

Sidney-Darwin Dash & Quarter-Mile Challenge



Sunday 11th June 2023

11.15 am

2023 STARTING LINEUPS

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| <p>JUNIOR GIRLS QUARTER-MILE CHALLENGE</p> <p>Lane 1 Indian Q (EDH) Lane 2 Polly H (G) Lane 3 Bethan R (EDH) Lane 4 Amelia B (MSH) Lane 5 Daisy P (M) Lane 6 Georgina G (MSH)</p> | <p>JUNIOR GIRLS SIDNEY-DARWIN DASH</p> <p>Lane 1 Otilie G (G) Lane 2 April H (MSH) Lane 3 Denise M (M) Lane 4 Frankie G (M) Lane 5 Ariana M (G) Lane 6 Belle H (EDH)</p> |
| <p>JUNIOR BOYS QUARTER-MILE CHALLENGE</p> <p>Lane 1 Will R (O) Lane 2 Zac W (Rb) Lane 3 Alex W (Rb) Lane 4 Ethan P (R) Lane 5 Will M (PH) Lane 6 Leon B (Rt) Lane 7 Pachara P (Rt) Lane 8 Henry Z (O)</p> | <p>JUNIOR BOYS SIDNEY-DARWIN DASH</p> <p>Lane 1 Harry P (Rt) Lane 2 Raph C (PH) Lane 3 Dele S (Ch) Lane 4 Ollie P (O) Lane 5 Monty W (S) Lane 6 Ethan P (R) Lane 7 Will Y (I) Lane 8 Gordon S (I)</p> |
| <p>SENIOR GIRLS QUARTER-MILE CHALLENGE</p> <p>Lane 1 Holly Y (M) Lane 2 Sophia U (EDH) Lane 3 Iris D (G) Lane 4 Sophia C (MSH) Lane 5 Eva H (G) Lane 6 Rosie M (EDH)</p> | <p>SENIOR GIRLS SIDNEY-DARWIN DASH</p> <p>Lane 1 Caitlin F (G) Lane 2 Romilly B (MSH) Lane 3 Iris D (G) Lane 4 Anni S (EDH) Lane 5 Eloise J (MSH) Lane 6 Mimi G (EDH)</p> |
| <p>SENIOR BOYS QUARTER-MILE CHALLENGE</p> <p>Lane 1 Dan G (O) Lane 2 Brad K (R) Lane 3 Harry P-M (I) Lane 4 Jack K (PH) Lane 5 Will S (R) Lane 6 Ryan M (S) Lane 7 George H (O) Lane 8 Kristian T (I)</p> | <p>SENIOR BOYS SIDNEY-DARWIN DASH</p> <p>Lane 1 Jan V-A (Rt) Lane 2 Jack K (PH) Lane 3 Harry P-M (I) Lane 4 Dan O (Rt) Lane 5 Ed P (I) Lane 6 Archie B (R) Lane 7 Tom P (O) Lane 8 Umar S (S) Lane 9 John W (R)</p> |

PRESENTATIONS AND AWARDS

Spectators are requested to kindly stay for the presentations of the prizes and awards

Sidney-Darwin Dash & Quarter-Mile Challenge

History of the Event

Monday 22nd May saw the Heats of the Sidney Darwin Dash and Quarter Mile Challenge 2023. Most schools at this time of year will, of course, be gearing up towards their annual Sports Day, as indeed Shrewsbury will be on Wednesday 28th June. However, few schools have as unique an athletics event as this one with runners sprinting down the middle of Top Common or racing around the Cricket Oval. With echoes of the Trinity College Great Court Run, our own event is in fact a deceptively recent 'tradition', not hundreds of years old as one might expect but in fact first run in 2011.

The genesis of the event came when a local resident of the town contacted the school asking whether we would be interested in a silver butter dish top that she had found in her attic, presented on 17 June 1869 to a certain H Hughes for winning the Shrewsbury School Quarter-Mile. Having gratefully received this donation, we added a rather fine plinth and silver plates and considered the idea of recreating the old 'Quarter-Mile' event. A suitable location was scouted for, with various areas around the school campus and beyond considered, but the area around Central was settled on to include a loop down past the Main School Buildings and around the Alington Hall. We decided, moreover, to extend the event to include a sprint, with the tree-lined avenue running from the Sidney to Darwin statues providing a natural 'track' to put our speedsters to the test. It was certainly quirky and not your average athletics event, but the first year's event was a tremendous success, with competitors and spectators relishing the uniqueness of the event and the exciting action that it generated.

