



WELSH ATHLETICS  
ATHLETAU CYMRU

**Welsh Athletics Track and Field Committee.**  
**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019.**  
**Venue: Welsh Institute of Sport Sophia Gardens**

Present

Lynne Brier (LB) (Chair); Joyce Tomala (JT) (East); Rhiannon Linington-Payne (RLP); Lynette Harries (LH); Alan Currie (AC) (Officials); Tom Marley (TM); Chris Jones (CJ); Jake Morgan (JM) (West); Crispin Backshall (CB) (North)

**1. Apologies**

Judith Gooding, Adrian Palmer

**2. Indoor Records Update**

- 2.1 AC presented all records/age group best performances found from the indoor season.
- 2.2 AC suggested a new record for U17 Men in the heptathlon as that is now the standard Combined Events format for that age group.
- 2.3 AC raised that the committee decided to hold U23 age group records outdoors last year, and asked whether we should now also keep U23 indoor records? **The decision was a unanimous yes.**
- 2.4 WA keep records for combined events that do not mirror the UKA/IAAF rule book formats and age groups. It was asked whether we should now fall in line for consistency. LH stated that it would be in our interest to fall in line with what happens over the rest of the UK. **The committee was in agreement with this.**

**3. Team Managers**

- 3.1 JT raised that it is the Track & Field Committee that should elect Track & Field Team Managers and this has not happened for a few years.
- 3.2 RLP explained that a recruitment process has been initiated, which would invite those interested to submit applications but there has been delay due to a lack of role description.
- 3.3 CJ explained that a new coaching development model is being formalised at the moment and this is aligned to bringing individuals into this space who are supported to develop on the pathway.
- 3.4 JM identified that international events need to be an opportunity for new Team Managers and staff to come through and develop – the pathway needs to be clear.
- 3.5 JT stated that there is a duty of care to the Team Managers to ensure that they are experienced enough and correctly equipped to deal with any issues that may arise during the course of a team competition.
- 3.6 LB proposed that expressions of interest be put up on the WA website as soon as possible inviting people to apply – DW highlighted that at least 2 years of experience with clubs/leagues/regions should be a necessity. JM raised that if we specify that experience is required, then the pathway (and requirements to progress) needs to be clear. LH suggested that WA can offer training and shadowing opportunities for new applicants.

3.7 CJ stated that we will be creating a pool of people who will progress and develop through this pathway that will ultimately result in targeting management of CWG teams. This needs to be a formalised process where they have access to training & development opportunities.

3.8 LB suggested to move this forward that a sub-committee of herself, CJ & RLP meet on 26<sup>th</sup> June to review applications.

#### 4. Selectors

4.1 JT raised that as above, appointing selectors is a role of the Track & Field Committee. Previously, different selectors were appointed for each competition and were given a specific remit to look at – this has worked very well in the past.

4.2 This would be a similar process to Team Managers where individuals express an interest to be part of a selection committee.

4.3 LH suggested that we look at the existing selectors and make sure that those in post are part of a 2-year cycle after which, new people can be brought in.

4.4 JT referenced the YDL process that is essentially a 4-year cycle, but individuals have to reapply every 2 years for continuity.

4.5 It was decided that we should mimic this model – individuals can stay in post for 4 years, but every 2 years, some would need to re-submit applications (whilst also welcoming new individuals into the process). JT directed RLP to the YDL website for the exact wording of the process.

#### 5. Matters arising from previous minutes

5.1 No previous meeting.

#### 6. Competition Updates

6.1 This should be a permanent agenda item going forward.

6.2 COG for outdoor Championships taking place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May at SWNC – JT, RLP, TM, DW & Sue Maughan to attend with Jeff Marsden to be included in information circulation as he cannot make the meeting.

6.3 It was suggested in the last officials committee that the size of the COG is reduced so that it takes less time for points to be agreed on.

6.4 Closing dates: Junior Championships – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May; Senior Championships – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June

#### 7. Selection Policies for 2019 Competitions

7.1 RLP circulated selection policies for the Welsh Athletics U20 International, Leiria Throws International and Manchester International for the committee to sign off. Pending any changes, these would be published on the WA website as soon as possible.

#### 8. Junior League Timetable

8.1 Raised by the Officials Committee – AC – Why was the start time changed? DW explained that it was requested in the Fixtures Conference in November. Due to the introduction of the 1200m, they wanted a slightly restructured timetable to help with the running of the event on the day.

8.2 AC – why has the 1200m been introduced for U11? DW explained that it was introduced to try and give the U11 athletes a progression towards 1500m at U13. JM stated that it may not be the most appropriate progression for an U11 athletes having seen it at the first fixture – it is not a positive experience for the majority of U11 athletes. DW explained that it was mostly team managers of the Junior League teams that were present at the Fixtures Conference last year. JM stated that the 600m is a good development event for this age group, but the 1200m isn't as good.

8.3 LH asked around a specific leagues meeting that has happened in previous years? TM/DW explained that this happened with the regional league committees this year. DW – at the fixtures meeting (minuted by JT), the matter of the 1200 was discussed by representatives from both regional leagues. LH- there are concerns about the welfare of the U11s with the 1200m event.

