

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018—2019

# WELSH ATHLETICS



WELSH ATHLETICS  
ATHLETAU CYMRU

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# FOREWORD



Steve Perks  
Chair of Welsh Athletics

As the new Chair of the Board of Directors of Welsh Athletics, it's my pleasure to welcome you all to the 2018/19 Annual Report. It's been a fantastic year for the sport in Wales and this summary of activity sets us up for an exciting new chapter in 2020

In light of the changes to the role and membership of the Board of Directors I would like to set out the reasoning behind these changes. Firstly, in order to fulfill the Governance remit of Sport Wales it was necessary that we as a sport of Athletics changed the way that each Director was appointed. It became right and proper that a clear, open, transparent and equal process enabled a person with the relevant skill set to carry out this role. We have already begun this process of appointing three new Directors with responsibilities that cover Performance, Finance and Equality. In the coming months other areas will be clarified by the Board and interested parties will hopefully, tender their applications for these roles.

This is the first stage in the modernisation of Athletics in Wales, others will naturally follow, as we strive to move the sport forward within the ever-changing landscape of our modern lives. It is imperative that in the coming years we realise that the sport will need to evolve to ensure that it remains relevant to our future athletes.

Thank you to you all for you continued support and contribution to our sport in Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Stephen Perks".

# INTRODUCTION



Matt Newman  
Chief Executive

**We are currently in a period of an unprecedented political uncertainty and this uncertain political world is also reflected in the current sporting landscape, as many of the building blocks of our established ecosystem are reset to build a more long-term approach to sport and physical activity in Wales.**

In spite of this uncertainty, Welsh Athletics has outlined a clear and ambitious strategy to set-out its contribution to the emerging new world.

This strategy has taken feedback from the extensive member (customer) consultation and distilled it into a set of six strategic goals which will drive the next seven years of operational activity.

The six goals reflect the breadth of activity across athletics in Wales and allow Welsh Athletics to take advantage of its ability to influence a wide range of sporting and government agenda. We are uniquely placed to develop the skills for a lifetime in sport and to support athletic development activities from social running to the athletic pathway which drives our contribution to Team Wales and Team GB.

Welsh Athletics has also been assisting Sport Wales in the development of an innovative new resourcing model which will be rolled-out in the coming years. In parallel, Sport Wales will redeploy its own resources to complement and add value to the work of National Government Bodies of Sport.

Working with the other home countries, Welsh Athletics has also been able to influence the future direction of British Athletics. "An Athletic Nation" now sets out the medium-term objectives for athletics in the UK and the recent appointment of a new Chair and CEO of UK Athletics will help bring cohesion to our respective activities.

The next twelve months will see closer integration on commercial and communication strategies and a renewed commitment to modernise the competition and talent development pathway. The current reviews into coaching and performance will lead to a more integrated model to assist the development of talented athletes and coaches in Wales. This model will be implemented immediately after the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

As the world governing body rebrands from the IAAF into World Athletics, it's also important that Welsh Athletics contributes to the Welsh Government's International Strategy and the recent announcement of the "SuperHalves" Series, means that Wales continues to influence the global agenda for road running with the Cardiff Half Marathon joining forces with four other world-class events.

This exciting and ambitious chapter for Welsh Athletics is built on sector-leading governance. With the leadership of Steve Perks as Chair of the Board of Welsh Athletics and with the addition of non-executive directors to bring a blend of sporting and professional expertise, Welsh Athletics now has the vehicle to support, monitor and challenge the implementation of the new strategy.

Equality and diversity will continue to be fully embedded across the organisation. We will build on our work with Disability Sport Wales to provide a fully inclusive offer to communities across Wales and our

Run Wales Social Running Programme will be further extended to areas of social deprivation. Our commitment to the Welsh Language has been recognised by the Welsh Language Commission as we seek to provide a bilingual service across Wales.

My thanks go to the staff team for rising to the challenge, for upholding the values of the organisation and for continuing to deliver a first-class service across all areas.



**"The number one thing sports organisations need to do to drive innovation and transformation is involve customers in product development."**

—  
PWC Sports Survey 2019

## EQUALITY STATEMENT

Welsh Athletics continues to make great strides forward in our desire to make the sport accessible to all. Changes to our Governance structure last year ensures that Board recruitment is achieved in the most open and transparent way possible and we are confident of ensuring gender parity on the Board by 2020.

The challenge will be to ensure that all committees and councils have mixed representation; only then will we see the true benefit of equality in the decision-making process within our sport.

We are also pleased to have made progress in the diversity of the organisation's staff team and we continue to ensure that our workforce is representative of the community it serves. We continue to improve the provision of support to our staff team in areas of mental and physical wellbeing.

The sport continues to embrace equality, diversity, inclusion and it was especially pleasing to see a recently affiliated club, CDF Runners, leading the way in organising the 'Pride Run' as part of the Pride weekend in Cardiff. Over 120 runners came together for the event,

highlighting that the sport continues to lead the way in removing barriers to participation.

The new Welsh Athletics strategy places equality and diversity at its heart and we are committed to ensuring the sport has a safe and welcoming environment. Our Members Equality Survey is a key piece of insight that helps inform areas of future development around inclusion. We would encourage as many members as possible to complete the survey this Autumn.

A key initiative over the next 12 months will be engaging with community groups to further identify ways of removing barriers. We would encourage our club network to also explore ways of improving engagement with under-represented groups, as a more open and welcoming environment will ultimately lead to further membership growth and improved member engagement. This will all contribute to further improvements in the sport across all areas.

*Matt Newme*

*J. Stephen Perks*

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The annual accounts to March 2019 and a full audit report have been distributed to members ahead of the Annual General Meeting on 26th October.

