

## **International report BMAF AGM 2025**

While international reporting is not part of the AGM process, I was asked to report the work of international team managers but there is more to international events than team management. Hence this not intended as a complete report on all of this years' international events where GB&NI compete but an outline of what typically happens to highlight the overall aspects of the role.

As part of supporting international competitions post covid and the departure of Peter Duhig there was need for somebody to check Nationality, national registration and area club fees were up to date and notify to EMA and WMA. This has been a manual task taking a large amount of time. Former IT manager, Peter Kennedy, foresaw this situation arising about 2 years ago and following discussions assisted in the development of a registration validation checker with Opentrack.

Using this online tool, checking a single athlete takes less than a second. Athletes receive an email to say everything is OK or a standard template email indicating what actions they need to take to validate themselves. The use of this semi-automated checker has saved an immense amount of time and has been used for events in Torun, Gothenburg, Bengaluru, Gainesville, Meduno, Jyväskylä and Madeira, approximately 1300+ entries.

The support team for approving international entries was three but one departed early this year, one has had limited availability with school holidays and child care leaving myself to perform about 95% of the entries for the last international in Madeira.

A more visible part of international support is the selection of team managers. This is done by advertising on the website and MastersAthletics and taking expressions of interest and a discussion style of interview being used. This has resulted in a HR process of selection involving members of BMAF and/or BMAF Services. The number of team managers is primarily dependant of the number of athletes likely to attend and thus creates a budget via the administration fee collected per athlete. Travel and accommodation take the bulk of the costs along with relay team fees.

The team management typically take the form of a lead with one or two others. The lead is based at the main venue where daily international team managers meet prior to the start of the days competitions. Information from these daily meetings can be then disseminated to other team managers and/or athletes as needed.

Team manager communication has moved on from the pre-record days of just email and a team manager mobile number. There is now a GB&NI WhatsApp group and Facebook group in addition. While not all athletes avail themselves of these it does provide a more direct method of communication to athletes.

The team managers themselves have a range of experiences in T&F, HM/Marathon, XC and walks. Each stadium and non stadia location provide different challenges with them being many miles apart and catering for very different events. Some flexibility is required by team managers in regard to being able to move between venues and vary their attendance times.

The original intention was to have full time non competing team managers such that they can commit to the role. In the recent EMA championships in Madeira it was decided to allow competing athletes to assist. However, this does mean that they are there for a shorter time, less available and have guidance from the full time managers.

The daily team management activity might be as routine as just being around the competition areas. It can include collecting athlete accreditation and arranging pickup, declaring athletes who are delayed in arriving. It can mean assisting athletes with competition requirements such as shoe rules.

Unfortunately some competitions get delayed and result in the team managers being in attendance for many hours longer than the timetabled days. Dealing with appeals in a formal or informal way can also be time consuming, resulting in not being available for other athlete assistance and again may extend the day.

While teams are mostly self selecting for non stadia events there is the paper administration for composite teams. But without a doubt the most challenging part of team management is track relays. Some age groups are again almost self selecting but the current age groups 55, 60 and 65 present the biggest challenge due to the number of athletes who are present. These age groups are a result of the baby boom generation, and the competitive instinct becomes apparent in team selection. This was addressed back in 2006 with BVAF guidance, this has been updated in 2023 and reflects the modern world and will adapt further in the future.

There is the additional administration of collecting and dispatching of medal and certificates for those who are unable to collect them. Typically there is a General Assembly at the outdoor championships. British athletes frequently qualify for EMA or WMA awards for their previous years performances, these are also collected and dispatched for those who can no attend in person.

While English is the working language of EMA/WMA there can be language difficulties in addition to cultural attitudes, this can effect how LOC officials act and team managers need to be aware of these factors.

During the championships the team managers are asked to keep some form of daily record and feed that back more formally at the end of the championships.

When a major T&F championship is complete, it is just about time to start the whole process again.

Glen Reddington