

2023



OXFORD UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC CLUB



FRESHERS' GUIDE

A cheat sheet to starting
athletics at Oxford!

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. TRAINING TIMES AND PLACES**
- 3. COMPETITIONS**
- 4. SLANG!**
- 5. MEET THE COMMITTEE**
- 6. WELFARE**

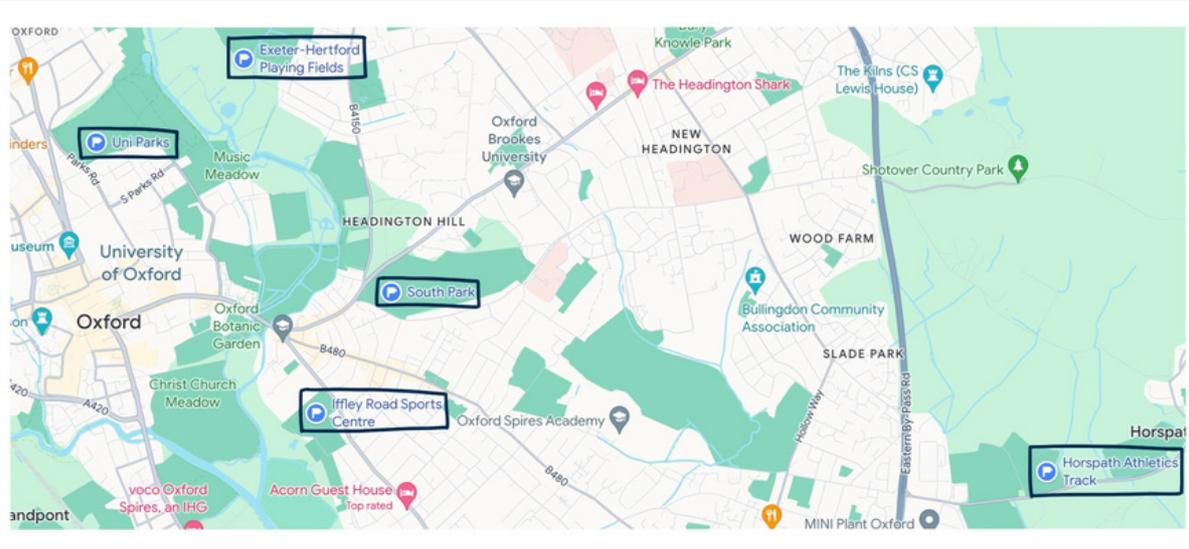
TRAINING TIMES & PLACES

Want to come along to a training session but you don't know where to be or when to go- then this is the place for you! Simply go to the OUAC website to find the training times, all squads are on there. Although most training takes place in the evenings at the Roger Bannister track at Iffley, there are a number of locations and time training can take place at depending on your event and the time of year.

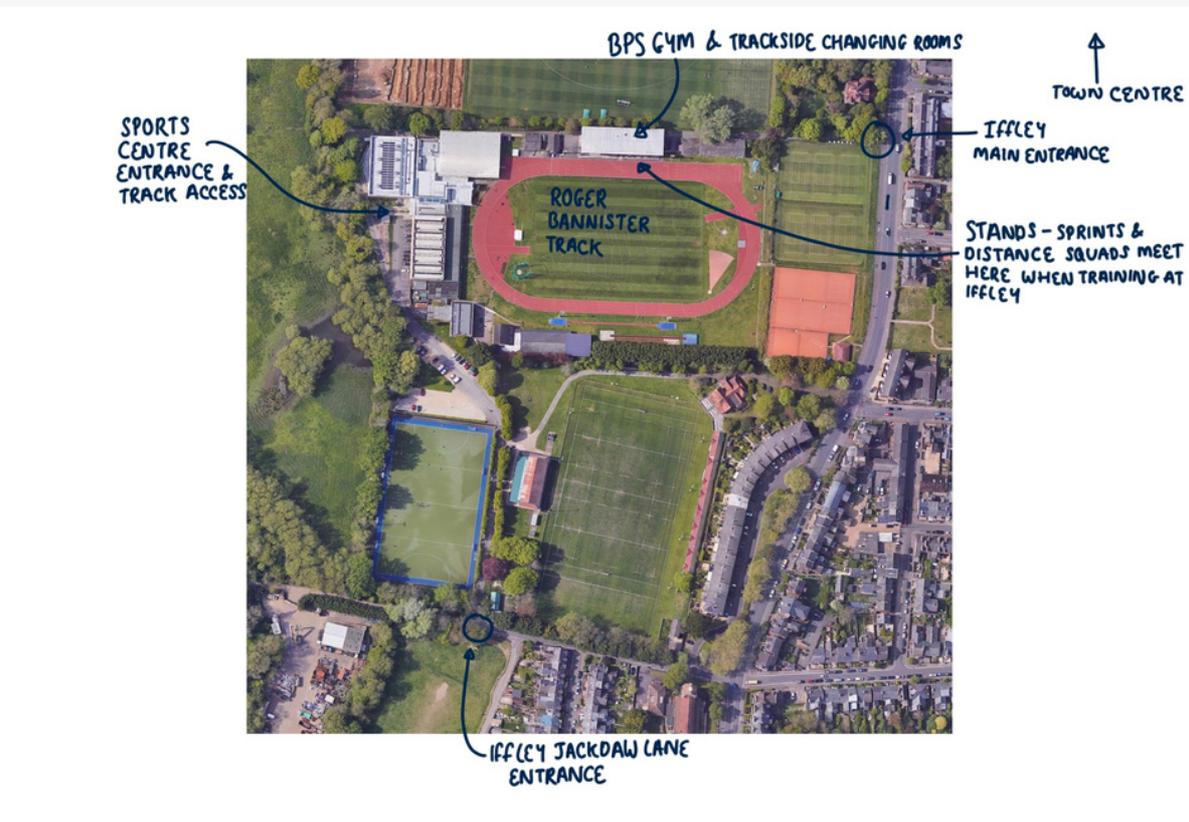
KEY PLACES (& WHERE TO FIND THEM)

