

ESAA – SOMERSET ROLL OF HONOUR

The *Somerset Schools' Games Association* was formed in 1921 but was limited to football. In 1922 the Association decided to include athletics and, in 1923, held its first County Championship at the Huish Football Ground, Yeovil on 28th July. Only 7 schools competed with the bigger centres of Bath, Bridgewater, Frome and Taunton not sending teams. County championships were not held in 1924 and 1925.

The *Somerset Schools' Athletics Association* was then formed in 1926 with its first County Championship being held on 19th June, 1926 at Weston-super-Mare with 7 districts taking part.

In 1927 the Association affiliated to the English Schools' Athletic Association and had immediate success when Eric Milkins of St. John's Senior School, Weston-super-Mare won the 1927 ESAA Boys 100 yards title.

Eric was the reigning County champion at 100 yards, 220 yards, sprint hurdles, high jump and long jump, a superb achievement considering there were now 14 districts from all over Somerset taking part in the championship.

OLYMPIC GAMES MEDALLIST

Mary Rand (née Bignal)	1964 Long Jump Gold, 1964 Pentathlon Silver, 1964 4 x 100m Bronze 1955 I LJ-2, 1956 I LJ-1, 1957 S HJ-1
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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLIST

Mary Rand (née Bignal)	1962 Long Jump Bronze and 4 x 100m Bronze 1955 I LJ-2, 1956 I LJ-1, 1957 S HJ-1
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COMMONWEALTH GAMES MEDALLISTS

Mary Bignal (later Rand)	1958 Long Jump Bronze, 1966 Long Jump Gold 1955 I LJ-2, 1956 I LJ-1, 1957 S HJ-1
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Kirsty McDermott (WAL) (later Wade)	1982 800m, 1986 800m and 1500m 1979 S 800m-2, 1980 S 800m-1
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Leslie-Ann Skeete (also Wiltshire)	1990 100m Hurdles Bronze 1984 S 100mH-3, 1985 and 1986 S 100mH-1
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Nikki Hamblin (NZL) (also Dorset)	2010 800m and 1500m Silver 2001 J 1500m-3, 2002 J 1500m-1, 2003 and 2004 I 800m-1, 2006 S 800m-3
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Max Robertson	1986 400m Hurdles Silver 1979 I 400mH-2, 1980 I 400mH-1, 1981 S 400mH-2, 1982 S 400mH-1
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Carl Myerscough (also Lancashire)	2002 Shot Put Bronze, 2010 Discus Throw Bronze 1997 and 1998 S SP-1
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BRITISH CHAMPIONS

Mary Bignal (later Rand)	1958 High Jump, 1959 80m Hurdles and Long Jump, 1959 and 1960 Pentathlon, 1961-63 and 1965 Long Jump, 1966 100m Hurdles 1955 I LJ-2, 1956 I LJ-1, 1957 S HJ-1
Kirsty Wade (née McDermott)	1988 800m 1979 S 800m-2, 1980 S 800m-1
Leslie-Ann Skeete (also Wiltshire)	1990 100m Hurdles 1984 S 100mH-3, 1985 and 1986 S 100mH-1
Jacqui Parker	1993 400m Hurdles 1985 S 400mH-2
Hayley Yelling	2002 and 2003 5000m and 10000m, 2005 5000m, 2006 10000m 1991 S 3000m-19
Jemma Simpson	2007, 2009 and 2010 800m 2000 I 800m-1
Isabelle Jeffs	2015 Javelin Throw 2006 J JT-1, 2008 I-1, 2010 S JT-1
Elise Thorner	2025 and 2026 3000m Steeplechase 2017 I 1500mST-1, 2018 S 1500mST-2, 2019 S 1500mST-1
Marcia Sey	2026 100m Hurdles 2015 J 75mH-3, 2016 J 75mH-1, 2017 and 2018 I 80mH-1
Chris Stewart	1970 5000m 1964 S 1M-2, 1965 S 1M-1
Max Robertson	1986-1989 and 1991 400m Hurdles 1979 I 400mH-2, 1980 I 400mH-1, 1981 S 400mH-2, 1982 S 400mH-1
Spencer Duval (also Staffordshire)	1995 and 1997 3000m Steeplechase 1987 S 2000mST-2, 1988 S CC-1 and 2000mST-1
Carl Myerscough (also Lancashire)	2003-2012 Shot Put, 2005 and 2006 Discus Throw 1997 and 1998 S SP-1
Alex Wright	2010, 2012 and 2013 5k Walk 2006 I 5k Walk-2, 2007 I 5k Walk-1, 2008 S 5k Walk-2, 2009 S 5k Walk-1

