



MCAA Track & Field League AGM 2023 – Minutes

Date, Time: Sunday 26th November 2023; 1400-1700

Venue: Clubhouse, Coventry Godiva Harriers

1. Welcome by the Chairman (Bryan)
2. Present
Abingdon & Witney, James (Banbury), Seemita (Birchfield), Nigel (BRAT), Jonathan (B&W), Wayne (B&R), Jaime (Burton), Bob (C&S), Scott (Coventry), Jo (D&S), Peter (Halesowen), Phil (Hereford Forest), Matthew (Kettering), Adrian (K&S), Paul & David (Leamington), Glenys and Stephanie (Leicester), Claire (Newport), Bryan (R&N), Rob & Rebecca (Solihull), Paul (Stratford), Elaine (Telford), Richard (Worcs), Yate, Stewart (MCAA, Hon League Treasurer)
3. Apologies
Received from Shaun (Cannock & Stafford), Cheltenham, Stoke, Gloucester, Notts, Tamworth, Daventry
4. Minutes from 2022 AGM
Accepted.
5. Matters arising (other than covered by the agenda)
The agenda was written to cover expected matters arising. No other matters arising were noted.
6. Chairperson's report
See Annex 1 to these minutes.
Bryan's report included a reference to possible age group changes from UKA. Stewart noted these had been shelved for at least two years. [Post meeting note: apparently British Athletics will introduce this change in 2026.]
7. League Secretary's report
See Annex 1 to these minutes.
A comment was made about the length of time required in the timetable for the long throws now that a C string was included. This was an issue in the

non-regional divisions. Further discussion was carried out on this as part of the AGM proposals – see below.

8. Financial report for 2023, including
 - a. Affiliation fees for 2024
 - b. Match hosting fees 2024

Stewart presented a financial summary for the 2023 season. There were still a few hosting fees to pay out and the technical match to invoice but the indications are that the league operated a reasonably balanced budget in 2023. Phil (Hereford Forest) proposed and Paul (Leamington) seconded that we accept the financial report. Carried.

The topic of fees (affiliation fees, match hosting reimbursement for 2024) was deferred until later in the meeting as some proposals to the AGM involved financial elements.

The AGM did at this point though conclude the debate on fees for the technical match in 2023. As per the AGM 2022 minutes and subsequent notes on the league website it was decided the fairest way to allocate fees was on a pro-rate basis against a club's competing athlete numbers. Becky (SSH) raised the topic, noting costs had not yet been attributed, and the 2023 AGM re-endorsed the 2022 decision to pro rate. The fees were set at £5 per competing athlete (athletes and not event) with a maximum fee for any one club of £75.

9. Election of T&F League Management Committee
 - a. Chairperson
Jaime proposed, and Nigel seconded, Bryan to continue as chairman. Carried.
 - b. League Secretary
Jaime proposed, and Nigel seconded, Richard to continue as chairman. Carried.
 - c. Management Committee Members
Two committee members (Lyn, Birchfield and Iris, Stoke) had advised the committee beforehand that they would step down after the 2023 AGM. Bryan thanked them both (in absentia) for their highly valued contributions over many years. We wish them both well for the future. The rest of the committee were re-elected. Jaime suggested we ask Shaun Ainge to join (**ACTION: Secretary**).
Seemita (Birchfield) and Paul (Stratford) expressed an interest in joining the committee but noted they were unsighted on details of what this involved and the commitment required. Becky (SSH) suggested we put a description on the website (**ACTION: Sec to organise**).
10. Presentation of divisional trophies
Duly presented (Gloucester in absentia). Awards were:

Div 1: Gloucester
Div 2: Yate and District
Div 3: Leamington
Div 4NE: Burton
Div 4SE: Banbury
Div 4SW: Worcester

11. Resignations from the league

Newcastle (Staffs) AC finished in final place in Div 4NE and were offered the option of re-applying. They have decided not to take-up the offer. They noted they were a club who mainly had middle distance runners and felt this meant they would not gain promotion making it difficult to motivate team members.

12. Applications and re-applications to the league

DASH and Daventry finished in final place in div 4SW and div 4SE respectively. The AGM was pleased that they accepted the offer to continue to participate in the league.