The end-of-year accounts to March 2019 show an income of

**£1,824,739**

2018 - £1,686,146 / 2017 - £1,596,307

Against expenditure of

**£1,779,831**

2018 - £1,784,816 / 2017 - £1,499,075

Resulting in a net surplus of

**£44,908**

2018 - £98,670 ▼ / 2017 - £97,232 ▲

Reserves are above the required level and revenue growth is showing an upward trend year on year.

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Welsh Athletics has made significant progress in relation to its governance over the past 12 months. The changes to the Board structure that were adopted at the 2018 Annual General Meeting have been gradually introduced over the past 12 months.

Our thanks to outgoing Chair Carol Anthony for overseeing the structural changes and extending her office period through until the end of March 2019 to ensure a smooth transition.

My thanks to Dr Nicky Lewis, Nick Everitt and Adrian Thomas for Chairing the Governance, Finance and Performance sub-groups of the Board. Our thanks also go to Tony Clements & Rebecca Rothwell for their work on the Governance sub-group, Keith Mathews for his work on the finance sub-group and to Zoe Eaton, Stephen Bailey, Georgina Williams, Rhys Williams and Anthony Hughes for their work on the Performance sub-group.

Welsh Athletics continues to ensure that it works towards fully implementing the criteria set out in the Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales. This is the sport sector's governance framework and we are proud to adopt the 7 principles of good governance.

### The 7 principles of good governance;

- Integrity – Acting as guardians of the sport
- Defining and evaluating the role of the Board
- Setting vision, mission and purpose
- Objectivity – Balanced, inclusive and skilled Board
- Standards, systems and controls
- Accountability and transparency
- Understanding and engaging with the sporting landscape

The Board will continue to audit the skills available within the Board whilst considering further recruitment requirements. The Board are also mindful of the need to ensure that knowledge and passion for the sport remain a key requirement for all Board members. Over the past 12 months, Board members attended on average 90% of Board meetings, and 100% of sub-group meetings. All meetings were quorate. Currently 37% of the Board members are female, and we remain confident of achieving gender parity Board by 2020.

### Board Attendance

Board Member	Board Meeting	Governance Sub-Committee	Performance Oversight Committee	Finance Sub-Committee
Carol Anthony (1)	6/6	—	—	2/2
Steve Perks	3/3	—	—	—
Ron Odunaiya	6/6	—	—	—
Dr Nicky Lewis	5/6	6/6	—	—
Bernie Plain	6/6	—	—	—
David Roberts (2)	3/4	—	—	—
Sue Alvey	5/6	—	—	—
Christian Malcolm (3)	1/3	—	—	—
Adrian Thomas	2/2	—	2/2	—
Nick Everitt	2/2	—	—	3/3
Charlotte Waite	1/1	—	—	—

(1) Resigned March 2019 (2) Resigned March 2019 (3) Resigned February 2019

# HEAD OF OPERATIONS

James Williams  
Head of Operations

## COMPETITION

Throughout 2018, a significant amount of feedback has been received about the need for the competition structure in Wales to evolve. We must acknowledge the huge strain the current amount of competition is putting on the volunteer officials, club officials, parents and most importantly the athletes. These stresses are not unique to Wales, and a similar story can be heard in all parts of the UK.

The consultation process of 2018, along with continued discussions has indicated the need for change. I have long felt that the traditional structures that exist within competitions in Wales must evolve to ensure that the sport can continue to grow and retain junior athletes.

I wrote in last years annual report the need for brave decision, and reiterate that view again this year. The situation will not change unless we are willing to take a considered risk and innovate our approach.

We have seen the success of events like the run with the wind sprint evening and the throws competitions organised by Lisa Grimwade (Cardiff AAC), both selling out in record time. We are keen to support innovation and in turn to support new competition providers to deliver new and exciting events across Wales.

We have recently invested in a new entry and results system with the aim of improving the experience of the athletes. The new system significantly reduces the administration burden for competition providers (including Welsh Athletics), we aim to offer this new system to competition providers across Wales in an effort to reduce the pressure on club volunteers. The next phase of development will include a Team Managers portal that can be utilised for the Welsh Junior League going forward – this follows direct feedback from clubs and club officials.

## FACILITIES

Welsh Athletics continues to liaise with key stakeholders to ensure that the stock of facilities across Wales is protected and enhanced where possible. Over the last 12 months, we have seen the establishment of 3 new facilities in RCT, with the recently opened Aberdare facility holding many competitions over the Summer. Our work with Local Authorities, Sport Wales and Welsh Assembly Government also saw funding being allocated to a new facility in Caerphilly, which will enable Rhymney Valley AC to continue their growth, as well as ensuring access for local schools and social running groups in the area.

Through the Sport Wales places for Sport fund, facility upgrades will be made to Bridgend, Newport, Carmarthen, Swansea, Bangor as well as additional support to Local Authorities.

Finally, through the Welsh Athletics facilities grant, we have supported the upgrading of throws cages across Wales. All competition venues have now either had modifications or have plans in place to modify their throws cages in line with the new regulation. Unlike the rest of the UK, no facility has had their competition licence revoked due to this support.

**“We have seen the success of events like the Run with the wind sprint evening and the throws competitions organised by Lisa Grimwade (Cardiff AAC), both selling out in record time.”**

## ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to engaging all our members and gathering their feedback on how the sport should develop. We are delighted to launch the Junior Athletes Voice, a forum which will provide a direct opportunity for the junior members to engage with Welsh Athletics and advise us on how they want the sport to develop. We have never previously had an established forum to engage the views of our junior members, and we look forward to seeing their views leading to changes to the sport in Wales.