Notes regarding the athlete details shown above :

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An entry for each athlete consists of the first line detailing their Major Championship medal win or their British Championship title win. Second (and subsequent) lines show their ESAA Championship performances in the abbreviated format – *yyyy a eeee p* where :

yyyy Championship Year

a Age Group (I – Intermediate, J – Junior, S – Senior, pre-1948 the age groups were Under-14 (U14) and Under-16 (U16))

eeee Event

p Place achieved (note an 'h-' indicates the performance was in a heat and 'r-' indicates it was in a preliminary round)

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ESAA GIRLS CHAMPIONS

1954	J	JT	Vivian Bradley	2000	I	CC	Courtney Birch
1956	I	LJ	Mary Bignal	2000	I	100m	Danielle Selley
1957	S	4x110y	Somerset	2000	I	3000m	Courtney Birch
1957	S	HJ	Mary Bignal	2000	I	800m	Jemma Simpson
1961	I	LJ	Lorraine Winfield	2002	J	PEN	Emily Bonnett
1962	S	HJ	Susan Dennler	2004	I	HEP	Emily Bonnett
1963	S	LJ	Lorraine Winfield	2004	I	300mH	Emily Bonnett
1968	S	80mH	Lindsey Cooke	2004	S	DT	Lauren Therin
1969	I	80mH	Jane Eastman	2005	J	DT	Katie Wickman
1969	S	DT	Vivien Knowles	2006	J	JT	Isabelle Jeffs
1971	S	100mH	Diana Toon	2007	I	DT	Katie Wickman
1971	S	JT	Carol Johnson	2007	S	JT	Sophie Thomas
1972	I	100m	Linda Nash	2008	I	JT	Isabelle Jeffs
1973	S	100mH	Bridget Rutledge	2010	J	CC	Emily Smith
1974	S	100m	Linda Nash	2010	S	JT	Isabelle Jeffs
1974	S	JT	Susan James	2011	J	PEN	Amy Cooper
1975	S	4x100m	Somerset	2012	S	HJ	Evie Grogan
1980	S	800m	Kirsty McDermott	2013	J	JT	Laurie Dawkins
1982	I	JT	Julie Abel	2014	S	1500mST	Holly Brown
1983	S	JT	Julie Abel	2015	I	JT	Laurie Dawkins
1984	S	1500m	Elise Lyon	2016	J	75mH	Marcia Sey
1985	S	100mH	Lesley-Ann Skeete	2016	S	HEP	Ellen Barber
1986	J	SP	Yvonne Anekwe	2017	I	1500mST	Elise Thorner
1986	S	100mH	Lesley-Ann Skeete	2017	I	80mH	Marcia Sey
1986	S	1500m	Sian Pilling	2018	I	1500mST	Amelia Wills
1991	J	JT	Emma Rich	2018	I	80mH	Marcia Sey
1991	I	400m	Caroline Espley	2019	J	LJ	Seren Rodgers
1994	S	3000m	Alice Braham	2019	S	1500mST	Elise Thorner
1994	S	800m	Dorothea Lee	2021	I	3k Walk	Abby Hughes
1995	J	HJ	Jennifer Hills	2022	S	HEP	Seren Rodgers
1997	S	3000m	Amber Gascoigne	2025	S	100m	Tiana Rizzo
1998	S	3000m	Amber Gascoigne	2025	S	100mH	Eden Robinson
1999	J	CC	Courtney Birch				

