

express Athletics

Speller: Key to our success was dedication and commitment



A DETERMINED women's team from WSEH won athletics' equivalent to the FA Cup Final at Bedford Stadium on Saturday and were crowned the 2007 British Athletics League Cup winners.

The competition is on a knockout basis and brings together the top clubs in Great Britain in a battle to become the UK champions.

After winning through successive rounds, the WSEH ladies overcame the might of seven highly sponsored or big city clubs to lift the coveted BAL Cup trophy.

Team manager Irene Speller said: "The key to the team's success was the dedication and commitment of some of the club's top athletes who turned out to contest the final,

BAL Cup

despite it being late in a long season."

Lesley Owusu had planned to finish her season the previous week, but decided to support her team endeavours. Her reward was a season's best of 53.76 in the 400m, achieved in very unfavourable weather conditions.

Helen Pryer continued to follow her successful plan of mixing club and top flight competition. Featuring in both short sprints, Pryer was victorious in the 200m and took runners up slot in the 100m to add 18 points to the team total.

Sophie Morris, who like Owusu has had a long season and like Pryer, featured in the recently televised Crystal Palace Grand Prix, also made time to support her club.

She won the 3000m race with consummate ease and gained top points.

In the absence of the club's top Discus thrower, Joanne John added this event to her main discipline, the Hammer. Despite the difficult conditions, John threw close to her best in both events to add her substantial contribution to the team's success.

Irie Hill also postponed the end of her season to fly in from Germany to compete in the Pole Vault and brought her experience to bear on vaulting in very blustery and difficult conditions.

She came in at what was for her a low height, despite having only eight attempts available for the event. Her caution proved to be well founded as some athletes failed at their first height and Hill achieved third place.

Jenny Heckford and Vicky Fouhy,

two of WSEH's top U20 athletes rose to the challenge of top flight senior competition, placing third in the 100m Hurdles and 800m races, respectively. Frances Smithson gamely competed in the Triple Jump, which is not one of her key events and Caroline Heaney turned up to ensure the team could field the medley relay team.

Pictured left to right are John, Owusu and Pryer with the trophy.

WHILE the WSEH Ladies team were grabbing the glory at the British League Cup Final at Bedford on Saturday, the club's men had major headaches in fielding a team due to injuries and holidays.

The best WSEH performance of the day came in the Triple Jump where international Julian Golley showed his class with a second place in 15m88.