Aligned to this, we will continue our commitment to engagement and communication by establishing a senior athletes forum, plus the launch of an annual members satisfaction survey. All of this will complement the views of our clubs and our committees – we sincerely hope that these views will continue to improve the sport for everyone, and continue the growth of the sport at all levels.





### GOVERNANCE

Welsh Athletics continues to work hard to refine the governance of the sport. Along with the FAW, Welsh Gymnastics and Welsh Golf, we have worked with Sport Wales to put in place a new governance assurance framework. This framework will underpin the way the organisation operates in relation to managing the organisation's risk, ensuring robust financial regulations and reporting, and ensuring that openness and transparency are at the heart of everything we do. The sport sector in Wales continues to evolve, and we must ensure that all committees that make up the governance structure of the sport in Wales have a mix of background, skills and experiences so that the views of all our membership are represented. To this end it is vital that we continue to encourage new members to join our committee structures, with more clubs engaging with Regional Councils.

# 385

Race licenses issued 2019

### COMMUNICATION

2019 saw the launch of the new Welsh Athletics website. Albeit still evolving, with new features being added all the time, it has provided a much better user experience for members. Our coverage on social media platforms has increased significantly, and we now engage with over 20,000 followers across out various platforms.

Aligned to this, we have launched a new podcast, aiming to raise the profile of our International Athletes, and in turn raising the profile of the sport in Wales. Our relationship with National and local media continues to improve, with BBC Wales continuing to support the sport – to this extent the 2019 Cardiff University Cardiff Half Marathon will be broadcast nationally on the BBC—a first for the event.

### GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT **SUE ALVEY**

The last 12 months has seen the General Council continue to improve communication between the various committees in the Governance structure and the staff of Welsh Athletics. Council members have received presentations in the following areas;

- Equality
- Safeguarding
- Club Affiliation
- Club Modernisation
- Competition

The joint meeting between the Board and General Council in July involved a presentation relating to the new strategy for the sport in Wales. It was encouraging to see significant dialogue around the need for dedicated junior athletics offering and the need to overhaul the current competition structure.

Another consistent area for discussion over the past 12 months has been the pressure that our volunteer officials find themselves under. The General Council will no doubt return to this area for more in depth discussion in the coming months, with a particular focus on recruiting and developing new officials.

The General Council has aimed to share best practice across the committees. It was pleasing to hear of the developments within the East Wales Regional Council at our September meeting, Regional Representative Joyce Tomala highlighted the way the region has embraced the findings of the 2016 Governance review and as a result attracted new volunteers and clubs to engage with the Region. We sincerely hope that other Regions will follow the East's lead and embrace a new way of working, it has been disappointing to note a lack of engagement by the West Region in particular over the last 12 months.

We look forward to working with the staff, Regions and Committees to support the roll out of the new Welsh Athletics strategy in the coming months and years. The General Council will continue to promote best practice and highlight areas for improvement. Only by doing this can we support the development of the sport across Wales.



# 56

Parkruns 2019

The Commonwealth Games held on the Gold Coast in Australia in 2018 was the end of the 2014 – 2018 Commonwealth Games Cycle and the start of the next exciting journey into Birmingham 2022 and onwards. Whilst very much looking forward, it must be celebrated that Welsh Athletes have represented Great Britain on 37 occasions in this period. Most notably, Melissa Courtney won European Indoor Bronze over 3000m in a new PB of 8:38.22, continuing her medal winning success. At the European U23 championships, five Welsh Athletes represented GB, with Welsh women – Shannon Malone, Melissa Roberts, & Hannah Brier - making up the majority of the 4x100m team, and Joe Brier securing a team Silver as part of the 4x400m quartet. At U20 level, Jeremiah Azu had a break through year; he was ranked no. 1 in Europe, and led the 100m European Champs final before pulling up injured.



# PERFORM

Away from the track, Dan Nash set a British record to win Bronze at the World 50km Championships in Brasov, Romania. In addition to athletes competing in these Teams we have had multiple coaches from Wales supporting these GB Teams in terms of coaching and leadership roles.

Reflection is a key aspect of Coaching and having consulted with the athletics community in Wales and critically reflected internally the Performance Team has now been restructured and will focus on building the capacity and capability of both our existing athletics community and the next generation of athletes and coaches.

The work undertaken in the restructure process clearly highlighted that there is a significant opportunity to build a talent development and talent conversion programme in our early years age groups through that will feed into our senior programmes. As key aspect of this plan is to build upon the previous success of our Regional and National Development Programmes which have a clear aim of supporting talented athletes and their coaches across Wales.

#### Programme Aims:

- To support talented athletes ensuring a smooth transition from Junior to Senior level
- To develop and nurture the concept of Long-Term Athlete Development
- To promote lifestyle advice to support athlete training
- To minimise the drop off in numbers of athletes in the U17-23 age groups and ages 14 - 23
- To facilitate collaborative working and sharing of ideas amongst coaches

#### We have created 4 new roles to support delivery of these aims:

- National Talent Development Coordinator Endurance – Liz Davies
- National Talent Development Coordinator Sprints, Hurdles and Relays – Matt Elias
- National Talent Development Coordinator Throws – Ryan Spencer-Jones
- National Talent Development Coordinator Jumps and Combined Events – Fyn Corcoran







These critical development roles are underpinned by our appointment of Zoe Brown as our Coach Development Coordinator. Zoe joins at this exciting time with the focus of critically reviewing the Coaching Landscape across Wales and developing opportunities / programmes for coaches at all levels to develop.