In 2016 the event was relocated to Top Common, being deemed a more suitable (and safer!) option for our exceptionally quick runners!

Please do come and support on Sunday. Parents are welcome – refreshments will be available from 11am. There will also be a 'Children's Race' after the Final event.

Races will start at 11.15am on Top Common.

Good luck to all competitors!

EJD

Head of Physical Education

Teacher in Charge of Athletics

ATHLETICS AT SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

According to the school records, the very first athletic sports meet at Shrewsbury was held in 1840, and in the Hunt's 'Hound Books' there is a copy of the programme from 1843. This event was held in the 'lower field' near the ball courts, though the following year the event was moved to nearby Coton Hill. Basil Oldham's *History of Shrewsbury School* notes "the distinction of having an athletic meeting with a longer history than any other in England." Until 1950, athletics came under the activities of The Hunt, and as such, the terminology used in the various athletics events was taken from horse-racing just as the cross-country terminology was taken from fox hunting. A list of starters for these races (which included 'The Derby Stakes' and 'The Two Year Old Stakes') would give the name of the 'owner', the name of the 'horse' and the name of the 'rider' which was in fact the name of the runner himself. Oldham's history provides an amusing account of the sorts of information one could find in the programme:

"The names invented for horses contained subtle allusions, not usually, of course, now recognisable; but a pencilled explanation has been added on some surviving programmes, such as 'fond of ladies' against a horse named Amorite, 'his father is an ironmonger' against another named Pig-iron and 'caught out of bounds before 7 o'clock' against one named Early Bird... Till 1929 the Sports included a fantastic half-mile handicap, called the Headroom Stakes, that was treated as a frivolity unbecoming so august an occasion. At one time most of the School ran in it, and consequently the Huntsman's handicapping could not be based on any real principle. Nor was much attempt made so to base it."

(A History of Shrewsbury School by Basil Oldham)

Perhaps the most famous of all Salopian athletes was Bob Tisdall who won the Public Schools 440 yards, and went on to win a record four events at Cambridge in the Varsity meet with Oxford (440 yards, 120 yards hurdles, long jump and shot putt), a record only equalled 60 years later in 1987. His crowning glory would come in 1932 where at the Los Angeles Olympics representing Ireland - Tisdall equalled the Olympic 440yard hurdles record of 52.8 seconds in the semi-finals before going on to win the Final and take the Olympic Gold Medal in a time of 51.7 seconds, which would have been a new Olympic Record had he not knocked over the final hurdle, which under the rules of the prevailing laws of the time meant that the time would not stand. The Olympic title, however, was Tisdall's, and we can be very proud of this heroic Salopian and his athletic achievements at the very pinnacle of world sport.

Shrewsbury's traditions in athletics are long and proud, and we very much hope that the more recent 'tradition' of the Sidney-Darwin Dash and Quarter-Mile Challenge not only provides an appreciative nod to the athletics heritage of old but will moreover become embedded as something of a Salopian institution to be eagerly anticipated each year.













Bob Tisdall, Olympic Gold Medalist, 1932

School Records

Junior Sidney-Darwin Dash:

Girls: Daisy McMullen (G) 13.31 (2017)

Boys: Nikita Martynov (Ch) 11.81 (2018)

Senior Sidney Darwin Dash:

Girls: Iris D (G) 12.98* (2023)

Boys: James Plaut (S) 11.04 (2015)

Junior Quarter Mile Challenge:

Girls: Francesca Harris (EDH) 65.31 (2018)

Boys: Charlie Tait-Harris (S) 52.41 (2014)

Senior Quarter Mile Challenge:

Girls: Iris D (G) 59.40* (2023)

Boys: Jack K (PH) 50.96* (2023)

*Record was achieved in a Heat

Events Order
Starting at 11.15am

1. Junior Girls Quarter Mile Challenge
2. Junior Boys Quarter Mile Challenge
3. Senior Girls Quarter Mile Challenge
4. Senior Boys Quarter Mile Challenge
5. Junior Girls Darwin Dash
6. Junior Boys Darwin Dash
7. Senior Girls Darwin Dash
8. Senior Boys Darwin Dash
9. Open Children's 'Fun' Darwin Dash (under 11's)