Similarly, Coventry, who struggled with sending teams and officials to matches in 2023 also accepted the offer to continue with league participation.

Shrewsbury had explored the option of joining but their committee felt they could not guarantee the provision of officials.

It was agreed by the AGM that clubs need to declare their intention to be part of the 2024 league by 1 Jan 2024. It was further agreed that in the future we would require clubs to declare intent by / at the AGM.

13. Proposals to the AGM

High level summary of the decisions below. See Annex 3 for the proposals.

Proposal 1 (Committee to tidy up the rules/constitution to reflect rule clarifications/decisions made by the committee in 2023)

Agreed unanimously

Proposal 2 (divisional structure to be two pan-area divisions and three regional divisions)

One club not in favour of reducing to just two pan-area divisions. Overwhelming majority in favour. Agreement was to adopt SSH's specific solution. See Annex 2 for the agreed laydown.

Proposal 3 (change the C string scoring to remove the incentive for clubs to use "fillers" in C string long throws in order to protect the timetable.

The proposed scoring approach was considered too complex and was not accepted (For: 5, Against: 11, Abstentions: 6)

An alternative suggestion was made by Abingdon to reduce the number of C string slots to four per sex with two allowed per sex on the track and two per sex on the field.

For: 20, Against: 2, Abstentions: 0.

ACTION: we will gather data in 2024 on the impact on the timetable (e.g. officials' feedback; recording of start/finish times of events (**ACTION: Sec, including updating of the field cards**)).

Note: under item 7 above (Sec's report) the meeting had identified that in 2023 officials noted issues with the timetable and the execution of the long throws.

Proposal 4: (that we encourage the use of EDM and wind gauges by providing a reimbursement should these be used)

Agreed overwhelmingly.

The discussion was extended to include the topics of fees for 2024 more widely (finance section 9 above refers). A set of calculations was provided by Stewart identifying a trade-off between increased affiliation fees and increased track-hire reimbursement. These calculations were updated on the fly to include the agreement to add EDM and wind gauge reimbursements. The values agreed by the AGM were:

Affiliation fee: £600 (**but see below**)

Host reimbursement: £800 flat rate, PLUS additional £50 if EDM is used; PLUS an additional £25 per wind gauge if wind gauges are used (to cover up to two wind gauges).

Photo-finish costs: to note – previous AGM decisions note that when PF is used the costs shall be split across the clubs competing in that match. These decisions remain valid.

Post meeting note: there were errors in the on the fly calculations but in a direction that meant we had overestimated the required affiliation fee. The committee has looked at this post meeting and noted that the affiliation fee should be £550 in order to provide a balanced budget (and not the £600 agreed at the AGM). (Sec note: the league does not aim to make a profit of course.)

Proposal 5 (encourage use of PF below division 2)

Agreed unanimously. Note: if PF is used the costs to be split across clubs who compete in that match (as per existing rules for divs 1 and 2).

Proposal 2 from SSH/proposal 1 from Abingdon (no scoring in the technical match).

The key discussion points were: a) that the extra match skews towards clubs who can cover the technical events; b) that the extra date congests the calendar; c) that the technical match would not be viable if not scored; d) that a well-supported match provides a positive athlete experience; e) that the date if not used for a technical match would be used for a full set of divisional matches.

For: 9

Against: 13

Abstentions: 0

Proposal 1 K&S (additional relay B string scoring teams)

Not seconded at the meeting

Proposal 2 K&S (double points for selected technical events to encourage development of these events in the clubs)
Not seconded at the meeting.

Proposal 2 from Abingdon: (remove the specialist event match)
Overtaken by events – i.e. AGM already decided to retain a scoring technical match

Proposal 3 from Abingdon: (remove C-string athletes)
Seconded by Leicester.
For: 4, against 17

Proposal 4 from Abingdon: (remove bonus points)
Not seconded

Proposal 1 from Yate and District: (that we have mixed 4x400 relays in matches 2 and 4 and single sex 4x400 relays in matches 1 and 3)
Seconded by Birchfield. Leicester asked whether we should go for mixed relays in all the matches. The suggestion to extend to all matches was not accepted. The suggestion to have two matches with a mixed 4x400 was accepted unanimously