- **Iffley:** the university's sports centre and the home to our athletics track, where most of the club's training takes place. Its main entrance is located on Iffley road, a short walk from Magdalen roundabout.
- **BPS Gym:** where S&C (for blues and seconds athletes) takes place. Found in the trackside building above the changing rooms.
- **Horspath:** a track just outside the Oxford ring road, and where some OUAC pole vault and hammer throw training takes place.
- **South Park:** the bane of all cross country runners; South Park is where most hill training takes place, especially for middle and long distance athletes. You can find it by walking up St Clements Street towards Headington hill, and it has entrances on both Headington Road and Morrell Avenue. Usual meet point What 3 Words: **grows.common.plants** .
- **Uni Parks:** found behind the university science area- occasionally distance training under OUCCC takes place here. It has lots of entrances, including on Parks Road, St Cross Road and the Marston cyclepath.

- **Exeter-Hertford playing fields:** the home to most of our middle and long distance athletes in the winter as most cross country training takes place here. Can be accessed by going through Uni Parks or the Marston cycle path. Usual meet point What 3 Words: **rats.powers.ahead** .



KEY TRAINING LOCATIONS



COMPETITIONS

At Oxford, despite what may appear to be a busy academic schedule, there is no shortage of opportunities to compete. What's even better is that several of these competitions are unique to Oxbridge, and have an atmosphere unrivalled to anything you'd find elsewhere. But what are the key comps and how do they work?

ATHLETICS COMPETITIONS – THE BASICS!

Never competed before? Don't worry. Here we'll provide a brief overview of how athletics competitions usually work to make you feel more comfortable about competing.

Choosing competitions. We'll provide you with plenty of advanced notice as to the when & where of the key club comps (e.g. Varsity). But there are other non-Oxford-affiliated competition opportunities, such as regional championships and open meets; we will share with you a spreadsheet with these details. It's worth chatting to your squad coach to ask which ones are best for you.

Entering competitions. For most of our key comps (i.e. Fresher's Varsity, indoor Varsity (FEAR) and outdoor Varsity) there will be a selection process, so you don't need to worry about entering. Cuppers (see below) is also easy, as you can simply show up. For all other competitions, there'll typically be a deadline for a form that you'll need to fill in on that competition's webpage. We'll try to send reminders about these deadlines for competitions which we expect many of our athletes to enter (e.g. Southern Champs), but it's a good idea to keep an eye on these deadlines yourself.

What to do on the day. You may have a pre-comp ritual or preferred fuelling meal, but the most important thing in terms of preparation on the day is to show up on time. I would recommend arriving between 90 minutes and an hour before the scheduled start time of your event. This allows you to sign in and collect your number (although we'll handle this if it's a Varsity match) and ensure you have time to warm up properly. You can usually warm up in the outer lanes of the track, but stay aware of any races which may need all 8 lanes! Then make sure you're in the vicinity of the start line of your race or the location of your field event around 10-15 minutes before the start time and await further instructions from the officials.

