

Minutes of Track & Field Committee,

Wednesday 14th July 2021, Teams Conference Call.



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

1. **Present:** Lynette Harries (LH), Adrian Palmer (AP), Dai Williams (DWS), Darran Williams (DW), Bethan Akanbi Mortimer (BAM), Rob Campion (RC) Rhiannon Linington-Payne (RLP), Joyce Tomala (JT), Sue Hooper (SH)
2. **Apologies:** Lynne Brier, Kath Elias, Jake Morgan, Mark Gold, Crispin Backsall,
3. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest:** – none declared
4. **WA Updates: (RLP)**
 - a. **Junior Championships:**
 - i. The Junior Championships will be held in Newport on 31st July/1st August. Age groups U13s, U17s and U20s. U15s will run alongside the senior championships thus allowing control over number of spectators at the championships.
 - ii. Numbers entered are on a par with previous years, when the championships have been held in the south.
 - iii. The timetable will be finalised shortly and due to go out to athletes on 26th July.
 - iv. RLP will work on updating the guidance; now that Welsh Covid restrictions have changed; to ensure both championships are in line with current guidelines.
 - b. **Senior Championships:**
 - i. Entries from both seniors and U15s are good.
 - ii. Some new initiatives are being introduced this year. A combined events challenge will be included to support talented combined events athletes. The athletes will compete in the mainstream events with scores for 'combined events' element running alongside. Events included are sprint hurdles, long jump, and javelin.
 - iii. BAM asked if this initiative would apply across all age groups. RLP replied that this year it will be piloted with the seniors. If it is successful this year the initiative will be rolled out to U15s as well. JT asked if U20s and U17s would be allowed to be part of the new initiative. RLP replied that they would be allowed however they would enter as seniors and compete with senior implements/hurdles with the hurdles being the biggest challenge due to difference in hurdle height.
 - iv. AP stated that the decision not to hold the combined events championships this year was taken by EA and the combined events strategy group. Discussions had been held over several months with representatives of all home nations. The rationale was to develop the pathway rather than continue with a competition which had not been well supported.
 - v. Aim is to have as 'normal' a championships as possible now that many restrictions have been lifted.
 - vi. It is a prerequisite of the nomination process for Commonwealth Games that athletes enter the senior event. RLP is working with the performance team to ensure athletes have the necessary information. AP stated that the nomination policy states that athletes have to compete this year however the standard clause is included which allows the National Coach discretion if an athlete provides a valid reason why they are not able to compete at the championships.
 - vii. LH asked if there was scope to hold presentations for the service awards. RLP replied that presentations will be different this year, adopting the process that British Athletics had used whereby athletes took their medals off a stand. In

terms of H&S RLP agreed to look at whether it would be appropriate for recipients of awards to be handed awards by presenters. LH will contact Jacqueline Brace to establish who would like awards presented at the championships.

c. International:

1. RLP reported that the International had been cancelled as teams had dropped out. The Manchester International will include an U20 International. The date of the Welsh U20 International has been retained in the UK fixtures calendar but looking to reposition to a weekend date so that it becomes more relevant in the calendar. Hopeful that nations from further afield will compete in the International as well as the home countries in 2022.
2. AP asked how much work would be required to stage this competition and gain EAP status. RLP replied that a significant budget would be required and a major factor in achieving EAP status.
3. JT questioned why EA's inclusion of U20 international had been supported but not WA's Competition. RLP thought that the fact that WA were not able to confirm the international would go ahead due to Welsh Government's Covid restrictions had probably resulted in the decision. This along with Home Countries only budgeting for one U20 International factors into the reasons for change.
4. AP stated that all home nations are looking at linking competitions to athlete pathway. Scotland are only sending an U20 team and not a senior team to the Manchester International as they do not feel that the competition benefits their senior athletes. The Manchester International will incorporate some U18 events.
5. Looking at grand prix style competition prior to Commonwealth Games in 2022.
6. An endurance program will be held on the date scheduled for the U20 International.

5. DISCUSSION:

a. IR Championships:

- i. JT explained that West Wales had been asked if they could hold the pilot event this year and what events they felt they could effectively manage and include in the timetable.
- ii. JT and RC had attended a meeting with West Wales representatives along with a representative of the Leisure Centre and Carmarthen Council. A lengthy discussion regarding the events was held. (JT had sent the timetable to all members of T & F committee).
- iii. The pilot event will be held in Carmarthen on 28th August 2021. Carmarthen Council will provide a risk assessment for the area outside the track. If track & trace is still operational at the end of August all regions will be issued with track & trace forms. Age groups competing are U13 girls, U13 boys, U15 girls, U15 Boys. Andrew Jenkins has created a timetable for the pilot event.
- iv. The results package would need to be set up for teams not individual numbers. DW stated that the team facility on Opentrack doesn't work in the UK only in Europe. DW will create a spreadsheet for the pilot event.
- v. CB had sent an email querying why there were no relays. Obviously at this time there is uncertainty around the Covid situation in late August. The timetable has been produced to ensure a short day, with limited numbers attending and

adhering to local conditions/ possible restrictions in place in August. The rationale was to reduce the amount of contact between athletes. CB had said that if a vote was required he could be contacted by phone. JT reminded members that AJ had already put a lot of work into the event to ensure a range of both track & field events but no relays.