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ESAA BOYS CHAMPIONS

1927	U14	100y	Eric Milkins	1987	I	1500mST	Robert Olney
1948	I	DT	D. Gedye	1988	S	CC	Spencer Duval
1948	I	JT	R. Waterman	1988	S	2000mST	Spencer Duval
1952	J	440y	Roger Grounds	1989	J	PEN	Ricky Glover
1953	J	440y	Roger Grounds	1989	J	80mH	Ricky Glover
1954	I	440y	Roger Grounds	1989	I	JT	Peter Sturmey
1954	S	HJ	Desmond Luke	1990	J	DT	James Kindon
1955	I	440y	Roger Grounds	1990	I	1500mST	Adam Duke
1955	S	100y	Derek Needham	1991	J	JT	Jamie Whelan
1956	S	440y	Roger Grounds	1991	S	2000mST	Adam Duke
1957	I	4x110y	Somerset	1991	S	SP	Lee Newman
1958	S	LJ	David J. Starling	1994	I	HT	Kevin Davies
1963	S	880y	Timothy Taylor	1997	J	80mH	Chris Tye-Walker
1964	I	SP	Rodney Speed	1997	S	SP	Carl Myerscough
1965	I	JT	Roland Hancock	1998	S	HJ	Ed Willers
1965	S	1M	Chris Stewart	1998	S	SP	Carl Myerscough
1966	S	200yH	Gareth Edwards	1999	I	100mH	Chris Tye-Walker
1967	I	100y	Ford Dennis	2000	I	CC	Frank Tickner
1967	S	880y	David Burden	2002	S	JT	Felix Hatton
1968	J	JT	Caraig Berkley	2005	J	PEN	Ben Gibb
1968	I	100y	Ford Dennis	2006	J	CC	Nathan Young
1969	S	JT	Anthony Harper	2006	J	1500m	Nathan Young
1970	S	JT	Anthony Harper	2007	J	DT	Liam Biddlecombe
1970	S	TJ	Rodney Heward-Mills	2007	I	5k Walk	Alex Wright
1971	S	TJ	Rodney Heward-Mills	2008	J	JT	Robin Danaher
1972	S	HT	Eric Berry	2008	S	DEC	Ben Gibb
1973	J	LJ	Clive West	2009	I	OCT	James Lelliott
1973	S	HT	Eric Berry	2009	S	5k Walk	Alex Wright
1974	J	PV	Neil Barnes	2010	I	JT	Robin Danaher
1975	J	DT	Paul Bowkett	2010	I	TJ	Jimi Tele
1975	I	LJ	Clive West	2010	S	2000mST	Charlie Maclean
1975	S	1500m	Martin Wilson	2011	S	LJ	James Lelliott
1976	S	DT	Christopher Wilkinson	2012	I	100m	Ronnie Wells
1977	I	DT	Paul Bowkett	2012	S	2000mST	Blair Brown
1977	S	DT	Christopher Wilkinson	2012	S	JT	Robin Danaher
1978	J	80mH	Tom Leeson	2013	S	400m	Elliot Rutter
1978	S	110mH	Nick Alexander	2014	J	SP	Cliff Schwabauer
1979	S	100m	Alfons Adedeji	2017	I	OCT	Jack Turner
1980	I	400mH	Max Robertson	2018	I	LJ	Jami Schlueter
1981	J	JT	Richard Meads	2018	S	DEC	Jack Turner
1982	S	400mH	Max Robertson	2021	S	110mH	Harry Barton
1982	S	HT	Tony Kenneally	2023	I	1500mST	Dillon Millard
1983	S	TJ	Steven Anderson	2024	I	3k Walk	Jack Wynn

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ESAA BOYS CHAMPIONS (cont'd)

2025	S	2000mST	Dillon Millard
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SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL ATHLETICS BOARD (SIAB)

The SIAB hold 2 annual international meetings for school athletes from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These are for *Cross Country* and *Track and Field*. The *Indoor Pentathlon International* (commonly referred to as the *SIAB Indoor Pentathlon*) is actually organised by the *Scottish Schools' Athletic Association (SSAA)*.

A fourth championship, the *British Schools Indoor Athletics Championships* was also held from 1990 to 2000.

GIRLS WINNERS

1968	S	80mH	Lindsey Cooke	2000	I	100m	Danielle Selley
1969	S	DT	Vivien Knowles	2000	I	3000m	Courtney Birch
1971	S	100mH	Diana Toon	2000	I	800m	Jemma Simpson
1971	S	JT	Carol Johnson	2004	I	300mH	Emily Bonnett
1973	S	100mH (A)	Bridget Ruttledge	2008	I	JT	Isabelle Jeffs
1985	I	DT	Amanda Barnes	2017	I	1500mST	Elise Thorner
1996	I	1500m	Tommy Kemp	2017	I	80mH	Marcia Sey
1996	U16	iHJ	Jennifer Hills	2018	I	1500mST	Amelia Wills
1999	I	PV	Lindsay Hodges	2021	O16	iPEN	Lucy Fellows

BOYS WINNERS

1965	S	1M	Chris Stewart	1989	U16	iPEN	Ricky Glover
1967	S	880y	David Burden	1990	I	1500mST	Adam Duke
1968	S	100y	Ford Dennis	1990	I	CC	Oliver Norman
1970	S	JT	Anthony Harper	1991	I	100mH	Ricky Glover
1970	S	TJ	Rodney Heward-Mills	2009	I	DT	Liam Biddlecombe
1971	S	TJ	Rodney Heward-Mills	2010	I	JT	Robin Danaher
1972	S	HT	Eric Berry	2012	I	100m	Ronnie Wells
1973	S	HT	Eric Berry	2018	J	CC	Joe Ponter
1977	I	DT	Paul Bowkett	2023	I	1500mST	Dillon Millard
1979	I	400mH (B)	Max Robertson				

Winning performances are shown in the abbreviated format – yyyy a eeee where :

yyyy Championship Year

a Age Group (I – Intermediate, J – Junior, S – Senior, Under-16 (U16), Over-16 (O16) and Under-18 (U18))

eeee Event (preceded by an 'i' indicates at an indoor meeting).

