

Sports Development Officer's Report

General

2018 has been another positive year for Guernsey Athletics on a number of levels. There have been a number of changes within the structure and workforce of the club which are already yielding positive benefits, and athletes have been stepping up both in terms of performance and recreational participation. Various areas of club development continue to organically grow – ultimately young developing athletes are at the centre of much of what we do.

The most successful Track & Field meet in over a decade was hosted at Footes Lane in June which included a 30-strong England U20 Team and a Scottish Athletics Academy side who went up against a senior Guernsey/Jersey line-up. The Intertrust Athletics Games was coined in the national media as the “Guernsey International” and saw over 80 personal bests set by athletes revelling in the atmosphere of international athletics. Away from that event, it was especially pleasing that performances on the track and in the field were consistently high in our local T&F meets.

Schools

As detailed in my report 12 months ago, we have moved to resolve the issue of time constraints on our school availability with the appointment of Lee Merrien to join me on the development team. Lee has taken to his role of Schools Liaison Officer extremely well and as well as allowing us to fulfil more requests for both primary and secondary school PE sessions, he's also introduced a new primary school event and secondary school initiative. We look forward to working with GSC on the new PE in Schools model following the recent States backing for this. The club also took on more responsibility (from States Education Dept) for the principle “school sports” events such as the XMA Junior Schools Athletics Championships and these events continue to retain their relevance in their current forms.

Community

The increased resources in schools has meant that our outreach has been more focused in that area, particularly in terms of younger athletes. Away from schools, our larger principle events also required increased resource in order to cope with increasing numbers – particularly the Fathers' Day Milk Run Half Marathon. That event exceeded all expectations meaning that an advanced timing system was required as opposed to manual timekeepers due to the volume of participants. The club also arranged clinics with Lee Merrien for all interested participants who wanted advice and guidance on their preparations for the event. The Intertrust Easter Festival, OSA All-Terrain Challenge and other endurance event series also drew in plenty of amateur athletes from outside of the club's membership.

Performance

Depth of performances measured from a senior perspective (but including performances from juniors) rose again in 2018 – the club is routinely using an international measure of performance, the world governing body the IAAF's Scoring Tables to track this. A large number of junior athletes continue to make steady progress across an increasing range of disciplines. In terms of individual achievement, Lee Merrien bowed out of competitive athletics with a very credible 8th place finish in the Commonwealth Games marathon, and Alastair Chalmers broke the British junior record for the 400m hurdles in the process of an impressive 6th place at the World Junior Championships...he also finished the year ranked as the fastest junior in Europe. His brother Cameron came home from the European Championships with a silver medal as part of the 4x400m relay team but was not involved in the final. Sophie Porter won national indoor bronze in the U20 400m and Joe Chadwick stepped up several levels to rank 1st in the UK for U17 indoor 200m. Our FNB-backed endurance squads also stepped up at regional and national level in the Road Relay events.

Coach/Workforce Education

The main event for 2018 was the hosting of a Coaching Assistant course here in Guernsey. UK/England Athletics have chosen to move away from the UKCC framework which means this course is essentially straddling the UKCC Levels 1 & 2. Coaches who partake in the course are deemed to be equipped to coach independently so long as a qualified coach of "Athletics Coach" or above is on site at Footes Lane. 15 candidates took part in the course of varying demographics from fresh volunteers to active athletes. In addition, Paul Ingrouille finished his qualification of "Event Group Coach" for endurance, which is the highest formal UKA qualification currently on offer. My own coaching CPD remains a priority in order to be able to lead from the front in terms of coach development and the coaching that all of our athletes ultimately receive. Away from coaching, Louise Perrio and Chris Gillman undertook a Race Directors course to qualify them to organise and hold endurance events under the UKA banner.