- vi. DW had replied to CB's email asking why the concern about the relays when regions should be grateful that an event was being arranged. He suggested that if relays are added at the last minute only athletes who had already been selected for individual events should be used. JT pointed out that in events held so far athletes had been asked to leave the stadium as soon as their event was over to avoid contamination.
- vii. RLP thinks it is fantastic that the opportunity is going ahead, particularly as the event will cater for the age groups where there has been a dip in engagement and membership. Whilst relays are popular, and she would always advocate relays, the risk assessment made by West Wales has to be taken into account.
- viii. JT asked RC for his interpretation of the comments from the representative of the Leisure Centre/Council as she felt he was reticent about holding events at Carmarthen. RC stated he was surprised by the response stating that numbers should be kept below 50. RC suggested that there may be scope to add in extra events on the track but not on the field.
- ix. DWS thinks that the core group of events included in the timetable produced by AJ is perfect. He doesn't want to extent the programme. If relays go ahead then only athletes already selected for individual events should be in the relay team.
- x. SH agrees that we should go with the programme offered.
- xi. LH asked for AP's view on the throws included in the programme. AP replied whilst there may be more javelin throwers in West Wales it's good to see an event going on. JT pointed out that one of the West Wales coaches had argued for hammer, but it had been pointed out that would only be for U15 athletes whereas javelin and shot were for both age groups. AP is of the opinion that there have been more throws events this year than previously thus giving athletes the opportunity to compete.
- xii. BAM Is ok with events suggested.
- xiii. JT summed up the discussion that everyone seemed to be in favour of the programme suggested, therefore a vote would not need to be taken so she would not disturb CB's coaching session by phoning him. West Wales would be asked if they could accommodate the relays.
- xiv. JT informed members that AJ will be sending further information out to regions. The date for final selections by all regions is suggested as 17th August as this would be after both U13s and U15s Welsh Championships.
- xv. 17th August will be the deadline for regions to declare their officials. All regions will need to supply full name, URN and level of each of their officials.
- xvi. AJ will contact SH regarding appointment of chief officials.
- xvii. DW has bib numbers in the office for the event. RLP said that IR medals are on order.
- xviii. **ACTION: SH to liaise with AJ re chief officials
JT to contact AJ regarding relays.**

b. Facilities:

- i. JT has received calls and emails from officials concerned about the state of facilities and tracks in Wales. Chris Moss was invited to attend this meeting but was unable to attend. He replied to a request from JT regarding monitoring of facilities and equipment.

- ii. CM stated that UKA removed the old facility inspection process and replaced it with the TrackMark accreditation process. Units 1 and 2 cover Track & Field provision and Unit 6 covers Competition however, these units do not get into the finer detail of specific equipment.
- iii. In an ideal world, all facilities should do their due diligence when it comes to equipment provision and competition providers should liaise closely with the facility to identify any issues in advance of the competition / event / meeting. CM's view is that, given that there are no longer formal facility inspections, what we need to establish a more robust process for the Chiefs (or Track Referee, Field Referee, Meeting Manager, Technical Manager) to feedback on facilities and provision which would allow us to raise any issues have more informed / detailed dialogue with facility providers / operators in relation to competition (and equipment provision).
TrackMark Overview: <https://www.uka.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Overview-v5.0.pdf>
TrackMark FAQ's: <https://www.uka.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TrackMark-FAQs-Feb-2020.pdf>
- iv. AP asked if CM was saying is it up to facility providers / competition providers to come to us or vice versa. AP felt that reporting issues, by technical /meeting manager either at or after a competition is too late. Should facilities be inspected prior to events?
- v. LH stated that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Previously 'Track Assessors' did an excellent job. Sometimes officials find themselves in an embarrassing situation. LH had written a report, which was sent to one of the clubs hosting an event suggesting that they use the information to tackle facility providers and local authority. LH has spoken to WA CEO regarding another facility she had officiated at. At the Welsh Schools competition officials had to dig the pits as they were not safe for competition. LH pointed out that equipment storage facilities are also an issue.
- vi. LH agrees with CM that a group should be in place to look at the issues. She is of the opinion that people should be identified by WA to carry out at least an annual check of facilities. A standardised list of equipment should be issued to all facilities.
- vii. RLP suggested that as facilities Track Mark accreditation is for a period of three years operators may become complacent regarding maintenance and repairs. She suggested that maybe equipment inventories should be produced for events. JT said that she had given one of the stadiums in question a comprehensive list of equipment and gone through requirements with the stadium management. Stadiums have been sent reports from chief officials but don't appear to be acting on them whereas when assessors were in place stadiums did act on reports.
- viii. JT had been asked if the kits set up for the regional assessors were back with WA. DW replied that WA only hold one set of equipment which is stored at Aberdare. He believes the kit held by West Wales was damaged in transit and not fit for purpose. He was unsure about the North Wales kit. Chris Price did hold the East Wales kit, JT to check if this is still the case. DW agreed to look into equipment held in the store at Cardiff.
- ix. AP is of the opinion that clubs have a role to play in keeping WA informed of any issues with stadiums and equipment. He believes stadiums who are not satisfactory should be named. He was surprised that Aberdare had been cited as not taking note of reports as he and RSJ had worked with the stadium to rectify issues with the cage. JT replied that she had received a number of emails regarding facilities, including the ongoing issue of pole vault at Aberdare and unsafe storage of hammers. LH stated that the high jump and pole vault facilities