Logistics - track events. Just before your race, the officials around the start line will call the event so that they can check you in again and give you your lane (if you're racing the 800m or shorter). If you're in the first race then you can then get ready, practice a start/run-out (for shorter races), and then stand behind the line. The starter will eventually call you to your marks. You'll get a 'set' and then then gun for distances of 400m or below, or just the gun for 800m or above. For the 800, you'll run in lanes initially and then merge to the inside after the cones about 100m in. For anything shorter you'll stay in lanes (except for the 4x400, which works similarly) and for anything longer you'll break immediately.

Logistics - field events. Most field events are similar in terms of how they run, with the exception of the high jump/pole vault. For the throws and the horizontal jumps, the official will announce the order of athletes, and you'll usually have 6 trials. For the high jump and the pole vault, there will also be an order, but they won't move on to the next height until everyone has either cleared the bar or had their 3 allowed attempts at the height.

CUPPERS

Cuppers is one of those terms which might initially sound a bit weird but soon becomes common vernacular. Cuppers is a competition held for most sports, usually in the form of an inter-college tournament. For athletics, however, it's slightly different given the typically individual nature of our sport - it's mostly just like a normal athletics meet! Trinity Cuppers is important for Varsity and BUCS selection (see below for what each of these comps are). It's also a chance to have some fun and try out new events in a more relaxed setting!



MICHAELMAS SPORTS DAY

As well as the Trinity Cuppers, we also used to have a Michaelmas iteration. However, new for 2023/24, we are now having a ✨ SPORTS DAY! ✨ This will be taking place in Michaelmas and it will be an excellent chance to try out something new, whether you've never done athletics in your life before or want to try your hand at a totally novel discipline in a pressure-free environment!

FRESHERS' VARSITY MATCH (FVM)

The Freshers' Varsity Match against Cambridge is the first of the 'key comps' on the schedule for the academic year. Anyone who has matriculated and never competed for OUAC before can take part! It is a strange one given it takes place in November, but it is a fun event and (this year) day out - the 2023 FVM will be in Cambridge! For anyone new to athletics, Michaelmas cuppers is a good way to set down some marks so that we can select you.

FIELD EVENTS AND RELAYS (FEAR)

Don't let the acronym scare you! FEAR is essentially the indoor version of Varsity which happens in February at Lee Valley. The further twist is that the track events work slightly differently. For the 60m and the 60m hurdles there are five athletes from each team with the times of the fastest four of those five being combined to calculate the result. The other track races are relays: the 4x200m, the 4x400m, the 4x800m, and the distance medley relay (DMR) which has four legs of 1200m, 400m, 800m, and 1600m (in that order). The field events are as normal, except the throws (other than shot) are outside.



THE 149TH ATHLETICS VARSITY MATCH

This is the big one. The 2024 season will see the 149th Varsity Match against Cambridge, on Sunday 5th May. We take four teams to the Varsity Match - the Blues and the Seconds for both the men and the women, with two athletes per event in each team.

The Varsity Match is the pinnacle of the Oxford athletics calendar, and we will stop at nothing (within reason) to beat Cambridge. Selection for this match often relies on results from Trinity coppers, which happens two weeks prior.



BUCS CHAMPIONSHIPS

BUCS (which stands for British Universities & Colleges Sports) is the inter-university championships which happens twice a year - once indoors and once outdoors.

BUCS is the only non-Oxbridge event which we enter as a club, with a team selection process (normally at most two athletes per event) and arranged transport & accommodation. The standard is high but it is a great opportunity to compete against some of the UK's best, as well as build camaraderie ahead of the all-important Varsity.



SLANG & OTHER WORDS

- **Blue:** the highest honour you can receive as a sports person at the university. To be awarded a Blue in athletics you must compete in the Blues team at Varsity and at some point in the season achieve a Blues standard (not necessarily in the same event).
- **Half-blue:** awarded to athletes who achieve a high standard in an event but did not quite reach the standard for a full blue.
- **Blues blazer:** a blazer you can buy if you achieve a full or half blue.
- **Tab:** short for Cantabrigian, and is what we call someone who goes to Cambridge.
- **Shoe the tabs:** a slightly strange phrase that even puzzles google a bit, but essentially means beating the tabs.
- **FTT:** F*** the Tabs.