14. Divisional Structure for 2024
see discussion above. Adopted solution in Annex 2.

15. Fixture Dates for 2024

Note: hosting statistics (which clubs hosted by season) are on the 2023 AGM webpage

The AGM discussed which date we should adopt for the technical match. It was determined that it was a choice of either May or June. Voting:

For May: 3
For June: 14
Abstentions: 5

Fixture dates are therefore:

Sat 18/5
Sat 15/6 (technical match)
Sun 14/7
Sat 17/8
Sat 7/9

16. AOB for the plenary session

Seemita suggested that we look at the TJ, PV, HJ minimum standards, given Seemita's observation that these seemed not fully consistent with National League standards. **Action: Sec to follow up and initiate an email discussion.**

Post meeting note.

The various standards are as below and as such there is a consistently easier standard in the MCAA T&F league but with the NAL standards appearing too challenging for the MCAA league. Given this follow-up the Secretary does not intend to initiate an email discussion unless prompted.

	NAL			MCAA T&F League		
	HJ	PV	TJ	HJ	PV	TJ
Men	1.60m	2.60m	9m	1.40m	2.10m	9m
Women	1.35m	2.20m	7m	1.25m	1.70m	7m

A question was raised as to whether we should continue with the league sec applying for a block competition licence from UKA, or each host to do their own. We concluded that the league sec would keep a watching brief on this through the year.

Stewart recommended that the key match officials (Chief TK, Field Ref, Track Ref) should not be appointed on the day. This was accepted.

17. Match hosting and election of secretary by division:

- a. Election of the divisional secretary.
- b. Club representatives to work with the Divisional Secretaries to discuss hosting and venues for each fixture. Please ensure that stadiums are available and comply with UKA certification.
- c. ***Please ensure the League Secretary has up-to-date contacts for your club.***

Annex 1. Chairman's and Secretary's reports

Midland League, Report of The Chair – November 2023

As those of you who have attended League AGMs over recent years will recall, your Management Committee have been seeking to respond to the general decline in League Competition with innovations which seek to make the League more attractive to athletes by being more competitive, requiring less travel and hopefully moving to shorter meetings.

I believe that these innovations have been broadly successful and, whilst there is always room for refinement, are delivering on the objectives above. They have led to improved quality of competition and more opportunities for athletes to represent their clubs.

We can also say that the Midland League are regarded as leading the way to a point where our sister leagues and England Athletics are looking closely at our model.

At the same time, we are very much aware that some clubs are struggling for both Athletes & Officials. This has affected the viability of the Regional Divisions 4. It has also proved difficult to find venues with only 5 clubs in some Divisions, hence our proposal to compress the league.

In this context I would like to thank all those Clubs & Officials whose flexibility has ensured that all matches can take place, sometimes in challenging circumstances.

Once again, this year we have benefitted from a strong and committed Management Committee who have worked in your interests to deliver the League and I would like to pass on my personal thanks to them. Two of our long serving Committee Members, Iris (City of Stoke AC) & Lyn (Birchfield Harriers), are stepping down this year and I would like to thank them both for their wisdom and commitment to the League over many years.

The proposals from the Committee aim at stability & refinement, whilst remaining aligned with our wider objectives. However, if the proposed UKA Age Group changes are adopted this might result in more significant changes for 2025. If this is the case, we will seek to work closely with the YDL to provide appropriate competitive opportunities for all Age Groups.

There are a number of Proposals from Clubs which seek to reverse the changes that I have described above. I believe that these proposals would have a hugely negative effect and strongly oppose them. I believe that the League will slowly wither and die if we reverse the League's modernisation steps and I would urge you to reject them. The AGM will of course be the ultimate arbiter in these matters and if necessary I, and others from the league management committee, will be happy to step aside if the AGM believes we are wrong to introduce these modernisation initiatives.

Finally, I would like to pass on my personal thanks to Richard for all of his hard work on behalf of the League.

Bryan – 15th November 2023

MCAA T&F League - Secretary's Report for 2023 Season

From my league secretary's point of view this season turned out to be somewhat busy.

