

Coaching and competition

Following the issue being raised by some parents and debated on the Facebook group, the Club would wish to clarify its position with regards to competition. Like many clubs in our area, we have for some time been experiencing demand for places in our younger groups that far outstrips our capacity to meet it safely, in accordance with UKA guidelines. Whilst in an ideal world we would love to be able to provide sessions each week for children who just seek to get some exercise and social interaction, without any consideration of taking part in competition, our coaching resources are insufficient.

Ultimately, as would be the case in most other sports a young person may have a taste of at a club, the primary purpose is to develop that young person into someone who will contribute to the club's continued participation in whatever leagues or cups it takes part in, and, as an individual, hopefully go onto achieve personal honours in the sport and be a part of its future. Our coaches, all of whom give up their time voluntarily, attend their courses and further their knowledge and skills so they too can be a part of the future development of the individuals they work with, of the club, and of the wider sport of athletics in the region and the UK.

As a club, with limited resources, we endeavour to construct and maintain a pathway through the age groups and competence levels that supports long term development of young athletes, in accordance with the primary purpose stated above. As a result, the focus of certain of our groups will necessarily be the further development of young individuals who have shown an aptitude and commitment to being competitive athletes. Whilst it may take time for some young people to gain the confidence to pull on the green and yellow vest, we aim to get all our young athletes to that point in due course.

We would still wish, as has been said earlier, to be able to supplement this principle and pathway with an offer for young people who may never have such aptitude or commitment to compete. Where we can do that we will, though it will continue to be subject to having the coaching availability to do so, and the primary focus of the club and its staff will be devoting sufficient time and input to those who want to develop themselves as competitive individual and/or club athletes.

We acknowledge that this may be a position that some parents do not agree with, but hope that they will understand the reasons for us having to maintain it at the current time. Should any parents of young people in any of our groups have further queries or concerns about this issue, they should either write into the club email address or arrange to speak to a member of the Club Committee. Anyone interested in helping to grow our coaching complement would be very welcome to approach any member of the coaching team for further information; your offer will be gratefully received.