



● The Overton 4x400 metres relay squad of James Foulkes, David Awde, Phil Berntsen and Marty Hooley

SP

Track men have won promotion

OVERTON Harriers' men have secured promotion in the Southern League for only the second time in their history.

They will start next season in division three after tying their final division four match, which proved to be the toughest of the season for the village club.

After winning the four previous matches comfortably, they met a stiff challenge from home team Bournemouth, who were seeking to gain the second promotion slot.

The Harriers successfully maintained their unbeaten record, to finish as division champions.

Bournemouth, however, started the match strongly by gaining valuable points in the field events, while Overton had athletes missing through holiday commitments and injury.

Overton's strength has been on

the track this season, with the squad boosted by a number of Andover-based athletes coached by James Coney.

Victories came thick and fast in the middle distance events. The notable performance came from Chris Jones, who won the 800 metres in an excellent time of 2min 01.6sec.

Marty Hooley, in his first run for the club, also ran confidently to win the B-string 800m.

Other double wins for Overton came in the 400m, through David Awde and Chris Jones, in the 1,500m (Phil Berntsen and Keith Clark) and the 3,000m steeplechase (Keith Vallis and Maz Firouzi).

James Coney was the only winner for the Harriers in the field events and he came top in the B-string long-jump.

James Foulkes narrowly missed winning the triple-jump, where he was pushed into second place by a

Bournemouth athlete.

Overton were one point behind Bournemouth with only the 4x400m relay to come.

Awde ran the first leg, finishing just behind Bournemouth as he handed over to Hooley, who brought the baton home only one metre behind the opposition.

Berntsen ran a fantastic leg in a personal best time of 56.7sec to keep in touch with the leaders.

Bournemouth had no answer to Overton on the anchor leg where Foulkes ran away to take victory and ensure the Harriers kept their unbeaten record.

Club captain David Vosser was delighted that the Harriers had gained promotion.

He said: "Joining forces with Andover ensured that the team now have the strength in depth to hold their own in the higher division."

Points: Overton 135, Bournemouth 133, Poole Runners 96, Team Southampton 61, Winchester 59, Weymouth 4.