Summer Grand Prix – 24th May 2025 Report

Saturday 24th May 2025, witnessed the return of NOTAN's Summer Grand Prix. After a five-year absence organisers were delighted to see the eagerness of many of the competitors, some of whom arrived almost an hour early, and their accompanying parents who were also keen to be part of the action.

First commenced on 4th April 2013 with 16 athletes across all four age groups the 2025 event had 99 competitors, with the largest contingent in the Year 5 category with 20 boys and 16 girls competing in the sprint, howler, distance and standing long jump events.

Whilst the ethos of the event is fun and enjoyment and the willingness to learn new skills the natural enthusiasm and competitiveness of those who participate cannot be tamed or removed. And it is this passion to excel that has earned special mention for the following.

Harris Jobson, Blyth - Yr3 Boys 400m –1m 14seconds matched the competition record held by Zac Brannon, set on 01/07/2016.

Minnie Carey, North Shields Poly - Yr4 Girls 75m –– 11.0 – NEW RECORD surpassing Maya Turner's previous best of 11.4 on 01/05/2017.

Matthias Gheorghiu, North Shields Poly, Year 5 Boys 75m – 10.7 – NEW RECORD surpassing William Fowler's previous best of 10.8 on 01/05/2014.

Special mention must also be given to the person responsible for bringing this event back.

The Summer Grand Prix cannot be held without an army of volunteers. COVID-19 brought an abrupt end to NOTAN's athletic calendar. The National lock-down and its impact on people's lives had ramifications well beyond the control of the Trustees. Despite being asked each Spring if it would return the changes in routine and life circumstances meant those who had previously operated the event were no longer available.

In early 2025, this one person kept pushing, encouraging me to approach the clubs who make up the North of Tyne Athletic Network (NOTAN): Blyth Running Club, North Shields Polytechnic and Wallsend Harriers, to find new people. Fear of disappointment made me resist but when the Trustees had a discussion about dissolving NOTAN, I took hold of the nettle and did as asked. I was amazed to find people in all the network clubs willing to take on previously hard to find someone to do roles and more.

On Saturday we witnessed the return of the army many of whom did not even know they would even be a volunteer before arriving at Churchill Playing Fields. Such is their passion and dedication to the sport that they timed, measured, raked, brushed and retrieved and recorded all of the events on the day. Naturally, errors were made. We are human after all. Putting that aside it was a marvellous day. And the person responsible for it all was there too. Bernard Johnson, thank you.

Tommy Brannon

Chair

26/05/2025

NORTH OF TYNE ATHLETICS NETWORK