

Eastern Rhinos trample weakened Cents - page 56



The Herts ADVERTISER SPORT



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James McMurray (368) on his way to breaking Steve Cram's long-standing record in Lille, northern France, on Sunday. Photo supplied.

Howell excited by Southern adventure

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ST ALBANS City boss David Howell says he is not worried about stepping into the unknown when City begin their maiden season in the Southern Premier Division this season.

Both Howell and City have experience in the Ryman Premier Division but both will be having their first taste of the Southern League this season, something Howell says provides exciting challenges.

He said: "At this level, you've played teams from the Southern League in Trophy matches and cup matches and non-league football is incestuous, everybody knows everybody and we've had a few games against, for example, Hemel and Chesham and sides who are in this league, and I know quite a few of the managers and players are players."

"I would say one thing about the Southern League which I think will be good, if you get a decent side together here, is you'll be going to some grounds that have catchment areas that are a lot larger than those in the Ryman League, sort of five or six-hundred. I'm looking forward to that but we need to get a side together that is capable of that."

City have been handed home ties in the First Qualifying Round of both the FA Cup and FA Trophy.

The Saints will have to wait until the results from both the Extra Preliminary and Preliminary rounds are in with David Howell's side set to take on either Haringey Borough or AFC Kempston Rovers, Crawley Green or Berkhamsted. In the FA Trophy the Saints will face either Ashford Town (Middx) or Maidstone United at Clarence Park on Saturday, October 22.

McMurray smashes record

ST ALBANS' middle distance king James McMurray has etched his name in the record books by breaking Steve Cram's long-standing U17 1500m record.

McMurray, who was competing in the IAAF World Youth Championships in Lille, France, at the weekend, finished sixth in the final in a time of 3.46.5 to smash Cram's 34-year-old record by 1.19 seconds.

Just like the golden years of British middle distance running when Cram, Coe and Ovett delighted with their records and dominance back in the early 80s, McMurray enjoyed a rivalry with fellow Brit Robbie Farnham Rose from Tonbridge AC alongside some very fast Ethiopian and Kenyan athletes.

McMurray's route to the final started last Thursday when he came third in heat two with a time of 3.50.16 to qualify comfortably for Sunday's show-down.

The beautiful stadium in Lille and the incredible atmosphere provided the perfect backdrop for records to be broken.

With union flags flying and plenty of vocal support from the St Albans contingent in the crowd, McMurray produced one of the performances of his life to smash the record and put the St Albans runner comfortably at the top of the all time British ranking for an U17 British athlete over the distance.

The race was won in 3.39.13 by Teshome Dirirsa from Ethiopia with McMurray the highest placed Euro-

pean athlete just ahead of GB team mate Farnham Rose who clocked a new PB of 3.47.60 to finish in eighth place.

"It is just unbelievable," McMurray told UKA News. "The race was amazing, how I like it. I have to give some massive thanks to my coach for all her time spent training me, to my parents for supporting me and for coming to watch me race."

McMurray's progression as an athlete started when he joined St Albans Athletics Club at 10 years old after showing strength in the schools district cross country races.

McMurray will also be in action this summer representing England at the Commonwealth Youth Games on the Isle of Man.

■ Another of the club's promising young athletes, Robin O'Connor, a pupil at St Albans School, excelled in the All England Schools Championships in Gateshead earlier this month.

O'Connor ran a PB of 4.12.35, narrowly missing out on the bronze medal in his first major track and field competition.

■ St Albans AC is urgently in need of more coaches to deal with the increase in young, talented athletes at the club.

They are seeking experienced coaches; ex-athletes who are willing to train as coaches and enthusiasts to help nurture the club's promising athletes and the expected influx, the London 2012 Olympics is hoped to generate.

Anybody who is interested should contact Peter Poulain on 07905 956893.



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