



www.ashfordac.org.uk

ASHFORD ATHLETIC CLUB (AAC) A PARENTS GUIDE TO YOUNG ATHLETES COMPETITIONS APRIL 2010

Introduction

The junior members of the Club compete in 2-yearly age groups which meet the following criteria:

Under 13 - must be under 13 on 31st. August in the year of competition.

Under 15 - must be under 15 on 31st. August in the year of competition.

Under 17 - must be under 17 on 31st. August in the year of competition.

Under 20 - must be under 20 on 31st. December in the year of competition.

AAC offers competitions for the above age groups in the following leagues:

1. Kent Young Athletes League (KYAL) U11/U13/U15
2. UK Young Athletes League (UKYAL) U13/U15/U17
3. National Junior League (NJL) U17/U20

The leagues are independent from each other, each with its own officers, rules and guidelines, but all with a common goal of developing young athletes. A Fixtures list for summer 2010 has

already been distributed so please make sure you have a copy to refer to throughout the season.

The AAC Executive appoints Team Managers for the leagues and these are supported by boy and girl athlete Team Captains and Vice Captains. The fundamental role of each Team Manager is to liaise with athletes, coaches, and other managers in order to select a team to represent AAC.

Wherever possible, team selection will be based on a balance between appropriate events, ability, fairness and agreement of those concerned.

The nature of your son or daughter's experience will be determined in large part by their own ability, their own motivation, the ability of their coaches, the availability of competitions and programmes and your attitude as a parent.

- Be realistic about their motivation
- Be realistic about their athletic ability
- View physical fitness as fundamental to success
- View mental fitness as fundamental to success
- View sportsmanship as fundamental to success
- Be aware that elite performance requires elite commitment and sacrifice
- Be ready to support coaches and officials
- Be ready to deal constructively with disappointment

When attending a competition please recognise that the athlete is the responsibility of the team manager and must adhere to the management rules and regulations. Whilst you may wish to spend time with your son or daughter or offer advice you must not hinder the team schedule or competition.

Recommended reading:

How to Help Children Find the Champion Within Themselves by David Hemery

Role of Team Managers and Captains

Each Team Manager will ensure that athletes are aware of transport arrangements, timetables and the wearing of club colours. Each athlete must wear their Club vest to identify them (the Team Manager does have some spares but please do not rely on this) and each athlete has to wear bib numbers or letters which identify the Club. These numbers or letters are issued by the Team Captains either before the meeting or on arrival at the meeting and are affixed to the athlete's club vest using safety pins. Although the Team Managers have a supply of safety pins, some parents prefer to supply their own. The Club has a pergola and an AAC banner where the Team Managers and Team Captains will be based for the meetings. Please make sure that you check in with them when you arrive at the meetings if you have not travelled there via the Club coaches. The Team Captains may also help the Manager complete the team declaration sheet which needs to be submitted before the meeting gets under way.

For most of the Leagues there is a limit of 3 events entered per athlete and in addition they may be asked to take part in a relay race usually held at the end of each meeting. The Club has a duty of care to see that there is an effective balance between the athlete's needs, ability and the team's needs. Another consideration is A string and B string entrants, where the A string should be the better of the two. In the event of a gaping difference, positions may be switched. Managers will be asking parents and athletes for their availability for meetings, and also their preferred choice of events they wish to compete in.

The league positions are based on points scored – places mean points. If we don't have an entrant or we don't finish or achieve a height or distance, we don't score. If we come first OR last we get points!!

In all the leagues for young athletes there are limitations on the number of events an athlete can take part in one day.

Officials and helpers

It is very important for all leagues that the Club takes a team of officials i.e. track and field judges, timekeepers, implement retrievers, sand pit rakers and so on. Points can be deducted from total scores if a team does not supply the required number of helpers. If you are able to help out, then please let the Team Manager know when you arrive at a meeting and they will team you up with an experienced official to support you. Some officials need to be qualified, but not all. England Athletics arrange courses for prospective volunteers who generally emerge from the parent group. If you are interested in attending a course please let us know and we will help you find a one day Level 1 Assistant Officials' Course which will be paid for by AAC

Championships

There are county, regional and national athletics championships. Entering Track and Field Championships is the responsibility of each athlete NOT the club or your coach. We will have copies of forms at the Admin desk and put up reminders.

Useful web sites

Kent County Athletics Association for Kent Championships
www.kcaa.org.uk

South England Athletics Association for regional championship
www.seaa.org.uk

England Athletics for national championships
www.englandathletics.org

Kent Schools Athletics Championships

This needs to be done via your school teacher or the contacts listed on the Kent Schools Athletics Association web site <http://www.ksaa.org.uk>. If you have a problem with being entered please ask your coach who maybe able to assist.

