

*In the spotlight...*

# Joe Chadwick

## ‘He could be top senior high jumper’ – Druce

After bagging a bronze medal at last year’s national championships, Joe Chadwick looks as if he has a bright future as a high jumper.

**Matt Lihou** reports

GUERNSEY producing elite high jumpers is a rare occurrence, but Joe Chadwick suggested in 2016 that he could be the person able to buck that trend.

And ahead of a new season that begins in 10 days’ time in Sheffield with his first ever indoor meet, the 15-year-old has been tipped for a bright future by Tom Druce.

Chadwick is far from a one-trick pony after also showing huge promise on the track – particularly in the 200m – but it is his high jump performances that have grabbed attention.

Before last year the teenager had never competed outside the Channel Islands, but his efforts in the inter-insular qualified him for the England Athletics U15 Championships in Bedford.

Had he repeated his then-personal best effort of 1.74m, it would have seen him secure a top-10 finish – but nobody predicted the performance he would produce.

Upping that PB by a big 6cm, he cleared 1.80 and finished in third place to win a bronze medal, only missing out on silver on countback after being tied.

It was a performance that Guernsey Island Amateur Athletics Club development officer Druce admits came out of the blue, but illustrated rich promise.

‘Joe has been involved in athletics for a while, but lacked the inclination and possibly the confidence to compete off-island and really prove himself,’ he said.

‘He is also a keen rugby player and I think was perhaps a bit more comfortable within a team environment, but then he had an excellent jump at the inter-insular and gained big confidence from that.

‘Even then, nobody expected him to be challenging for a medal in Bedford, but he exceeded all of our hopes and expectations with a fantastic performance.’

That jump also earned him the standard needed for Island Games selection this summer, meaning that Chadwick is almost certain to be on the plane to Gotland in June.

Before all of that, he has his first indoor meeting at the Sheffield Indoor Open, where Guernsey are taking a young five-person team to compete at the GIS Indoor Arena.

It is the start of a big year for Chadwick and one that could go a long way to determining just how far he – and the club locally – go in the future.

Chadwick’s effort of 1.80 last year meant he was only 5cm short of the island under-15 record held by Phil Diamond, who is also the best ever at under-17s and senior level.

His under-17s record is 2.02 and his senior mark stands at 2.06, set back in 1995, and since then no local athlete has even got close to beating that mark.

‘We are not used to having top high jumpers over here and we perhaps lack the specialist training that is needed to really take Joe to the next level,’ admitted Druce.

‘At the moment, he is jumping once a week and working on the track during his other sessions, to improve his all-round athletics ability.

‘But depending on where his priorities lie moving forward and the progress he shows, then we as a club will have to have a think about where we go next.

‘It may mean that we up-skill our coaches to help Joe become a top senior high jumper, because he is certainly showing huge potential.’



### JOE CHADWICK

**Age:** 15

**Sport:** Athletics

**Club:** Guernsey Island Amateur Athletics Club

**Events:** High jump, sprints

**Notable achievements:** Bronze

medal in the high jump at the

2016 England Athletics U15

Championships

Although he’s already had success as a high jumper, Chadwick has also shown promise as a sprinter.  
(Picture by Adrian Miller, 17187769)