2019 also see us launch the exciting British Athletics Futures Hubs, this is a joint initiative with Cardiff Met, Swansea University, British Athletics and Welsh Athletics – upon proof of concept Welsh Athletics have an objective to establish a further Welsh Hub in North Wales. The initiative has a focus on providing a high-performance training environment for athletes between the ages of 18 and 23. The aim is to develop an environment that supports both full time athletes and dual career athletes (those combining University Education with Athletics) as they look to the initial step towards competing at Commonwealth Games Championship and then progressing onto the global stage.

In bringing these development opportunities to fruition Welsh Athletics continues to be fully supported by Sport Wales and their team of practitioners.

2019 saw the formation of the Performance Sub Group, a key group of individuals from the Athletics Community, Disability Sport Wales and Sport Wales, headed up by board member Adrian Thomas. This group will meet every 3 months to offer support and critically review the operations of the team.

The existing support programme to develop athletes that compete at a Commonwealth Games will continue in the next cycle, however the focus will change and we will deliver two programmes (i) a programme that supports athletes that have clearly achieved performance levels that would see them compete at a Games and (ii) a programme that identifies those athletes that we can help develop to be competitive at the next Games. The overarching objective for this programme is that 75% of athletes who are selected to compete in Birmingham 2022 perform at their Personal Best or in excess of their Personal Best level.

# PERFORMANCE COACHING

# 1793

Qualified coaches 2019



## 2019

has been another fantastic year in the sport, experiencing continued growth and development in key areas.

The number of clubs affiliating to Welsh Athletics grew with the membership exceeding 13,000 for the first time. In our drive to be a sector leading organisation, we continued to refine the club affiliation process supporting clubs in identifying key personnel and helping club evolve their structure and governance accordingly. This work will continue in the coming years with us supporting all areas of club development for all clubs in Wales.

As part of our dedicated 'Club Modernisation' programme the 'Clubs Portal' has continued to develop with additional features added and more resources added for clubs to benefit from. The portal, which includes; club review and planning software, a comprehensive Club Resource Centre and a range of online training courses, now boasts over 245 registered users.

The end of 2018 saw the best attended and supported Clubs Conference which continued to highlight the excellent work being carried out in clubs across Wales. Via the both the National Award and the Service Award programmes we celebrated the clubs, volunteers, coaches, officials running groups, and athletes that excelled and who continue to underpin the sport at all levels. We must thank all the clubs, individuals and in particular, the award panel members for their continued support. The grants for Grassroots Athletics was re-named the

Club Modernisation and Innovation Fund and close to £20,000 was allocated to support projects at local, club and regional level. These projects are vital in developing additional opportunities and supporting activities taking place within specific environments.

Looking forward we have re-structured and revitalised the Development Staff Team who will have a more focused work remit to support the sport in delivering the new strategy. The renamed 'Regional Club Managers' will focus on modernisation and development across 4 key areas; Clubs, Schools, Workforce and Physical Literacy.

Thanks must go to the clubs that have embraced the modernisation agenda and been pro-active in their development over the last 12 months.

From a schools' perspective we will continue to work with Welsh Schools Athletic Association and focus on helping school districts create a sustainable programme of activities whilst supporting teachers through a range of education and development opportunities.

We will look to support both clubs and individuals at all levels in their volunteering journey in the sport whilst continuing to work closely with Disability Sport Wales in launching a new guide running workshop to help develop more inclusive opportunities across Wales.

2020 will also see the launch of the Welsh Athletics Physical Literacy programme for younger athletes. This programme will make it easier for clubs, local authorities and community providers to deliver activities that are progressive and develop the key physical competencies required to enjoy a lifetime in sport.

### COACH EDUCATION

As of 1st April 2019, new safeguarding standards came into effect for all new coaches and those renewing a coach licence. This training has been devised specifically for athletics using UKA's existing welfare policies and procedures, so all examples are relevant to the sport.

In July 2019, Athletics Hub was launched across all Home Country Athletics Federations and British Athletics. This new booking platform allowing us to go fully paperless and modernising the way in which Welsh Athletics administer coach and official education. Athletics Hub provides a more efficient system of booking individuals on to courses, a quicker and easier way for clubs to pay for multiple courses, and allows coaches to access resources and booking in one place.

We have begun the process of training and developing new tutors in Leadership in Running Fitness, Coaching Assistant and Athletics Coach qualifications. This will enable us to be continue and expand our future course.

We continue to work closely with colleagues across the home countries to develop both the formal coach qualifications and coach development opportunities available to support the continuing personal development of coaches at all levels.

CLUBS &  
OFFICIALS

# BUILDING THE FUTURE

**580**

Over 580 award nominations across all categories

**110**

Over 110 clubs

**13,000**

Over 13,000 members

**66**

66 the number of individuals qualified as event adjudicators, Assistant Official, Level 1 and upwards in Track & Field, Endurance disciplines.

**40**

40 Track & Field Mentor & Mentee pairs

**OFFICIAL EDUCATION**

This year we piloted a Mentoring Pathway, and subsequently there are now over 40 Track & Field mentors and mentees paired up for officiating support across Wales.

An 'Official Welcome Pack' has been developed with input from experienced officials and is ready to be launched for new officials joining the Welsh Athletics Officiating Pathway in 2019/20. The pack contains all the important information for new officials all in one handy document which will be available electronically on the website and as paper copies at the end of Level 1 courses.

A new free British Athletics online Health & Safety module as part of the Level 1 Award for Technical Officials (Track and Field) has replaced the face to face course and can be taken in at your own pace in the comfort of the home if needed.