Personal Best

Each athlete is encouraged to keep a record of their training schedule, dates, venues and results at competitions, and be aware of all the Rules. It would be helpful if each athlete purchased their own record book so that they can see the improvement in their times, heights, lengths etc. The Club has written some useful documents which are available for downloading and printing off on the website. They include:

- ✓ AAC competition check list
- ✓ AAC Information leaflet
- ✓ AAC Code of Conduct
- ✓ AAC Mission Statement
- ✓ AAC Grievance Procedure
- ✓ AAC Competition Guidelines

In addition the website has a list of useful links that may help athletes to prepare for competitions.

ABOUT THE LEAGUES

1. Kent Young Athletes League This is very much a local (Kent) competition for Under 13 and 15 boys and girls. It takes place on Sundays. There are two divisions, (1 and 2) with the aim of all clubs to get to Division 1. We are currently in Division 1. This league is set up to introduce children to competitive athletics.

As the venues are fairly local, the Club relies on parent's help with transport in order to keep costs to the Club down. This league is regarded as a development area of competition but nevertheless does present some strong opposition which helps all our young athletes to work towards their personal goals.

Although this is a team competition, there are opportunities for athletes to take part in non-scoring events. We don't prioritise the best athletes in all events to get maximum points. The Club encourages athletes to have a go at a variety of events. We endeavour to offer training and advice when new events are

being tackled for the first time. Arrangements for training sessions are displayed adjacent to our reception, our website and on notice boards, as well as via the coaches themselves.

Our aims for 2010 are

- ✓ All U13s take part in at least 2 KYAL matches.
- ✓ All U15s take part in at least 3 KYAL matches.

Team Managers are Pat Hanys and Fiona Sime.

2. UK Young Athletes League This is a national league which is divided into geographic regions. It is for U13, U15 and U17 boys and girls and takes place on Sundays. The venues cover a fairly large area taking in Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and London. The Club provides free transport for these meetings by way of a coach which leaves this year from the Julie Rose Stadium – times and venue to be confirmed. On board each coach will be your Team Manager, other coaches, officials and parents. We are currently in SOUTHERN Division 1, South East.

Like the Kent league, this is regarded as a development league but again there can be some tough opposition. The Club encourages athletes to have a go at a variety of events and we don't prioritise the best athletes in all events to get the maximum points. There are no non-scoring events or guest runners allowed in this league.

This is a competition where historically AAC struggles to get sufficient numbers of athletes or helpers to attend. It is important to support this league and we will be encouraging more athletes to take part.

Our aims for 2010 are:

- ✓ Encourage all U13s to take part in 2 UKYAL matches.
- ✓ All U15s take part in to least 2 UKYAL matches.
- ✓ All U17s take part in at least 3 UKYAL matches.
- ✓ Mid Table Finish

The girls Team manager is Kara Gibbs, but at the moment there is no currently no manager for the boys.

3. National Junior League. This is a national league divided into geographic regions. We are currently in the Medway Division, which as the league title suggests, is fairly local. Although called "Junior", this league exists for Under 20 men and women, so it can be a big step up from the other leagues.

The league allows Under 17 athletes to compete, but where implements or hurdles etc, are involved, all athletes will be competing as U20, e.g. men's sprint hurdles will be 110m not 100m and at the higher setting. Men's shot will be 6 kg not 5 kg and so on. Likewise there are some distance and height considerations for women.

This is slightly more than a development competition, because U17/20 athletes are already allowed to compete as seniors. This is a great league to start fine tuning skills, tactics and techniques. There are opportunities to do non-scoring events.

Our aims for 2010 are:

- ✓ All U20 athletes to attend at least 3 NJL matches
- ✓ Encourage all U17 men to attend at least two NJL matches
- ✓ Encourage all U17 women to attend at least two NJL matches
- ✓ Unless there are good justifiable reasons e.g. athlete not ready to use U20 throws implements
- ✓ Mid Table Finish

The men's Team Manager is John Chambers.

The women's Team Manager is Mary Holmes.

Southern Men League (SML) and Southern Women League (SWL)

These are performance leagues for athletes aged over 15. As athletes get older we encourage them to start going to senior leagues, to help make a gradual transition to senior athlete.

Coaches can advise you on the appropriateness of an athlete competing in these leagues.

Our aims (Unless there are good justifiable reasons not to.) for 2010 are:

- ✓ All U20 women to attend at 4 SWL matches.
- ✓ All u17 women to attend at least 3 SWL matches.
- ✓ Encourage all 2nd year U17 men to attend at least 1 SML match.
- ✓ Encourage all U20 men to attend at least 3 SML matches.

Lisa says:

Here is some great advice from Ashford AC member and World Championship Silver medalist Lisa Dobriskey to young people looking to get into sport.

"My advice would be to try everything and enjoy it. I was doing sprinting at school and I stumbled across the 800m and the 1500m. I was never the best and it took me a while to find my forte in the 1500m.

You're not going to run for Great Britain in the Olympics when you're 11-years-old so you need to take little steps to get there.

It's not always about winning or competing in major championships, you just need to make sure you keep progressing.

Make the most of the people around you because there are so many people that want to help and support you. You get so many opportunities, and if you make the most of those, you can achieve really great things."