Right from the start of planning we recognised that the results software needed to be updated – both in terms of teams/divisional structure, but also to ensure the league maintained flexibility over the match format and scoring. We tried in the first instance to approach commercial providers – but the cost (a few thousand pounds) was just unrealistic for the league. Neither did we have access to a fully open software solution that we understood and could edit. First big job of my year then was to write a results package from scratch – and keep it simple enough for someone else to maintain if necessary. Must admit I was on edge for the first round of matches – you can check the software as much as you like but using it in anger is the real acid test.

Organising the technical match innovation likewise absorbed a fair amount of time. I did load myself a bit on this task as I was keen to make the athlete experience enjoyable. I also felt the pressure of making this innovation work. In addition to getting the officials together I was quite keen to provide athletes with pre-drawn heats/pools to try to make sure athletes found the meeting enjoyable. Hopefully all this served the athletes well - although more on-the-day flexibility with heats re-drawing would have been helpful I reckon. Pleased at the end of the day with the turn-out, with the standards achieved and importantly with the athletes' enjoyment. I greatly appreciated the thanks that I (and my wife who stepped in as Field Ref) received.

Difficult to gauge how matches worked out in the divisions unless you're part of those matches. From a slightly parochial viewpoint then - for division 4SW – we had a good time. The athletes enjoyed it and the flexibility offered by the C string athletes greatly helped, as far as I could tell, with team spirit. Some gaming of the scoring system to gain good B and C string points – pick an unpopular event – but also many examples where the event was noticeably enhanced when clubs were able to field three event specialists.

Officials and venues were though still an issue for a number of divisions. Re-jigging field officials' rota in the week before an event seemed to be a regular occurrence. Finding viable tracks and/or willing hosts also somewhat of an issue. We managed to overcome the issues on each occasion but I got the distinct feeling it was very unstable and could easily have tipped number of times into events and/or match cancellations.

Despite the stress of the league organisation I did enjoy the season and that, at the end of the day, is the only question I ever ask myself for my athletics. After all this is, for those outside the world's top 100 or so, not a sport we do for financial reward.

Richard, MCAA Track & Field League Secretary

Annex 2: AGM 2023 agreed divisions for 2024

Divisions for 2024; (SSH suggestion linked to their divisional reconfiguration proposal)

Division 1

Club
BRAT
Cheltenham & County Harriers
Gloucester AC
Notts AC
Rugby & Northampton AC
Yate and District AC

Division 2

Club
Birchfield Harriers
Bristol & West AC
Cannock & Stafford AC
Leamington C & AC
Newport Harriers
Stratford-upon-Avon AC
Tamworth AC

Division 3NE

Club
Burton AC
Charnwood AC
City of Stoke AC
Sutton-in-Ashfield H & AC
Telford AC
Wolverhampton & Bilston AC

Division 3SE

Club
Abingdon and Witney AC
Banbury Harriers AC
Coventry Godiva Harriers
Daventry AAC
Kettering Town Harriers
Leicester Coritanian AC
Nuneaton Harriers AC
Royal Sutton Coldfield AC

Division 3SW

Club
Bromsgrove & Redditch AC
Dudley & Stourbridge Harriers
Halesowen A & CC
Hereford Forest
Kidderminster & Stourport AC
Solihull & Small Heath AC
Tipton Harriers
Worcester AC

Annex 3: Proposals (less the Annex to proposal 3)

League Management Committee proposal 1: Providing improved clarity in the rules consistent with league management committee decisions made during the 2023 season.

Background: A few issues arose during the 2023 league season that required the existing set of rules to be interpreted by the league management committee. This in effect created “case law” examples. The committee believes these clarifications should be incorporated in the constitution/rules.

Outline of issues.

The following issues identify where rule updates are required to remove uncertainties in the descriptions. The management committee will update the rules to remove the uncertainties in line with committee decisions made in-year. Annex B provides working drafts of these updates to provide a more detailed view of how these changes are intended to work.

Issue 1: what happens if an official discharges part, but not all, of their duties (for example a timekeeper is there for most of the match but has to leave before the women’s 5000m and the relays)?

Issue 2: given photo-finish is now used in most (if not all) division 1 and 2 matches, how do we score timekeeper officials’ points given that both manual and photo-finish tasks are valid timekeeping activities?

Issue 3 (a perennial problem rather than one found only in 2023): what threshold do we apply when judging if a club has “failed to provide the required officials for two matches”?

