



## *Essex County Athletic Association*

Minutes of the Essex AA Track & Field meeting held via the Zoom platform on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, start time 7pm.

### **Participants:**

Andy Catton (Chair), Malcolm Bailey (Secretary), Claire Levey, Diane Wooller, Rick Thompson, Scott Darney, Tony Benton, Kaye Merrywest, Paul Merrywest, Elaine Forrest, Vicky Trevor, Bob J, Steve Reynolds, Joe Everitt.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence received

### **2. Minutes for the last meeting – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022**

All action points arising from this meeting have been discussed at Executive committee meetings. No actions remain outstanding.

### **3. Review of the 2023 Essex & Eastern Indoor Track & Field County Championships- which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

Prior to the meeting, Diane Wooller submitted a report, which was read out at this meeting:-

#### **Meeting Managers Report**

Lee Valley Athletics Stadium is a good Venue and the stadium staff very pleasant and helpful. The equipment is good and although it wasn't out as early as normal and not always in the same place we normally find it the staff were ready to provide as and when we asked for it. We were also able to buy a large box of Safety pins from them as we hadn't thought to supply safety pins with the numbers.

We didn't have enough Radios on the same system for this meeting. I had to give six radios on one system to anyone associated with track events and 4 on a different system to first aid and field officials so I had to have 2 radios on different systems. The county needs to buy a set of at least 10 or 12 radios on the same system.

We had an issue with spikes; Athletes were informed that they had to run in Christmas tree Spikes which are not available at the moment so spikes had to filed blunt this caused a problem at call room where all spikes are checked.

We didn't use Lee Valley's Photo Finish system we used Woodford Green's Finish Lynx System which worked well all weekend. We started using the Electronic Gun but after the 1<sup>st</sup> couple of races I had

complaints from athletes and coaches that the athletes couldn't hear it so I asked the starter's to use their own Guns.

I was very impressed with Roster as this was the first time we had used it I thought the Athlete Registration went very smoothly there weren't any long queues at Registration. There are a few issues to be sorted before we use it for the outdoor Championships. Athletes weren't asked to put their EA number when entering the competition. On Saturday I had to tell an Athlete he wasn't able to compete as he wasn't with any club and didn't have an EA registration number.

#### SATURDAY

On Roster men could enter V35 Hurdles we don't do Vets Hurdles they have to enter seniors. One athlete competed as a senior the other we allowed to go with the U20 men as the heights were the same for V35 but he didn't count in the race.

The timetable for the U13B hurdles on Roster was 18:31 on all printed tables and later on roster it was 15:55 as one of the boys was coming later as he saw the time on Roster we scheduled the event at 16:55pm

An athlete arrived too late for her race and the race was already seeded so wasn't allowed to compete.

We don't do any master's field events athletes wanting to throw their masters weights were told they had to throw senior weights.

#### SUNDAY

A timetable issue with the Long jump caused a few problems amendments made to the timetable were not correct on roster and Athletes were arriving at call room for the wrong times.

A mother was very upset as her daughter was put on the results as qualifying for the U17W 200m final in error. I apologised to her and explained why her daughter had not qualified but she still said it was not good enough.

There is a shortage of officials in all areas. My thanks go to all the Officials and volunteers for their hard work at such an extremely busy meeting.

It is also thanks to Elaine Forrest, Vicky Trevor and Rick Thompson for the brilliant work they did on the roster system for this event. "

Elaine Forrest also sent in a report as follows:-

"The Essex and Eastern indoor championships took place at Lee Valley on the 4th and 5th March. The number of entrants was a third up on prior year (just shy of 900 compared to about 600 in 2022). Of those 266 entries were from 173 Eastern athletes.

Event entry fee was £12 meaning around £10,500 was taken in payments (before fees). Entry fee on the day of the event was £5 and £1700 was taken before the card payments for Sunday have been confirmed.

This year the event was organised by a small committee and the decision was taken to make use of the England Athletics preferred event system - Roster. As a new system to the committee much time was taken in learning the system and setting up the event and undoubtedly some clear learning's were made for the future. For example - an option exists to request EA numbers at time of entry which wasn't used but should have been. There is also a known Roster issue whereby anyone born in 2006 is automatically classed as a senior rather than a U20 because of the way EA determines age groups at that level. This meant manual intervention in these cases. It was also clear that some information could have been stated more clearly on the entry form - for example underlining entry was only for Essex and Eastern athletes and explaining the 2006 issue. We also had a very small number of complaints from those unused to online entry that there was no postal option and the system was unfamiliar to them. And some people would have preferred to be able to just see a field timetable or a track one rather than a combined timetable being the only option.

