winning on count back. New signing Joshua Bones jumped 14.59m to take third spot, and record a new PB, in the A string.

Neal Baines ran a wind assisted PB of 11.04 to take third in the B string 100m and jumped 6.00m to take second in the B string Long Jump.

Stefan Wilcokson and Jonny Newell both raced over the 110m and 400m Hurdles whilst Hayden Brittain, Aaron Aplin and Stuart King were the other athletes in a highly promising squad.

The impact of the Bedford performance was felt at Stoke where, on the same day, the club continued their fight for survival in Midland League Division One.

Relegation to Division Two next season looks almost certain after a sixth place finish. With only seven male athletes and eight females the day was

always going to be tough – made worse by the men’s team comprising three U17 athletes and four veterans.

The only victory of the day went to Amie Grainger in the B string 400m Hurdles with the award for perseverance going to Becky Smith who competed in seven events in 150 minutes before leaving to return to work.

Smith added the Hammer, Javelin, Triple Jump, 100H, 400H to her more traditional Pole Vault and 200m whilst Grainger added the 400m, 3K, 800m and 4x400m Relay to her 400m Hurdles to make up her maximum five events.

Claudia Rogers turned in a strong 100m after disappointment in her 200m whilst Jackie Massey produced another strong run over 3K and backed it up with a run over 1500m.

Laura Brown returned to competition adding the 400m and 4x400m Relay to the Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump – Kate Raynor also competing in her maximum five events.

Becky Woolley was fourth in the Javelin and the Shot and added the Long Jump and a debut in the 4x400m Relay to her quota for the day. Claire Beaumont was the final member of the squad adding the Discus and Shot to her main Hammer event.

Chris Ashmore completed his own Heptathlon – taking third spot in the B string Shot and Javelin, racing over 100m and 200m and jumping horizontally and vertically in the Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump.

Ashmore was joined in the Shot and Javelin by Steve Woolley who also threw the Hammer and Discus. Team Manager Dave Lisgo put on a Mansfield vest for the first time in many years joining Woolley in the Hammer and Discus and Ashmore in the Long and Triple Jumps.

Steve Grainger was the fourth veteran in the squad starting out with a 66.9s performance over 400m Hurdles before adding the 2K Steeplechase, 400m, 1500m and a leg of the 4x400m to his day.

Grainger was joined in the Relay by the three U17 athletes – Tom Wallett, Tom O’Mara and Connor McHale. Earlier on Wallett had completed a sprint triathlon racing over 100m, 200m and 400m, O’Mara had raced over 800m and 1500m with McHale jumping over the 400mH, 2K Steeplechase and Pole Vault.

Mansfield based Rachel Gair, competing for Trafford AC, threw over 60 metres in the Hammer for the first time this season in the UK Women’s League at Manchester. Gair’s throw of 60.77m was just 14cms short of her lifetime best and cracking the 60 metre barrier, as well as moving into seventh spot on the UK rankings, will be a big boost to her confidence.

Rachel's sister Charlotte threw in a Trafford AC vest for the first time having signed for the Manchester based club as a higher level athlete – logging a best throw of 34.98m in the Discus.