Issue 4: rule 9-14 indicates that a club may be excluded from the league for the following season if it misses two or more matches and yet rule 9-3.1e mandates removal from the league (but allows re-election) if a club fails to provide the necessary officials on at least two occasions. If a club misses a match it will by definition have not provided the officials – the mandatory aspects of rule 9-3.1e and the non-mandatory aspects of rule 9-14 are inconsistent.

Issue 5: if a club uses more than the allowed number of C string athletes (against a given sex) how do we correct the scores – in other words which scores do we disregard?

Issue 6: at times field judges have allowed athletes to use a shorter TJ board than that mandated in the rules, how do we score the event in this situation?

Issue 7: athletes have attempted the TJ and/or PV and are yet not sufficiently fit to achieve the minimum standards in a safe manner, how do we best support athlete safety?

League Management Committee proposal 2: Divisional structure for 2024.

Background: At the 2022 AGM clubs were optimistic that relatively small regional divisions of six teams would be able to readily find club hosts, venues and officials. (Note: “small” is used here as each regional division includes teams that field only a limited number of athletes, and indeed clubs withdrew before the season, meaning we often had matches that were something like four-team matches.)

This optimism proved unfounded and all regional divisions struggled with venues, hosts and officials.

We also note that costs of track hire etc. have increased and the cost to host a (non-photo-finish) match is around £800-£1000.

Clubs, however, still express an interest in minimising travel – suggesting three regional divisions is working well in terms of athlete, team management and officials travel.

Proposal: That we reduce the number of divisions to five, with two pan-area divisions of six teams each and three regional divisions organised geographically with the number of clubs balanced across these three regional divisions (current estimates are for regional divisions of either 8, 8, 8 or of 8, 8 and 9 teams). This will save around £3,500 of hosting costs over the year.

We recognise that some tracks will have less than 8 lanes (and beyond the 100m straight certainly less than 9 lanes). The rules already allow for the situation where the number of teams exceeds the number of lanes (e.g. as used in 2022 at Wolverhampton for a 7 team division 3 match).

Proposal 1 from Solihull and Small Heath: reduce to 2 pan-area and 3 regional divisions

[Secretary’s note: for completeness SSH’s identical proposal is copied below.]

In order to increase competition, reduce the number of divisions from 6 to 5. Having 3 regional divisions helps considerably to reduce travel & this wouldn't be achieved by having only 2. Division 4SE, had only 5 clubs because of the withdrawal of Corby & Harborough, & not all of the remaining clubs could host or provide sufficient qualified officials. It ended up with 1 club hosting twice. It appears that other divisions had similar problems.

SSH therefore propose that the league has divisions 1 & 2 as at present & 3 regional division 3s with the latter 3 having 8 clubs in each if possible. This would reduce cost, improve the competition & make it easier to find venues & officials.

League Management Committee proposal 3: refinements to how we score C string athletes in order to protect the timetable.

Context: feedback received by the league management committee indicates that the inclusion of a limited number of C string athletes has proved popular; has encouraged the participation of more event specialists from the clubs and improved the competitiveness of events.

The option for more event specialists to be included in the match scoring was the key idea that originally underpinned the C string idea. However, a study of results suggest that the C string scoring system, as currently defined, additionally encourages clubs to use, at times, non-event specialists in the C string role. It has been noted that inclusions such as these can disrupt the timetable and is particularly an issue for JT and DT.

Proposal: that we protect the match timetable by refining the C string scoring in a way that continues to encourage club inclusion of a third event specialist but removes a large part of the incentive to include non-event specialists.

Proposal:

We introduce a way of moderating C string scores so that these scores reflect an athlete's performance relative to other athletes (across the B and C strings) in that event. This is achieved by aligning C string performances with B string performances in such a way that a C string cannot score more highly than any B string athlete who has posted a better performance. Conversely good C string performances (good in the sense that they are better than some of the B string performances in an event) are awarded appropriately. The scoring is defined in such a way that B string results and scores are completely unaffected. A few examples are given in Annex A to illustrate the approach.

League Management Committee proposal 4: reimbursement of costs for EDM and wind gauges.

