

Sandhurst Sports Day 2016

Had Tim Peake still been residing on the International Space station this morning, gazing out of his window at Earth, he would have immediately alerted his comrades to the spectrum of colour emanating from the capital of the universe which is Sandhurst School. All houses were represented in a kaleidoscope of blues, greens, yellows and reds (which will certainly inspire Mrs Sutton's art groups for weeks to come) as the rainbow of friendship rapidly disappeared and the battle lines were drawn for the annual war which is Sandhurst School Sports Day.

Leading up to the event, the Heads of House had been harassing, threatening, driving their tutors to encourage tutees to do their best whether competing or supporting and we were able to speak to each of them before the events began. Mrs Farrance, whose Romer team had waited 19 years before winning the tournament in 2015 commented that 'we are proud to stand here as the reigning champions and we are not prepared to hand the throne over yet', whilst Mrs Jones, looking like a ray of yellow sunshine (albeit topped by a clown's wig) declared simply 'We're gonna win, we're gonna win, we're gonna win' and judging by the first few races... you would be forgiven for thinking that she had inside information. Mr Sinnamon, rooted like an English Oak, was surprisingly quiet when asked if he cared to comment for the article. No defiant words, no Aussie attitude, he calmly shook his head and stated 'No Comment', obviously choosing to be a man of action rather than words – time would tell. Mr Doree welcomed Mr Bingham to his first sports day as Head of Bailey and blue faced though he was, we are sure that he would not want this to be a reflection of his mood at the end of the day.

Our commentators as always were the entertaining Mr Lovejoy who, as you would expect from the Head of Performing Arts, can never be too far from a stage and microphone and Mr Doree. Mr Doree recognised and paid a touching tribute to those that had died or been injured the evening before, in the most recent terrorist atrocity to affect Europe in Nice. It was a fitting reflection and entirely appropriate given that we can come together as a community and celebrate Sports Day, as a result of the very freedom these terrorists seek to take from us. The students stood respectfully silent for a few moments before the commencement of the tournament was announced and their enthusiasm filled the air.

The first win of the day went to Young House whilst the second was taken by Bailey. The students supporting were beginning to warm up their voices but yet in full voice and almost immediately following Mr Doree's comments that the students were surprisingly quiet, the roar of Romer raged through the crowds accompanied by the rhythmic beating of their drums, clearly demonstrating that they were sufficiently warmed up- and the support worked as Romer won the next race! The volume of voices became contagious as Young rose to the challenge and then Gemini and Bailey and this support extended to their teams as performances seemed to correlate to those whose supporters were the loudest at that time.

The greatly anticipated 800m race between Emily Spencer Jones and Marie Halliday kicked off and it was a close contest between the two of them - big praise for Chloe Dick who came in third against these two very successful athletes. Following this, Luke Stewart from Gemini set a new school record in the 600m, a superb time of 1 minute 46 and crossed the line to the 'war cry' chants of Gemini House that they had been rehearsing during tutor time, all led by Mrs Lovejoy and her very loud whistle while Bimod Gurung smashed the 100 metres in the senior's race. Additionally, although some sibling rivalry was apparent in the Girls' Year 7, 150m race as Gemini's Caitlin Dell won closely followed by her twin sister Megan, this rivalry disappeared as quickly as it arrived with both congratulating the other's success.

As always the spirit of Sandhurst Sports Day extended beyond just being about who crossed the finish line first. Year 7 Darcy Ashdown- Ford obviously tired from running the 600m found encouragement from the support of Year 10 students Marie Halliday and Emily Spencer Jones who ran along the line with her to ensure that she finished what had been a challenging distance. Across the house groups, students were stepping up without hesitation to fill in for absent competitors, and were giving it their all considering they were not expecting to have to compete.

Not to be outdone, Sandhurst School was honoured to be joined by the pupils of Sandhurst Nursery who had been warming up in preparation for their event and whose competitors had been assigned to each of the houses to ensure they really were a part of the procedures. Toby was the winner of the first event with Anna Marie following in second however it didn't matter to the children each of whom was supported by the cheers of their secondary neighbours throughout.

At 10am Mr Doree teased the audience with the information that there was a tie at that moment but would not state who this was however only 13 minutes later, he was able to inform the supporters that these teams were in fact Young and Romer. It seemed only seconds later that the end of the first break was declared along with the rankings of the house groups for all to contemplate: 4th Place Bailey with 488 points; 3rd Place, Gemini with 581points; 2nd Place Young with 612 pts but in 1st Place with 622 points the existing champions Romer – was this going to be their year again?

As the second half of the tournament began and with only ten points separating the two top houses there was everything to play for; the first race finished Young, Romer. Amongst the crowd all supporters were on their seats to project cheers, screams and shouts at their team mates obviously aware of the difference their support could make and the closeness of the results as they were; the weather may have become a little chilly but the fire of the crowd was not in doubt. Maxine Fontaine's fabulous banner for Young was at times, louder than the noise of the crowd with the possible exception of the Gemini Hey brothers' South African chanting while the Romer drums and Bingham's Bailey Bravehearts sustained their support for their respective teams.

Forty minutes had passed very quickly when it became the turn of arguably the most exciting events of the day: the team 4 x 100m relays. While the competitors got themselves organised, Mr Lovejoy paid tribute to Mr Smith, firing his gun for the final time at Sports Day before his retirement - students filled the air with cheers and applause for his life's contribution to the school.

To the resonance of the Chariots of Fire music and with the rain staying away, the students were still in great spirits and everything was to play for. There were spoils of victories for all houses across the year groups but it all came down to the seniors to round off the excitement with a fantastic win by Gemini boys. Would it be enough?

Mr King took the podium to announce the final scores of Sports Day 2016: Have Romer done enough? Is it Mrs Jones' turn? Has Mr Sinnamon actually lost his voice and where is Mr Bingham?

4TH Place Bailey...3rd Place Gemini 797... the tension really began; 2nd Place Young ; 1st Place Romer had done it again!!!!