

Track and Field Secretary's Report 2023

Overview

This calendar year we have successfully run the following programme of events:

		Competitors	Previous
Indoor Pentathlon, 3K (and some Masters Open events)	Lee Valley - February	184	133
Indoor Track & Field Championships	Sheffield - March	507	627*
Winter Throws	Oxford - March	109	136*
Track & Field Championships	Derby – June	803	636
Throws Pentathlon	Oxford - August	93	68
10K Track	Jarrow - September	57	70

*Including winter throws (136 competitors who did a winter throws event)

We have sadly not managed to run the following Championships this year:

- 5K track: due to the inability to secure a suitable event in which to include this.
- Outdoor Pentathlon: there was not a suitable space in the competition diary where we were confident we could secure officials etc.
- Decathlon/Heptathlon Championships: This was again arranged as part of the North West Combined Events competition but the organisers cancelled their event at fairly late notice.

Some of the changes instigated over the last few years are now becoming embedded, including greater use of technology to support our Championships to run smoothly, live streaming of the event, and a dedicated Call room and medal presentation ceremonies to make the event feel representative of a National Championships.

I have had some voluntary support to assist me to deliver Track & Field events (an Officials Secretary, dedicated Comms person, someone else to support the procurement and contractual aspects, and someone also organised the 10K within their own event) – this support is hugely appreciated so thanks to those people for what they have done.

Overall, during the calendar year 2023 we made a surplus of £15.4k across the above events. This was not intentional, but has been achieved through the careful management of expenditure, mostly officials' expenses and venue choices etc. Some events have also struggled to secure the optimum number of officials due to competing demands on officials.

I am aware that not everything was perfect at all events this year but as always, I have sought feedback from lead officials and athletes (at the event as well as via other mechanisms) and this feedback should be used to continually improve things for the future as required.

Indoor Pentathlon and 3k (and some open events) – Lee Valley

This event had, as you might expect, fewer athletes because of the specialist nature of the Combined events element. The entry for the 3K Champs was however well supported with 68 entrants (13 more than 2022). Overall entries were up on the previous year by 51 athletes. We did put on a number of Open events around that to try to provide a better competition environment for our athletes as well as additional competition opportunities, but the entries were lower than we would have hoped except for most field events. We made a small loss at this event which was disappointing but possibly not unexpected.

Indoor Track & Field Championships – Sheffield

In order to endeavour to move our events around the country as much as possible, I took the bold move to relocate the main track and field Champs to Sheffield after many years at Lee Valley in London. 507 athletes entered (down from 627 the previous year which included the winter throws).

The event went well and positive feedback was generally received. Due to the new venue we were not able to run a winter throws event simultaneously so I arranged a separate event (see below). The presentations, which had received negative feedback the previous year were improved and well received.

Winter throws

Due to the change of venue for the main indoor championships, a separate event was required for throws. This also allowed us to address athlete feedback to get more than a handful of throws (necessary at Lee Valley historically due to their just being one cage) and therefore meet the competition needs of outdoor winter throwers. There were 109 entries with many entering multiple events. This led to timetable challenges but a successful event none-the-less which made a small profit.

BMAF Outdoor Track & Field Championships 2023 – Derby

Entries were up 25% on 2022 at 803 – almost an all-time high, only previously better in 2018 when additional events were able to be included. I rescheduled the programme to span across 2 days rather than the age-split introduced following Covid, based on athlete feedback. Overall, the Championships gave a positive financial outcome due to reduced officials costs through mainly use of some more local officials and reduced hotel use. Feedback was gathered from Chief officials, viewed on social media and fed back verbally during and after the Championships from athletes. Mostly positive feedback received. For those that did not attend the live streaming service was welcomed, although could have covered more field events. Athletes felt the atmosphere was great: friendly, professional, competitive and relaxed. My thanks goes to all those who helped before, during and after the event – I couldn't have put it on without you!

Throws Pentathlon - Oxford

This event was very well received with 93 entries (55% approx. 30 more than expected). This increase created timetable challenges which we handled as well as we could. The predominant use of fairly local officials kept cost down and meant that they were familiar with the facilities. Overall, we made a very small surplus mainly due to higher than expected throws entry and cost management. Consideration needs to be made as to whether this should be a 2 day event in the future if the numbers are increasing?

The challenges in 2023

Continued challenges include but are not limited to:

- a) A congested competition calendar nationally. This is somewhat managed by UKA but often incorporates clashes which have to be overcome e.g. we had to move our Outdoor Champs this year as UKA put something else on that weekend which would not have now allowed us to get any officials.
- b) Officials are a continual challenge. I continue to have both our indoor and outdoor British Championship included on the UKA national official's availability list, this has helped attract some of the best officials in the country who have not had an opportunity to access BMAF events before and has improved the professionalism of our events as a result. Officials in the volumes we need them, for our larger events, is still a challenge however, where clashes are inevitable, but this is a national problem and not isolated to BMAF events.
- c) Venues. It is clear from various communications that I see or hear that athletes are unaware of our specific venue requirements. It is increasingly challenging to find venues that meet all our competition requirements. We continue to look and aspire to move our championship around if possible and practical to do so, as requested by the athletes but our options are currently very limited.

Farewell from me!

As this AGM will see me leave my role as BMAF Track & Field Secretary, I want to say what an absolute pleasure it has been to assist our athletes to achieve their competition goals on the track and field scene during the past few years I have been in this role. I have enjoyed it immensely and learnt a lot along the way too.

I have scheduled indoor dates for my successor, in order to ensure we have some events in the indoor/winter season.

I will not be a stranger and look forward to seeing you at an indoor event soon (either as an athlete or official).

I would again like to take this final opportunity to thank all those who supported me and the above events in any way – your help was very much appreciated.

Good luck for the 2024 season and beyond.

Kay Reynolds
Track & Field Secretary

October 2023