Proposal: that we encourage the use of wind gauges (to improve athlete experience and allow better results posting on Power of Ten) and EDM (to speed up the measurement of long throws). To support this it is proposed that the costs of EDM and wind gauges are fully reimbursed to the providing club, either from a levy on clubs at matches where these systems are used; or by having a host reimbursement figure above the £650/match if EDM and/or wind gauges are hired/used.

League Management Committee proposal 5: further use of photo-finish equipment.

Context: athletes, noting that the Power of Ten requires the use of photo-finish times for elements of its rankings, greatly prefer to have their sprint times recorded by photo-finish rather than manual timing.

Proposal: that the requirement for clubs to consider the use of photo-finish be extended to all divisions as per the suggested rewording of the appropriate part of rule 9-3.1a below (note the re-wording also tidies up cost allocation for the use of photo-finish):

9-3.1a (part) The host club shall be responsible for the provision of at least:

- . All Match Fees
- . For Divisions 1 and 2 photo-finish equipment and a qualified photo-finish team should be provided if affordable equipment is available. **Costs to be shared by the participating clubs.**
- . **For other divisions, clubs should aim to provide, for at least one match, photo-finish equipment and a qualified photo-finish team if affordable equipment is available. Costs to be shared by the participating clubs.**
- . (AGM 2022) The following officials to be provided at a level which matches or exceeds the minimum level required by UKA licencing conditions for a level 1 permit:
 - Chief Starter (note, currently the requirement is at least level 1)
 - . Marksman/Starter's Assistant (note, current requirement is at least level 1)
 - . Chief Timekeeper (note, currently the requirement is at least level 2)
 - . Track Referee (note, currently the requirement is at least level 2)
 - . Field Referee (note, currently the requirement is at least level 2)
- etc..

Proposal 2 from Solihull and Small Heath; also proposal 1 from Abingdon

“Assuming that the Technical meeting is to continue, it should be a stand-alone match with no league or match points earned. It certainly isn't right for points to be gained when something like 80% of the athletes can't compete. Most of the athletes who do compete already gain many points for their clubs as it is relatively easy for them to gain maximum points in league competitions when there is little opposition.”

Proposal 1 from Kidderminster & Stourport

Issue: In the regional divisions we have many spaces in the relays.

Solution

Allow one B string option per club for Men and one B string option per club for Women for the 4 relays. (4x100mM, 4x100mW, 4x400mM, 4x400mW)
Scored in a similar way to other B string events.

Benefits

1. Team spirit. Increase inter-team interactions. Spreading the fun.
2. Athletes more likely to travel if they have extra event to compete in.
3. Team managers able to whip up enthusiasm as there are more athletes needed.
4. Getting more athletes to stay to the end of the day adding to atmosphere etc
5. Rewards clubs for getting more athletes involved. (Growing the sport)

Issues

So this B relay team option might not be appropriate for the top Divisions due to timing issues.

Perhaps this should only apply to the lower divisions.

Proposal 2 from Kidderminster & Stourport

Issue: In the regional divisions we have events with only two or three athletes in. (100m hurdles, Steeplechase)

Solution

Double points (or points and a half) for an under-filled event. 1 event per gender. So maybe 100m hurdles Women's and Men's Steeplechase.

Staying the same for the season so facilitates traction/momentum.

If announced now team managers and coaches have plenty of time to train athletes.

Benefits

1. Improve standards in the unpopular events
2. Encourage athletes to try events that they may be more suited to.
3. Nobody wants to run in a race on their own!!!

Issues

Again this may only be appropriate for the lower divisions. So only applied to some divisions.

Proposal 2 from Abingdon: remove the specialist event match.

Proposal 3 from Abingdon: remove C-string athletes.

Proposal 4 from Abingdon: remove bonus points.

Proposal 1 from Yate and District: that we have mixed 4x400 relays in matches 2 and 4 and single sex 4x400 relays in matches 1 and 3.

Increase the frequency of the mixed 4 * 400 relay from 1 to 2 matches within the season.

With the increase in visibility of this event on the international scene and exposure at recent major championships, it has become very popular within the athletes, and I am regularly asked why it is restricted to just 1 match of the season at the moment.

When it is run, all teams enjoy it and it is very well supported from the spectators, so I feel it is time to increase this to 2 matches a season, say Match 2 and Match 4, reducing the regular single sex relays to the other 2 matches.