

## *Varsity for Field Events and Relays (VFEAR) - February 29th 2020*

VFEAR was the last match in which Oxford and Cambridge were able to compete against each other this year, and what a match it was! One of the first events to take place, Discus set the tone for the rest of the events of the day. Bridget Fryer, followed by Cara James at Rachel Elwood, all threw further than any Oxford thrower, achieving a cumulative throw of 126.57m against 101.61m. For the women's throws, next came the hammer, a much more tense event; victory relied on Emily Baker-Thurston's final two throws after many caged previous attempts. But the pressure did not get to her, and clear domination of light blue was seen again. For Shot Putt, with a soaring 1m73 lead, Cara James brought the very clear victory to the womens' team, which included our beloved ex captain Maxine Meju, making a return to guarantee the field victory. Next came comfortable victories in the Pole Vault and Long Jump. with key players Jen Sheasby and Mary Adenji leading the field. The Pole Vault was especially notable, as every single Cambridge vaulter jumped higher than any Oxford athlete!

The high jump was the deciding event for the women's field. After an outstanding performance in the throws, a victory would allow Cambridge to take the trophy home. Martha Stevens, current women's captain, decided to join in with the standard hurdles/high jump combination and after a shaky start getting interactive with the upright (scar to show for it), showed incredible progress, not allowing Oxford to get ahead by a single centimeter. This was until she had to leave the competition to run to the 4x200m start in true heptathlete style! The competition was extremely tense with Martha and Izzy both matching Oxford's 3rd and 4th athletes' heights.. Florence and Lea remained matched with Oxford's top two at every height until the final height. Whilst Cambridge won on countback, it was a perfect tie between the two teams. But having won the Hammer, Shot, Discus, Pole Vault, this draw guaranteed the domination of light blue.

On the track side Cambridge were lacking a few key players, committed to important cross country or championship races. Louise Shanahan was busy winning the 1500m indoor Irish national championships, an absence that the Oxford team celebrated very enthusiastically as they did not see her emerge from the bus. Despite the fact that many first team athletes were missing, a great competition was provided by hare and hounds runners, many of whom were in their first year at Cambridge! Notably the distance medley relay, for which we were against a very strong Oxford line up, saw an incredible 1200 leg from Ella Fenelly, followed by an incredible 400m leg from Belinda Clarke. Belinda was roped into the event last minute after Erica had to be drafted into the 200m Erica. The high jump, event the field victory was relying on, was still going on, forcing Florence to pull out of the 200m. Leah Everson held one well during the 800m and Emly Bradley finished off with a very strong 1600m, despite the victory going to Oxford for the race. There were "mixed results" (to quote the Achilles instagram page) in the hurdles, and although the women's team didn't win the event, many of the athletes achieved a PB on the day. There were more PBs (and an exact equal PB for Florence Cochrane) for the flat sprinters too, in

an incredibly close fought 60m, with the win ultimately going Oxford's way (Only 100th of a second in it!). The women match resulted in a victory in the field and a loss in the track and a memorable day for all the women involved.

The men brought back more trophies still, with a victory in the track and a draw in the field (which meant retaining the trophy!). The day was especially marked by the men's sprints team breaking the 4x200m VFEAR record in 1:29.90 and winning by 3 seconds, whilst being 0.02s off also taking the 4x400m record in 3:19.63. An incredible race that left us all very excited! Sprinters were definitely on form as Mounir Hinedi won the 60m in 7.09 and Cambridge placed 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th sealing the victory. Mounir and Andrew both achieved PBs. Sprint hurdles saw a similar success with PBs for Samuel Clarke, Joe Mitchell and Morgan Treasure and a clear victory for our captain Sam Clarke. Elliot Baines even decided to drop Rugby for a day or two to be a member of this winning team. Sadly the domination of the sprints did not translate to the distances, with a few athletes unavailable and others injured, leading to a loss of both the Medley and the 4x800.