In some events in the 1970s and 1980s two races (A and B) were necessary because of a limited number of lanes at the venue. An '(A)' or '(B)' highlights where this was the case.

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WORLD JUNIOR / U20 MEDALLIST - BOYS

1998 Carl Myerscough Shot Put Bronze

EUROPEAN U23 MEDALLIST - GIRLS

2005 Jemma Simpson 800m Silver

EUROPEAN JUNIOR / U20 MEDALLIST - GIRLS

2003 Jemma Simpson 800m Bronze

EUROPEAN JUNIOR / U20 MEDALLIST - BOYS

Elliot Rutter (2013 4 x 400m Bronze) ran in the heat but not in the final.

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MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES

Many athletes who competed in the English Schools' Athletic Association (ESAA) Championships have become very successful in a wide variety of sports including Bobsleigh, Boxing, Cricket, Cycling, Darts, Football, Hockey, Modern Pentathlon, Netball, Powerlifting, Rowing, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Skeleton, Triathlon and Weightlifting.

Details follow of four of Somerset's ESAA competitors who have gone on to have a successful career in other sports :

HOCKEY – MADDIE HINCH MBE

Maddie represented Somerset when finishing 5th in the 2006 ESAA Senior Javelin Throw event.

Only 2 years later she made her debut in goal for the England hockey team. She won a silver medal as a member of the England hockey team in the 2014 Commonwealth Games and a gold medal in the 2015 European Championship.

Maddie won Olympic Gold when the Great Britain team won in Rio in 2016 with her making a major contribution by saving all 4 penalties in the deciding shootout. She has since won bronze medals in the 2015 European Championship, the 2018 Commonwealth Games and the 2020 Olympic Games.

As of July 2022, Maddie has represented England 98 times and Great Britain 68 times.

Maddie was awarded the MBE in the 2017 Honours List.

MODERN PENTATHLON – DANNY NIGHTINGALE

Danny represented Somerset in the 1972 ESAA Senior 2000 metres steeplechase. For the previous 4 years he had already been successfully taking part in Pony Club events like the Tetrathlon (a shooting, swimming, running and horse riding variant of the Modern Pentathlon).

In 1976 he won Great Britain's first Olympic Modern Pentathlon medal, the Team Gold (with Adrian Parker and Jim Fox). He finished 10th in the Individual event. Going into the final event, the 4000 metres pursuit, the team were in 5th place. Remarkably all 3 members of the team finished in the first 6 places in the pursuit to jump into 1st place.

At the 1980 Olympics he was the Modern Pentathlon team captain and finished 15th in the Individual event. The team finished in 8th position. He also won the British title 4 times from 1976 to 1979.

Danny and Mary Rand were both given the Freedom of Wells on the same day in July, 2012.

ROWING – SARAH WINCKLESS MBE

Sarah represented Surrey when finishing third in the 1990 ESAA Inter Discus Throw event. 2 years later, representing Somerset, she finished second in the 1992 ESAA Senior Discus. Soon after, while studying at Cambridge University, she took up rowing.

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Sarah won the 2004 Olympic double sculls rowing bronze medal with her partner Elise Laverick. She followed this with wins in the women's quad event at the 2005 and 2006 World Championships. Interestingly another member of the 2006 World quad team was another ESAA competitor, Debbie Flood.

Sarah was awarded the MBE in the 2015 Honours List.

RUGBY UNION – SIR GARETH EDWARDS CBE

Gareth represented Somerset while on a scholarship at Millfield School and won the 1966 ESAA Senior 200 yards Hurdles. Although good at many sports Gareth's future was always going to be in rugby union.

He made his debut for Cardiff RFC in 1966 and within 6 months, at the age of 19, won the first of his 53 caps for Wales. His meteoric rise continued and in 1968, aged 20, he became Wales's youngest ever captain. Interestingly he never missed a Wales game in the whole of his international career from 1968 to 1978.

Gareth also played 10 times for the British and Irish Lions.

In 2007 he was awarded a CBE and knighted in 2015.