- **Centipedes and Millipedes:** the men's and women's Seconds teams at Varsity.
- **OUCCC/triple C:** oxford univeristy cross country club- our sister club. Middle and long distance training is joint with OUCCC.
- **FEAR:** Field Events And Relays varsity- Cambridge like to call this VFEAR, probably because they're very afraid of us.
- **WWT:** warm weather training. Over Easter we hold a training camp in Portugal that's open to all members.
- **Achilles:** an athletics club open to past and current members of OUAC and CUAC. They help organise the Varsity match and the Transatlantic series.
- **Transatlantic series:** a series of matches where Oxford and Cambridge team up under Achilles against a number of Ivy League Universities. The matches alternate between taking place in the UK and the US.
- **EH:** Exeter-Hertford playing fields. Grass sessions often take place here.
- **BPS:** Blues Performance Scheme. A scheme that provides support to high performing teams (such as athletics!) and individual athletes at the uni. It runs our strength & conditioning sessions.
- **Crewdate:** a social between two sports clubs that usually involved drinking games (although it is possible to go to one and not drink). They're not for everyone so don't feel pressured to go, but are a good way of getting to know people better!

- **Doing a shoe:** a drinking game started by someone putting a shoe on their head, generally at crewdates. The last person to put a shoe on their head 'does a shoe' which is where they drink from their shoe.
- **Vinnies:** short for Vincent's Club. A members sports club for athletes (typically people holding blues) at the university, and is the site of lots of OUAC socials and dinners.
- **Pinky:** Vinnies' iconic drink named after its (interesting?) pink colour. A common sight at evening socials and dinners at Vinnies. A pint contains orange juice, grenadine and 5 shots of gin.
- **therealjohnsbar:** the club's instagram meme account, named after John's Bar- a much visited bar on Portugal training camp.

A QUICK GUIDE TO VINNIES

Seen on the term card that there's a social at Vinnies but you don't know what to wear to where to go- then here's what you need to know:

- The club is located above Shepherd & Woodward on High St and is accessed by a blue door on King Edward St.
- To gain entry all you need to do is press the buzzer and say you're with athletics, and follow the flight of stairs up to the bar and main room.
- After 6:30pm there's a dress code at Vinnies which you'll need to follow if you want to avoid getting kicked out. It's **no denim or trainers, plus men must wear a shirt and a tie.**
- Don't stress too much about what you wear to a Vinnies social, as long as you're following the dress code in the evening then you're good to go!

MEET THE COMMITTEE!



President Gallagher

(also known as Catherine)

Looking nice and friendly! As she always is! Of course! Ha ha...

Year: 4th

Subject: Physics

College: Corpus Christi

Events: 400/800

"My favourite memory at OUAC is watching people, including myself [that must have been an out-of-body experience], being thrown into the water jump after this year's Varsity win."





Men's Captain: Will Parry

Year: 4th

Subject: Chemistry

College: St Hilda's

Events: 110mH/400mH

Strengths: false starting and lying [I have never seen him run a 400mH]

"My proudest accomplishment is achieving a Blue in the 110mH."

Women's Captain: Charlotte Buckley

Year: 3rd

Subject: Biomed

College: Oriel

Events: Anything between 400 and 1500. You can even put some hurdles in her way!

"I am looking forward to winning 4-0 at a home Varsity in 2024." So am I, Charlotte, so am I.





Men's Vice-captain: James McCulloch

Year: 3rd

Subject: Biology

College: Merton

Events: 200/400 [but will do anything if you ask him nicely]

Strength: Hating on the 400m, being a masochist

Weakness: Anything that one does in a gym

Women's Vice-captain: Ella Fryer

Year: 2nd

Subject: Chemistry

College: St Catherine's

Events: 400/800

Weakness: OUAC pub quizzes, obeying the Vinnie's dress code

"My proudest achievement is placing 4th in the 800 at English Schools, and running a new OUAC record for bronze in the BUCS 4x400!"





Secretary: Sammy Baker-Jones

Year: 2nd year DPhil

Subject: Material Sciences

College: Oriel

Event: 400mH

Strength: Holding the U11 Girls Harrogate Harriers high jump club record.

"My favourite memory at OUAC is competing at, and winning, both FEAR and Varsity."

Treasurer: Joe Morrow

Year: 4th year DPhil

Subject: Chemistry

College: Queen's

Event: 5000m

Strengths: Computational materials chemistry; applying machine learning to atomistic simulation.

"My proudest achievement is representing OUAC in my debut London Marathon, running 2:23."





Women's Social Sec & Social Media Rep: Natalie Groves

Year: 2nd

Subject: Biochemistry

College: Brasenose

Events: 200/400 (and 100, but she "would rather not be associated with such a boring event lol")

Weakness: The quality of her race is solely dictated by whether or not she has a rice cake with Biscoff spread beforehand

Men's Social Sec: Peter Braybrook

Year: 2nd

Subject: French and German

College: Lincoln

Events: 400

Strengths: Not doing a STEM degree; also being a rugby lad

"My proudest achievement is running sub-2 for the 800 (after many attempts), as well as running a huge PB at coppers!"