January saw our officials help deliver an international multi-event competition within the Welsh Senior Indoor Track and Field Championships. It was great to see such a large number of Welsh Officials gaining experience in officiating an international field and they must be commended for their efforts in the extra

organisation required. Welsh Officials have officiated at international competition this year, including Diamond League fixtures and the World Indoor Championships in Glasgow. A particular congratulations should go to Gareth Jones and Rory McKerlich who were added to the British National List qualifying as Level 4 Officials in Field and Track respectively.

In April 2019, a Welsh Athletics Official Development day was hosted at the Ron Jones Stadium engaging with volunteers from clubs within the area as well as from Blaenau Gwent AC & Rhymney Valley AC.

It is with great sadness that this year saw the loss of Brian Alvey. Brian was a huge character within Welsh Athletics giving his time in all levels of competition across Track and Field, and Endurance and will be sorely missed by everyone.

Officials continue to be one of the most important factors within sustaining athletics and it is important that Welsh Athletics works with clubs to continue to support the recruitment and development of these individuals that will in turn ensure the success of the sport.



# ING FOR TURE





## UNITE

A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE IS

**VALUED** AND  
**SUPPORTED**

WITHIN OUR SPORT



## ENGAGE

**YOUNG PEOPLE**

PREPARE EVERYONE FOR A LIFELONG

**ENJOYMENT**

OF **SPORT**



TO BE NUMBER ONE IN  
PARTICIPATION AND OPTIMISATION  
WALES, UNDERPINNED BY A  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
THIS BY BEING A SECTOR LEADER  
FOR GOVERNANCE, COLLABORATION  
AND MODERNISATION



## OWN IT

ENSURE THAT

**EVERYONE**  
HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
**PARTICIPATE**  
AND **ACHIEVE**



WELSH ATHLETICS  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

7 YEARS | 6 GOALS

1 SPORT

Cardiff

BRITISH ATHLETICS  
CROSS CHALLENGE

Cardiff



**ONE SPORT FOR  
OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS  
ED BY A WORLD CLASS  
AMME. WE WILL ACHIEVE  
R LEADING ORGANISATION  
LABORATION, INNOVATION  
ERNISATION.**



**INSPIRE**

A NATION OF  
**CHAMPIONS**  
WHO INSPIRE THE NEXT  
**GENERATION**



**INNOVATE**

PROMOTE A VIBRANT CLUB  
AND **COMMUNITY**  
CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS  
**IMPROVEMENT**



**LEAD THE WAY**

BE A RESPECTED  
**TRUSTED**  
**AMBITIOUS**  
SECTOR LEADING ORGANISATION



**ATHLETICS**  
**FAU CYMRU**  
GOALS | 1 VISION  
**SPORT**



2018

# YEAR IN COMPETITION



— 2019

# REVIEW

# TITITIONS





## TRACK & FIELD

2019 has seen a year of transition as we seek to provide a refreshed and engaging Track & Field competition programme for all our members.

Arguably the highlight of the indoor season came as the Welsh Indoor Senior Championships was extended to a second day and also played host to the annual Combined Events International match between Great Britain, France, Spain, Poland and Czech Republic. We were delighted to welcome the livestreaming services of Vinco Sport for this event, and a further two events outdoors which most definitely enhanced the profile of our major track and field events this season.

Athletes, spectators and officials were treated to multi-events athletics of the highest quality with the likes of Niamh Emerson and Holly Mills taking the Senior & U20 titles respectively.

Outdoors, the Welsh Senior Championships was held on the same new date introduced in 2018, and once again was a huge success. The Welsh Junior Championships returned once again to Wrexham and we were delighted to see a 15% growth in athlete entries in comparison to the last Championships held at this venue.

We were delighted to welcome back teams from the home nations to Cardiff for the Welsh Athletics International and also a team from Guernsey to the event for the first time. The title for 2019 was taken by an incredibly strong South of England team – we look forward to welcoming all of these teams back in the 2020 edition of the event.

Event Specific Competitions continue to grow in popularity and we continue to cater for the increased demand for them. Three #RunWithTheWind Sprints Open Meetings were held in Cardiff, four Endurance Open Meetings and (at the time of writing), twelve throws events held across Cardiff and Carmarthen. The summer of 2020 will see us look to further increase the provision of this incredibly popular competition format and ensure that all events are catered for numerous times across the season.

The Welsh Athletics League was an unfortunate victim of the Welsh weather this year, with two of the four matches called off due to unsafe weather conditions. Despite this, the fixtures continue to attract over 130 athletes per event. This year Masters implement weights were also incorporated into the league format for the first time.

The Welsh Junior Leagues continue to attract over 400 athletes at each fixture – congratulations to Swansea Harriers and Neath Harriers who defended their titles in the Cup and Plate Finals respectively.

In line with our continued commitment to develop and modernise our events, we have launched a new entry system and results platform through OpenTrack. This system has provided a new interactive result service and we hope to roll out this system further in 2020 to include live field event results.

With over 90 Track & Field events licensed this year, our utmost thanks must go to the officials and workforce who work tirelessly to ensure that these events can go ahead.





## ROAD RUNNING

2019 has seen a breakthrough for endurance events in Wales and in particular for Road Running.

The Cardiff University / Cardiff Half Marathon successfully hosted the inaugural Commonwealth Half Marathon Championships last October where Dewi Griffiths ran 62:56 and Kris Jones improved his lifetime best to 63:57. The Welsh women's team was led home by Clara Evans in 74:13.

Charlotte Arter became the first Welsh woman to dip under the 70 minute Barrier for Half Marathon at Barcelona in February. Her time of 69:40 took nearly 90 seconds off the old record set by Caryl Jones and saw her become the fastest British woman since 2015 whilst surging to eighth on the UK All-time lists.