For heavy throws an outstanding performance from Marley Young in Discus and Shot, achieving blues distance in both, was not enough to steele the win and Cambridge lost all of the heavy throws. The javelin however was the exception in throws, with a clear Cambridge victory thanks to Jude Compton-Stewart throwing 13m further than the rest of the field with 55.6m. Another great win came from the pole vaulters, exceeding the Oxford total by 70cm, with two new recruits Illya Carey and Patrick O'Keefe. Long jump saw the 6m line broken by three of our four teammates, Georgios Zaphiris taking the win with 6.45. He will also finish 1st in the triple jump in 13.89m, with CUAC securing a 1,2,3. High Jump did not see the same success as the other jumps sadly, with last minute injuries leading to a narrow defeat.

A successful day was followed by a dinner back in Cambridge, which was great fun, despite it's last minute nature! Although we would not normally hold an event following VFEAR, with a sailing regatta cancelled and a host of spare seats to shift, CUAC were quick to snap up spaces at a black tie event hosted at the Royal Cambridge Hotel. The turnaround was tight to say the least, with approximately 20 minutes in between the coaches pulling in back at Wilberforce Road, and the dinner starting. However we put our speed and athleticism to good use and managed to throw on our best and make it there in time. Whilst being entertained (and slightly confused) by some of the sailing club antics across the room, we had the opportunity to relax and reflect together on what had been a great competition at Lee Valley. Finally, the evening was rounded off with singing and dancing in Emma Bar, having been invited along by ex CUAC athlete Mojo who was in control of the decks at a DJ of the week event.



### BUCS Indoors

From the 14th to 16th of February, CUAC took a squad of 23 athletes (10 women, 13 men) to compete at BUCS indoors in Sheffield. This is the largest group of athletes we have taken to this competition in many years, and we have to thank our sponsors, The EyeBag Company for helping to fund the travel and accommodation for the event.

Despite the long drive up to Sheffield and the stay in unfamiliar accommodation, there were some stellar performances across the board. On the men's side we had two athletes make it into finals. Ryan Morgan made it into the triple jump final with a jump of 13.17m and Morgan Treasure jumped 6.42m into the Long Jump final. Callum Court won the B final jumping 4.50m, the same height as 6th place in the A final. Sam Day and Billy Matthews both made it into the semi finals of the 400m and our depleted 4x200m team narrowly missed out making it into the final.

The women's team had an equally strong showing, with standout performance from Louise Shanahan, a first-year PhD student at Trinity College. Louise ran some very tactical races in the 800m heats on Friday and Saturday before storming her way to a gold medal in the final on Sunday with a time of 2:09.07. Mary Adeniji was set to compete in two events, the triple and long jump. She secured a bronze medal in Triple with an impressive jump of 11.73m, however sadly sustained an injury and had to withdraw from Long.

Despite the hassle of leaving a busy Cambridge term, the trip was deemed a resounding success by all who attended. This may be because of the competition, or because of the fun that comes along with any squad overnight trip (shared ice bath anyone?). Sadly BUCS Indoors is unlikely to happen in the 2020/21 season, but in the coming years, look out for a much higher CUAC turnout at this national event.



*VFEAR 2020 Team Photo*

## Teams

### **Women's Team**

Florence Cochrane - Sprints

Annie Geiger - Hurdles

Louise Shanahan\*\* - 800m

Leah Everson - 800m

Mary Adeniji\*\* - Long & Triple Jump

Cara James\* - Shot Put

Rosie Rice - Shot Put

Christina Antoniou - Long Jump

Lea Wenger - High Jump

Jen Sheasby - Pole Vault

### **Men's Team**

Kaesi Opara - Sprints

Mounir Hinedi - Sprints

Zute Ogbedeh - Sprints

Ben Ross-Russell - Sprints

Ryan Morgan\* - Triple Jump

Morgan Treasure - Long Jump

Andrew Ejemai - Long Jump

Sam Day - 400m

Billy Matthews - 400m

James Coxon - 1500m

Aiden Turner - 1500m

Callum Court - Pole Vault

\*finalist \*\*medallist