Webmaster: Tom Wood

Year: 1st year DPhil

Subject: Earth Sciences

College: St Anne's

Event: 5000m

Strength: Voluntarily running up ridiculous hills, and doing it for Wales.

"My favourite memory at OUAC is running the 5000 in my first Varsity as a Blue in 2021 (after all the COVID drama.)"

Fixtures Rep: Thomas Renshaw

Year: 3rd year DPhil

Subject: Earth Sciences

College: St Hugh's

Events: Anything on the track that's not classified as a sprint

Strength: Longevity (as he enters his 7th year at OUAC)

Weakness: Having a bootleg Varsity photo after missing the official photo session





Kit Rep: Jewel Bennett

Year: 5th

Subject: Medicine

College: Lady Margaret Hall

Event: 100mH, High Jump

Strength: Being a field eventer!

"My proudest athletics achievement is winning the high jump at my county championships."

Access Rep: Anika Schwarze-Chintapatla

Year: 3rd

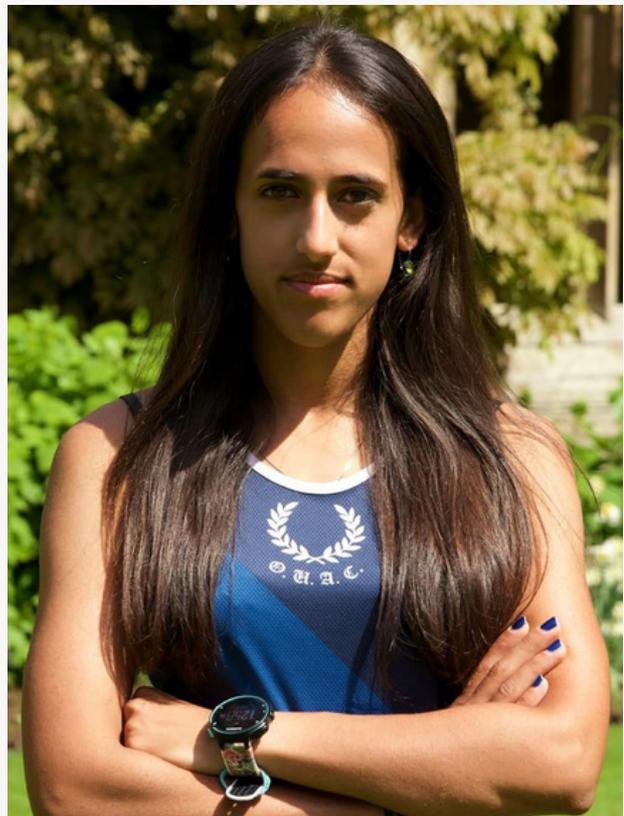
Subject: Medicine

College: Trinity

Event: "A bit of everything really."

Strength: Coherently messaging the OUAC group chat.

"My favourite memory at OUAC is getting everyone in the hole at Portugal [more context needed], and cheering on the 4x400 teams at Varsity!"





Women's welfare: Alex Shevchenko

Year: 3rd

Subject: Engineering

College: St Catherine's

Event: 800

Strength: Organising welfare
doughnut mornings <3

"My favourite memory at OUAC is
helping out, and supporting
friends, at Varsity."

Men's welfare: Tom Yeadon

Year: 3rd

Subject: Biochemistry

College: Univ

Event: "Cross country" [when
should we tell him he's the
athletics club men's welfare
officer?]

Strength/weakness [delete as
appropriate]: being an
Instagram influencer



Welfare in OUAC

Hello, it is Alex and Tom here, your welfare reps for the coming year! We are here to solve any welfare related issues, no matter how small they might seem. Starting university is always a challenging experience; starting Oxford and balancing it with athletics even more so! Remember that we have been in your shoes just a couple years ago, and are always here to support and help you.

During the year we will organise various events, sometimes together with our wonderful social secretaries! Watch out for Welfare breakfasts, hot chocolates, and even huge Secret Santa :)

You can find us on the track with the middle and long distance crew, contact us on Facebook messenger, or simply email at alexandra.sevcenco@stcatz.ox.ac.uk and thomas.yeadon@univ.ox.ac.uk.

We will also be sending bi-termly emails with a lot of helpful resources and information!

Remember to always prioritise your health - both mental and physical, have enough rest and eat well! We are always happy to have a chat and can't wait to meet you all!



Welfare donuts last May! Huge success:)