Behind her Clara Evans shot to fourth on the Welsh all-time lists with 72:49 and Jenny Nesbitt came home in 73:14.

Joshua Griffiths and Andrew Davies scraped under the 65 minute Barrier in Barcelona with Dewi Griffiths clocking 61:44 at the Chevron Houston Half Marathon to signal a return to form early in the year. Swansea Harriers continued their tradition of performing well at the ERRA National 12 Stage Men's and 6 Stage Women's relays, finishing seventh and sixth respectively in April.

This was followed by a hotly contested Welsh 5km Championships in the Whitchurch suburb of Cardiff where Ieuan Thomas reclaimed the Welsh 5km title from Jonathon Hopkins and Clara Evans secured the women's title. The event also saw an

inter-area competition between Wales, English Regions, Northern Ireland & Ulster & the Armed Forces.

At the time of going to print, Joshua Griffiths heads the 2019 Welsh rankings for 10km with 29:33, recording that time on his way to a Welsh 10km title at the Brecon Carreg Cardiff Bay Run in March.

Arter sits at the top of the women's 10km lists following a win at the Cardiff Metropolitan Cardiff 10k with 32:45 in early September. Dewi Griffiths and Charlotte Arter both top the half marathon lists.

Griffiths leads the marathon lists after clocking 2:11:46 to finish 16th and as the third British Athlete at the Virgin London Marathon. Natasha Cockram heads the women's marathon lists following a 2:34.18 clocking at Houston in January.

With Road Running at a very strong place in Wales, we look forward to further improvement through the Winter both domestically through Inter-Club Competition and with further exceptional performances at the hands of the top Welsh Athletes.

# 385

Race licenses issued



## CROSS COUNTRY

The Welsh Cross-Country season began in October with the usual local leagues and the season opener in the British Cross Challenge Series in Cardiff. The event had been overhauled for 2019, welcoming some of the best European Athletes for the first time in an attempt to bring top class athletics to Wales and to offer Welsh Athletes the best possible competition opportunities on Welsh soil.

2013 European Cross-Country Champion Sophie Duarte opted to race in Cardiff but was unable to prevent Denmark's Anna Moller from storming to senior women's victory, two months ahead of her U23 European title in the Netherlands.

North Whalian Charlie Hulson was a convincing winner in the men's race with Jake Heyward announcing his intentions for the coming Cross-Country season with a convincing victory in the Welsh Capital.

Welsh Athletes outperformed wildest expectations at the Liverpool Cross Challenge in November. Cari Hughes claimed her highest profile victory to date in the U20 women's race and Heyward lived up to his pre-race favourite tag with an emphatic victory in the U20 men's equivalent.

Charlotte Arter stormed to senior women's race victory with Hulson overcoming Dewi Griffiths to finish in fourth with Griffiths one place behind.

This meant that the five went on to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Spar European Cross-Country Championships in Tilburg where they were joined by compatriots Kris Jones, Matthew Willis and Melissa Courtney. In turn this ensured a record number of Welsh Athletes at the

Championships with Heyward's fourth place finish a highlight from a Welsh perspective and both Arter and Courtney claiming top 10 spots.

The Welsh Cross-Country Championships moved to Pembrey Country Park using a varied and interesting route around the park which offered a mix of terrain at a picturesque setting.

Jenny Nesbitt was a runaway winner in the senior women's race with Dewi Griffiths claiming an eighth victory in the Senior Men's category.

Cardiff AC reclaimed the men's team title led home by runner-up Ieuan Thomas, following domination by Swansea Harriers at the event in recent years. The Harriers retained their Senior Women's crown however led home by Alaw Beynon-Thomas.

Champions in the younger age-groups included Conor Smith and Osian Perrin who took Junior Men and U17 honours and Katrin Higginson and Ashleigh Willis in the U20 and U17 Women's contests.

The UK Inter-Counties Championships traditionally closes the domestic Cross Country season each year. Welsh interest in the senior women's race sat with Nesbitt who claimed an historic victory and took some impressive scalps that included several European medallists and most of the top British contenders from the Cross Country season.

The 2018 / 2019 season was also a key period for athletes in the younger age-groups, paving the way for a new crop of athletes to emerge amongst the best in the UK. Participation levels also continue to increase in the endurance sector and keen followers of the sport look forward to the coming season with great anticipation.



## TRAIL RUNNING

It has been another memorable year for trail running in Wales as runners in their thousands are stepping off the road and onto the trails. Across the world, such events as the UTMB in France attract over 10,000 competitors across a week-long festival.

It feels like endurance running is on the up and in another growth curve, whether on the roads, via parkrun or on the trails and Wales is feeling the benefits.

Once again Wales' premier trail marathon events, the Salomon Trail Marathon Wales and Snowdonia Trail Marathon both drew big fields. With the Snowdonia event also hosting the trials for the 2019 World LD Championships.

The Welsh Trail Running Championships were held at the Welsh Trail Running Festival in Builth Wells back in May, with hundreds of runners taking part; and classic events such as the Man vs Horse race in June drew record numbers.

Our Welsh runners tasted success abroad too, as a team travelled to Brittany once again to take part in the Celtic Trail Challenge - and took individual and team gold!

Trail runners are running ever-further too, with the Pen Llyn Ultra hosting a 100-mile race this year and the Preseli Beast boasting an array of distances to challenge ultra-trail fans.

The Welsh Trail Running Committee continues support and promote the sport and we can certainly state that trail running in Wales is in rude health!