- 8.4 JM stated that in the West, there seemed to be some confusion as to what was actually agreed. One issue was that it is in the constitution that U11's do not run over 1000m in a single event. He noted that it was introduced as an experiment, but perhaps needs to be reviewed. TM highlighted that the league is not directly controlled by WA – therefore the committee can encourage and suggest modifications to the programme. JM raised the fundamentals of what we try to encourage with U11 athletes – the majority of athletes that young are not developed/strong enough to hold form etc. over that distance. LB/CJ discussed that although there are limitations that they can only do 1200m on the track if entered for that event, we should not be encouraging specialisation at that young age; rather, we should be encouraging a multi-disciplinary event experience.
- 8.5 The suggestion/recommendation was made that the 1200m should be taken out of the programme and that 600m should be the maximum distance for this age group. All agreed that it should be proposed that the 1200m is removed immediately (for final three fixtures) – **DW to email clubs taking part to inform them of the committee's recommendations.** A break would then be observed on the track during the time that the 1200m was scheduled. JT suggested that whilst recommendations are made from the committee, clubs will frequently override recommendations at league AGMs. JT is of the opinion that the governing body needs to enforce recommendations made based on H&S and Welfare of athletes.
- 8.6 JM raised that the length of day is an ongoing issue and that more should be looked at the reduce the amount of time that athletes and officials spend at the track – it should be a positive experience for all involved, not just athletes. TM is taking all this year's feedback on board, with a view to reviewing at the end of the 2019 season.
- 8.7 **LB proposed that the league format is reviewed in a committee meeting at the end of the 2019 season. This will be on the agenda in the September meeting.**

## 9. Inter-Regional Championships

- 9.1 TM presented a summary of discussions that led to the decisions regarding the new format for this year's Inter Regional Championships. Decision to remove the combined U20/Senior age group made as that age group has not been particularly well supported across all 4 regions as other age groups. This was then discussed in the Fixtures Conference and this was supported by a lot of the clubs present.
- 9.2 AC raised that the West had a lot of objections, and also the North. He raised that there is a danger of alienating the Senior age groups and only catering for the Juniors. The question was asked as to why the event is not well supported by Seniors – why are Juniors not staying in the sport? JT pointed out that there is plenty of U20 competition via YDL etc. – many of the West Wales compete in this.
- 9.3 RLP raised that attendance from Senior/U20 athletes was very good at last night's Sprints Open Meeting and that suggests that it is the format of competition that deters their participation, rather than not wanting to take part anymore. People have other constraints that now mean that they cannot give up a whole day for competition anymore and this reflects in the participation numbers at various competitions.
- 9.4 LH raised concerns with U20 athletes progressing through to Senior level – if we remove that competition opportunity, what do we replace it with? What incentives are there for U20 & Senior athletes to take part in these competitions e.g. selection for Welsh teams?
- 9.5 JT/DW clarified that the South & East Wales regional championships (Senior & U20) are taking place as part of other competitions (MDAL and Welsh Senior League for example), as it was felt that the quality of competition provided for those athletes was not good enough.
- 9.6 LB highlighted that although the regional championships has been removed, they have been replaced with more event-specific opportunities, offering athletes the opportunity to compete in favourable conditions. LH pointed out that if these events have increased participation, then this should be publicised and celebrated.

- 9.7 LB has received a lot of commination regarding the Inter Regional changes and the inclusion of the U13 athletes in the new format – they do have a lot of competition already and so do they need this additional competition opportunity?
- 9.8 CJ expressed that the rigidity of current competition formats (Championships) means that we are losing the enjoyment factor of competition. Do these competitions still have the same value as they did 20 years ago? Enjoyment and retention should be the absolute priority.
- 9.9 JM raised the motivations of athletes in this date & age – they often travel all over the UK for a good quality competition. The title/status of Region or Inter Regional champion doesn't hold any value for our better athletes. LB noted that the #RunWithTheWind evening attracted some higher-profile athletes and coaches from London & Loughborough, and this should be a target for all event-specific competitions in Wales going forward. The open event in the Senior Championships also attracts higher-quality athletes.
- 9.10 TM pointed out that North Wales don't necessarily have access to the current event-specific competitions provided. If there was the demand for them then WA could help to set them up for the clubs/region to deliver.
- 9.11 LB asked whether, when the current changes are up for review at the end of the season, is it the committee that make the decision, or should more voices be brought in? TM confirmed that the T&F committee should decide in the first instance, but with a consultation period for the regions to discuss and feedback (2 weeks was suggested as an appropriate period). This will then go from T&F committee to the Fixtures Conference and General Council & back to the regions via regional representatives.
- 9.12 LB confirmed the format for this year – that the U20 & Senior age groups would not be a part of the Inter Regional Championship & U13 athletes would be brought in, as publicised. This will be revisited at the end of the season where debates & decisions made last year will be revisited
- 9.13 JM expressed that if these decisions lie with the committee, then the decisions made are final.
- 9.14 LH reminded the committee of the review of the endurance area, and there has been tremendous progress since then in those events. There was also a review of the regions and what they should be doing. Some of the recommendations were that there would be a common agenda from the regions and that regions could then raise individual points as necessary. This should be taken back to senior members of WA staff in order to get to a point of consistency between regions and their agendas.
- 9.15 LB brought up the concerns from the North that the new date clashes with the Cheshire League. The Cheshire league caters for U13 all the way up to Seniors – three North Wales clubs support the league. TM confirmed that when the new date was set, there were no fixtures on that weekend in the draft calendar supplied by UKA – the Cheshire league fixtures were agreed after the Inter Regional date was agreed. This clash was also only highlighted by the North Region in May 2019, and not when the relevant fixture dates were released. TM expressed that it won't be possible to change the date at this late stage due to facilities, officials, logistics etc.
- 9.16 RLP reminded the committee that at the end of the 2018 season, the committee unanimously agreed that changes needed to be made to the format of the InterRegional championships, the date being one of them – it's important to note in a positive light that changes have been addressed as promised, and they will be reviewed at the end of the season, LB expressed that the committee hope that the North region decide to still support the event this year.