On the whole though the use of Roster does seem to have allowed for a number of efficiencies in the process (e.g. quicker results) and there is undoubtedly more that could be done to make it even more useful to any future events - for example the call room being logged into a device and the system could pick up the seeding sheets automatically. Also it is important to check that final results have been processed before closing for the day as on day 1 the final's hadn't been automatically pulled through to the system meaning these were added manually that evening. Likewise all Field results were manually entered by a results processor rather than the Field teams.

Away from the entry system the event seems to have been well run - there was some confusion regarding a couple of the long jump times but these were resolved on the day without issue. A couple of athletes were unable to compete on arrival at the venue because of their lateness - where possible seeding did make allowances but at least two athletes couldn't compete because seeding had left no spare lanes. We also had some athletes rejected at the call room for incorrect spikes (despite this being publicised at every communication point) and one athlete who was told they couldn't compete as they weren't EA registered (despite previously claiming they were).

Other issues that arose on the day were caused by a printer breaking leading to a delay in seeding sheets being produced (resolved by a spare printer from the previous day's seeder still being in his car), underlining the need for back up's of such items. Likewise paper for printing was running quite low by the end of the event. Walkie Talkies were limited in number and replacements are needed. The announcer was not getting seeding sheets, so couldn't announce athletes in the races. This can be resolved by making sure there is a screen she can access, thus cutting down on the mound of printing we had to do. This would also mean she could announce those progressing onto later races. It would have alleviated the one complaint we received regarding an incorrectly marked progression sheet.

All suggestions will be considered prior to the outdoor championships but our intention is to use the same system and to open entries imminently

Reports were discussed and in summary it was felt that the Roster worked well although there will still be teething problems that need to be resolved, including:-

- Automatic check on EA Licence numbers – not used this time and organisers had to check that athletes were eligible to compete. (The Roster EA registration check will be used in future)
- Anyone born in 20026 is automatically classed as a Senior rather than an U20
- Could not cope with split entry fees

We are not yet able to calculate overall profit for the event as we are still waiting for a number of costs to be claimed.

A rough calculation – fees received (athletes and spectators) £12,790 less anticipated costs and expenses of £7,000 so profit circa. £5,790 before split with Eastern AA.

The electronic payment machine worked well over the weekend and will be used at the forthcoming Outdoor Championships in May.

It was mentioned that the Essex qualification was incorrectly stated on the entry form. Should read '9 months residence or birth'

Andy Catton confirmed that all Championship records are being brought up to date.

Timetable – would it be possible for a separate time table to be produced for Track and Field events. Champs organisers agreed that this will be done for the outdoor champs)

#### **4. Track 5k and 10k championships**

The 10k championships will be held at Braintree on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

5k championships – venue and date still to be arranged. It was proposed that this could be held at the Ilford track (Cricklefields) but it was subsequently discovered that their Trackmark has expired. Andy Catton is liaising with the local council to resolve. A deadline of the end of March has been set.

WGEL have offered to host this event if the issue with the Ilford track cannot be resolved in time. Possible date Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **5. 2023 Relays Championships**

This will take place at Chelmsford on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

#### **6. 2023 Outdoor Track & field Championships**

It is planned that these will take place at Chelmsford over the weekend 13/14 May. The track at Chelmsford is currently undergoing a refurbishment and it is hoped that this will be completed by the time of the Championships.

Also, we have been made aware that Chelmsford Football club may need the stadium on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> May, if they reach the National League playoff semi finals. They will need to finish either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> in the final table (currently 5<sup>th</sup> but just two points off 3<sup>rd</sup> – so it is a possibility). The Centre

is aware of this and we will have to ensure that we vacate the stadium by 4pm. It has been suggested that we seek written confirmation from the Centre. This will be followed up.

We are considering a possible alternative venue should Chelmsford not be available. Basildon was suggested but this is not available.

(Update after meeting – We are now in the process of obtaining the permit but will continue to work on an ‘emergency’ contingency plan for a change of venue, if necessary. We understand that the work that is being carried out at Chelmsford should finish in time unless

- a) There is extreme bad weather
- b) Football is continuing to take place at the stadium which might delay completion of works
- c) The track & field markings cannot take place on the planned date)

Race walks – we are struggling to find sufficient officials to act as Walk Officials/judges. If we are unable to do so, then these events will be cancelled.

## **7. Any other business**

The combined events are taking place as part of the Eastern championships in September. It was noted that these are taking place just two weeks after the Schools championships; with the Southern’s already taken place. This may affect entry although it was noted that the Essex 2022 championships were poorly attended. We have not received any complaints about this decision and the position will be reviewed in 2024.

Meeting finished at 7.40pm