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GB vests 2019



## MOUNTAIN RUNNING

On the international scene, our junior athletes have once again produced the goods, at the WMRA. Under 18 International Mountain Running Cup in Susa, Italy on Saturday 24th August; The Welsh girls finished a very creditable 4th placed team. Wales boys achieved their best ever placing in the events 14 year history with team silver.



### BRITISH & IRISH JUNIOR MOUNTAIN RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS – LLANBERIS

Eden O’Dea produced perhaps the best performance of her fledgling career to date, finishing 2nd overall in the combined under 17 girls and under 20 women’s race which earned her a debut British international selection for the World Championships in Patagonia on Saturday 16th November. First home for Wales in the Senior Home International/World Trial race was 7th placed Matt Roberts (Calder Valley) followed by 8th Russell Bentley. 13th Mark Hopkinson (Mynydd Du) 16th Daniel Bodman (Aberdare) and 27th Owain Hunt Williams (Eryri). Heidi Davies finished 23rd overall and 3rd female finisher - enough to earn her a first senior GB vest at the Patagonia World Championships.



### INTERNATIONAL SNOWDON RACE – 20TH JULY

Andrew Douglas previous visit to Llanberis saw him win the International Snowdon race on his first attempt in the iconic race, which this year was one of the World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) 7 race World Cup series. Andy Douglas (Scotland) 64.04 & Sarah McCormack (Ireland) 74.49 were the main winners of the event run in quite warm conditions. Wales first finisher was 10th placed Mark Hopkinson (Mynydd Du) 70:20 who held off a late charge from Eryri’s Russell Bentley 70:35. Wales were well represented by North Wales athletes in Michael Corrales 74:45. Richard Roberts (Eryri) 64:59. Owain Williams (Eryri) 78:18. Tristan Evans (Meirionnydd). Eilw Haf (Eryri) 91:05 & Gemma Moore (NWRRRC) 93:57. Eryri Harriers were also well represented with 54 of their club members completing the race, in particular 48th placed Emlyn Owen 80:18.



### WELSH/BRITISH MOUNTAIN RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

At Ras y Moelwyn (Blaenau Ffestiniog) Welsh athlete Gareth Hughes (Mercia) finished in 1:22:18, just missing out on a overall podium finish in 4th position but took the men’s Welsh title. The first Welsh female finisher and taking the Welsh title was Miranda Grant (Eryri Harriers) fifth female overall in a time of 1:42:39.

There were some very good performances from other Welsh athletes including 10th placed Andy Davies (Mercia) 1:25:39, 15th & first local finisher Russell Bentley (Eryri Harriers) 1:26:17. 17th & 2nd MV/40 Richard Roberts (Eryri Harriers) 1:27:08. Russell Owen (Eryri Harriers) 1st MV/60 1:44:58 & Emyr Davies (Hebog) 1st MV/70 2:24:57.



**WELSH ATHLETICS. JUNIOR MOUNTAIN  
RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS  
BETWS-Y-COED. 27TH JULY**

Mike Spill, Samia Jones and Joe Reardon were the outstanding race winners of the Welsh Athletics Junior Mountain Running Championships at Betws-y-Coed on Saturday 27th July. The event also incorporated the Welsh trial races for the International Youth Cup and the British & Irish Junior Mountain Running Championships. In conjunction with a combined Northern Ireland and Wales development training camp being staged in and around Betws-y-Coed, the Northern Irish athletes were also competing in the event.



**WELSH ATHLETICS INTER-REGIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Longtown, Llanthony Loop. 13th April. Mark Hopkinson was a clear winner of the tough 13.6km/792m event, over two minutes clear of, the very promising young Aberdare athlete Joe Reardon who held off the challenge of Eryri's Owain Williams for silver. Hannah Jarvis (Mynydd Du) was also a clear winner of the women's inter-region title ahead of Hebog's Sian Williams.

Looking ahead, there is much to look forward to with Wales sending 3 male athletes to compete in the Trofeo Vanoni International Relay race in Morbegno, Italy on Sunday 27th October, a long-standing 7km relay event which has grown over the years to become one of the best supported and elite events, attracting the best mountain runners in Europe. This will be the 62nd running of the event. Morbegno of course is twinned with Llanberis.

Planning for 2020 already looks exciting with the WMRA. Under 18 International Mountain Running Cup to be staged in the UK for the first time at Ambleside on Saturday 20th June. We will be looking to develop our athletes along the Welsh Athletics endurance development pathway and ensure that we give our very talented athletes the international opportunities that they deserve to progress to GB representative level.

Thank you to all the committee members, race organisers and volunteers who have given up their time to enhance and promote the sport and of course, the competitors who enjoy the freedom of racing on the mountains and the land owners who have been so generous in allowing events to be held on their land



**SCHOOLS**

The Schools Association has continued to work in partnership with both Welsh Athletics and Run4Wales during the 2018/19 academic year. WSAA continues to work to align competition pathways and become a fully integrated part of Welsh Athletics.

Domestically, competition began on Sunday, October 21st. with the Joint Indoor Combined Events Championships, held at NIAC, Cardiff. This led to selection for 16 young athletes to attend the Indoor International which was again held at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow. Congratulations to Cardiff High School's Zak Wall, winner of the Under 16 Boys Championship.

The Inter Schools Cross Country returned to Brecon on Saturday, November 17th. There were 366 finishers on the day across the six race program. Special mention must go to Strade's Ben Thomas, winner of the Senior Boy's title for the third successive year. WSAA selected teams of 4 to participate at the Home Countries International held in Belfast in January based on results.

Teams representing the eight School Districts were back at Brecon for the National Cross Country Championships on Wednesday February 13th. Following this event teams were selected to travel to Santry in Dublin for the SIAB Cross

Country (36 athletes). March also saw the Welsh Schools Sportshall Final at Cwmbran which was again an unqualified success.