## 10. Welsh Schools Championships

- 10.1 CB raised that he had received feedback from Barry Edwards (NW Development Officer) around the lack of participation of athletes in the regional qualifying events for Welsh Schools Championships and a lack of communication with the schools.
- 10.2 Need someone to go into schools and explain the importance of these events as part of the curriculum – focus seems to be always very much on classroom-based lessons rather than sport.
- 10.3 JM confirmed that in West Wales, attendance/support for these events is generally very good.

- 10.4CB also highlighted that often these events are run by unqualified schoolteachers, and there is no presence of any qualified officials. TM stated that a lot of regional qualifiers are run predominantly by schools' teachers anyway.
- 10.5CJ highlighted that in the North there is definitely a limitation on time – the NW Development Officer is employed one day a week as opposed to those in the South/West who are fulltime. As part of the re-modernisation model, there will be a fulltime person heading into North Wales.
- 10.6LH pointed out that some headteachers won't release staff for a day to travel to competitions with school teams.
- 10.7LB suggested that next time the Network Officers get together, this could be a topic of discussion and an opportunity to share what happens across different regions.

## 11. Photofinish

- 11.1JT asked why there was an additional cost that is now incurred with the hire cost from Welsh Athletics for technicians. TM confirmed that the costs are listed on the website.
- 11.2TM explained that it has been put in place as an incentive to expand the pool of Photofinish Technicians that are available to us. The equipment hire is still the same – the technician fee goes straight to the technician.
- 11.3LH asked who manages and administers the equipment? TM confirmed that Welsh Athletics organise with the event organisers as to who will collect/deliver the equipment etc. and that time pressures on staff now mean that it's not necessarily possible for a member of the Competitions Department to take the equipment to events.
- 11.4AC raised that he had received communication from John Elward that TESS was not fit for purpose for an outdoor meeting. Officials have complained that the canoe see the flash and cannot hear the start signal. TM confirmed that there is a development to the system being released that will rectify this.

## 12. Training Opportunities

- 12.1LB stated that it was raised in the previous General Council Meeting about training/support required for committee members from Welsh Athletics. What support do people want, and what format to they want it in? – feed back to Welsh Athletics
- 12.2Agenda items currently vary in quality from one region to another and it was suggested that these should be standardised to a certain extent to ensure that the regions are all working towards a common goal.
- 12.3LB highlighted that it is often unclear as to who she represents on the committee and whether she should be attending any other meetings? Additionally, the terms of reference as to how long an individual can serve on a committee and whether there is any election/re-election process?
- 12.4RLP highlighted that this is a topic that has been discussed previously around clarity of roles of those on the committee, and roles that we want represented. It was suggested that the committee, as it is, should come up with the roles that they want to exist and that would benefit the committee moving forward.
- 12.5All confirmed that the clubs should feed into the regional meetings, which then feed into track & field, so a Clubs Representative may not necessarily be a role that needs to be in place anymore.

## 13. Agenda Items for Welsh Athletics Committees

- 13.1There are agenda items that should appear on every agenda going forward:
- 13.1.1 Conflict of Interests
  - 13.1.2 Equality & Diversity
- 13.2LB stated that it should be broadcasted/celebrated that Welsh Athletics is working towards the advanced level equality award.

#### 14. AOB

14.1LB pointed out that there was no longer a representative from Welsh Schools sitting on a committee and that a replacement needs to be found.

14.1.1 It has since been confirmed that Kath Elias will still sit on Track & Field Committee as the Welsh Schools representative and will be included in all future correspondence.

14.2CB raised concerns about the model of U15 events being split across both the Junior & Senior Championships. JM expressed that he very much supported the model and that it was a good opportunity to experience a Senior Championship for the younger athletes. DW/RLP explained that it is a necessity for timetable logistics for the Junior Championships weekend – there is not enough time to fit all junior events across one weekend. TM confirmed that it is something Welsh Athletics will look to review at the end of the season.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019, 18.30 start at Sport Wales National Centre.

Agenda items for next meeting to be received by the secretary for collection and distribution. AOB to be presented in the meeting.

The meeting finished at 20:56pm

DRAFT