at Cardiff Stadium were below standard, she had communicated this to WA CEO. LH believes a holistic approach is required. Some improvements have been made at Newport however there are still issues. LH concluded that if improvements are not made some officials may refuse to officiate at certain stadiums.

- x. JT asked how the T & F committee/WA can move this forward. DW stated that there is an ongoing issue between the contractors and stadium regarding the installation of the pole vault at Aberdare. JT had been told by stadium management at Aberdare that they were unable to get the uprights out of storage. DW stated that he had been at Aberdare several times and had not experienced any issues with equipment.
- xi. AP asked if there was a policy in place that required any issues raised by this committee to be addressed within a certain timeframe. JT explained that significant issues raised are reported to General Council and relevant WA Head of department / staff member however timescales are not defined.
- xii. BAM reported concerns regarding the circle and long jump area at the 'new' Caerphilly facility.
- xiii. DWS asked if it would be worthwhile to produce a guide to upskill stadium staff in relation to equipment and maintenance. He suggested that maybe stadium staff should complete a checklist prior to competition. JT responded that she didn't feel this committee could insist on this matter only offer advice and recommendations. RLP feels that Track Mark issued by UKA would be seen as sufficient by Councils and Local Authorities and they that would be unwilling to spend money on things they do not prioritise. CM is apparently working on a new facility strategy. RLP suggested it may be worth looking at whether or not recommendations made could be incorporated into the new strategy. BAM is of the opinion that some form of education for facility managers would be useful, citing staff at the new Caerphilly County Borough Athletics hub who have stated that they are not sure what their roles are.
- xiv. This matter will also be referred to Officials committee.
- xv. **ACTION: CM to be invited to attend next T & F meeting for further update on facilities.**
- xvi. **JT to ask for facilities to be discussed at September GC meeting.**

6. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – not already covered:

a. Regional Representatives:

- i. East Wales AGM has been rescheduled for 1st September, when representative will be elected.
- ii. CB is continuing as the representative for North Wales.
- iii. South are seeking clarity of their representative; it may be Mark Gold. DWS to notify JT and LB.
- iv. Jake Morgan is the elected West Wales representative.

7. REPORTS:

a. Regional Issues:

- i. West Wales are holding a regional championships for U11's, August 18th and U13s, 11th August. Open to all West Wales athletes.

b. Officials Committee:

- i. SH is working on officials for both Championships. JT asked if there were sufficient officials for the Championships as a plea had gone out via UKA. SH replied that some UKA officials will be attending both championships. A Meeting Manager is still required for the Junior Championships. Richie

Jenkins had volunteered however this would leave the number of track judges short. JT had been asked to be meeting manager however had stated that until UKA had notified in writing that the cage at Newport was compliant she would not take on the role. If the cage was notified as compliant then she would consider the role on the Sunday. DW asked who would then do the seeding.

- ii. JT asked how many of the 'new' officials are actually new to the sport, citing an example of a track judge who has also worked as a field judge. Obviously that person cannot undertake two roles at an event. SH replied that some of the people who had attended the field course had made themselves available for the championships. Starter's courses had also been run however even though SH has contacted those attending none have come forward to officiate at events.
- iii. JT informed members that EA were working with the YDL on an initiative to encourage people to come into officiating. EA are offering an incentive of £20 off the cost of officials level 1 courses and £20 towards kit for those moving from L1 to L2. JT has pointed out to EA and YDL that Welsh Officials do not pay for course and that Kit is issued free to officials attending championships.
- iv. LH stated that it has been an uphill struggle for SH and ZH to get enough officials for events. LH has spoken to JW (CEO) on this matter and will bring it up at the joint Board and GC meeting next week. She has suggested that WA look at the challenge of securing more officials as a priority. LH believes that clubs should be contacted as part of their development.
- v. Officials have asked about the Carmarthen throws meet. RLP and DW have received no information from the organisers. SH has sent the list of officials to the organisers but has heard nothing from them.
- vi. **ACTION: DW to contact organisers**

8. Any Other Business.

- a. SH to ask Richie Jenkins to be Meeting Manager both days of Junior Championships and put out a plea for more track judges.

9. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 13th October 2021

10. **Dates of Future Meetings:** (all meetings commence @ 6pm)

- a. Wednesday 8th December
- b. Wednesday 9th February