The Schools summer track & field Championships were an important part of the Gemau Cymru festival of sport early in July. The event saw 1 new Welsh age group record as well as 8 new championship bests. Following the championships, a team of 70 was selected to take part in the SIAB International, this year held on home soil at Swansea University at the end of July, the team returned a haul of 11 medals. In addition, there were no fewer than 16 personal bests and yet another Welsh age group best, this time for Osian Perrin (St. Gerrard's) in the 3000m. The Association also accepted an invitation from Welsh Athletics to enter teams in the Under 20 International.

Qualifying events across the 8 School Districts fed into the final event of the domestic programme as a total of 62 teams from 36 schools battled it out in the NASUWT Cup and Plate Final in Brecon on July 10th. Quality of performance was evidenced by no fewer than 17 new championship best performances which punctuated a great day of athletics, a fitting end to another great year of schools' competition.

## Run Wales continues to grow, providing high quality, social, easily accessible and enjoyable running opportunities for everybody.



Our programmes have again seen fantastic growth over the last 12 months and continue to provide the inspiration, expertise and opportunity for more people than ever to run across Wales. The increasing number of registered run groups- now up to 157 – including growing numbers of workplace running groups, such as at Admiral Insurance in Cardiff.:

**At the beginning of 2019 one of our senior managers wanted to see if we could set up a Couch to 5k course for Admiral, having become a keen runner herself, progressing from a novice to exercise and a bit overweight, to running the London marathon! She credits running with helping keep her weight and fitness sustainable and wanted to share it.**

**Admiral already had an informal run club at lunch times but nothing for beginners, so a few of us joined in and launched Couch to 5k in February, with support from Run Wales, and one of us had already coached C25k outside of work and was able to bring in that experience.**

**The first group saw about 20 new runners complete the 9-week course to a continuous 5k run, which they did in pouring rain and celebrated with cake and a completer's T- Shirt!**

**Since then the group have consolidated their prowess, reaching 10k; our Swansea office have followed suit; and we are launching courses in Newport and a satellite Cardiff office also.**

**Runners are supported by LiRF coaches (Admiral has paid for staff to take the qualification) and keen everyday runners from Admiral who want to help.**

Our focus continues to be on supporting our invaluable workforce of qualified Run leaders. Over the past year we have successfully qualified 431 Leaders in Running Fitness (LiRF's) and 50 Coaches in Running Fitness (CiRF's). As we continue to seek equality balance across all our programmes it is heartening to note that across all individuals who have qualified as a LiRF in Wales 57% are females. With this excellent expansion of qualified leaders, we now have 1163 licensed LiRF's and 145 licensed CiRF's across Wales.

Building on a concept from run groups within Cardiff, the Big Social Run has now been launched across the country. The runs are social events where a number of run groups from a particular area get together to have 1 big run together. They are non-competitive and a place where people can just enjoy running together in a pressure free environment, whilst learning from others and meeting new people. To date we have had 9 events delivered, across 4 different venues, with the largest attracting over 400 registered runners.

A big focus of the last 12 months has been the support and development of our workforce of volunteer run leaders. We have launched a monthly leader's newsletter as well as a leader forum online, where the community can discuss ideas and help each other wherever they are. We have also held leader networking events in all of the Welsh regions, bringing individuals together and responding to their specific needs by facilitating learning sessions and group discussions, as well as just enjoying a social get together of like-minded people.

Run Wales could not be as successful as it is without key partners and stakeholders. We continue to build these relationships to deliver new and exciting opportunities. One example from the past 12 months is our work with Diabetes UK and the NHS. Together we worked to support a group of type 2 diabetics in Aberdare to make a positive change to their lifestyle and condition through running, which we called 'Step into Action'. The Step into action pilot project is proving very popular with the participants and is already having a positive effect on their health and in managing their diabetes.

Our strategic alliance with Parkrun has continued to flourish and prove fruitful. This weekly running opportunity now 56 parkruns in total, which is broken down as 16 junior and 40 senior opportunities.

At Run Wales have long understood the range of benefits, including better health and well-being and more connected communities, associated with our programme and associated greater physical activity. As we move forward Run Wales is ideally placed to lead the sector in promoting physical activity across Wales and will continue to drive the increase in running participation and call running the biggest participation sport in Wales.

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Parkruns 2019

# AWARDS 2019 WINNERS

The full Roll of Honour can be viewed at  
[www.welshathletics.org/en/page/welsh-athletics-awards](http://www.welshathletics.org/en/page/welsh-athletics-awards)



## Award of Honour

The Award of Honour is given to individuals in recognition of exceptional service to athletics in Wales. The award is given for a minimum of twenty-five years active contribution to the sport at club, regional, school, district schools or national level on behalf of Welsh Athletics or the Welsh Schools Athletics Association.

—  
Paul Brooks (Wrexham AAC)  
Kath Crane (Brecon AC)  
Stuart Hodson (Midland Counties)  
Nigel Jones (Swansea)



## Meritorious Awards

The Meritorious Award is open for to individuals for services at club, regional, school, district schools and / or national level on behalf of Welsh Athletics or the Welsh Schools Athletics Association. The award is given in recognition of services to athletics in Wales over a minimum period of fifteen years active service to the sport.

—  
Gerald Davies (Glamorgan Valley Schools)  
Dai Gatehouse (Dyfed Schools)  
Arthur Egan (Wrexham AAC)  
Ian Robinson (Wrexham AAC)  
Steve Ryan (Swansea Harriers)



**WELSH ATHLETICS**  
ATHLETAU CYMRU

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