

## Athletics Development Officer Update

Greetings to you all at the Isle of Man Veterans Athletics Club and thank you for inviting me to give you some insight as to who I am, what I do and how the IOM VAC fits in to the picture of athletics development on the Isle of Man.

Firstly in case you are unsure of who I am my name is Trevor Christian and in November 2009 I was appointed as the part time Athletics Development Officer for the Island in a jointly funded role between Isle of Man Sport (formerly the IOM Sports Council), England Athletics and the Islands local athletics clubs.

My background in athletics dates back to 1994 when my talents as a thrower at schools competitions were noted by Kim Harding who suggested I join my local club Manx Harriers which I did.

From here I competed for many years winning a number of IOM Track and Field and Lancashire County titles as a junior. In the senior ranks I represented Manx Harriers helping them to gain Division One Status in Northern Men's Leagues and also gained my National vest in Island games at Jersey 1997, Isle of Man 2001 and Guernsey 2003. From 2004 I spent time away from athletics playing rugby for Douglas RUFC until returning to athletics competition again this season.

Enough about me, what about athletics development!

### A Brief History

Since starting in November the IOMAA Development committee and I have been addressing the projects in the IOM Athletics Development Plan which was originally put together by the Development Committee in partnership with England Athletics Club and coach Support Officer (CCSO) Sarah Friday. The plan detailed projects to improve areas in athletics such as participation levels, coaching access and quality, performance standards, etc. By submitting this plan to England Athletics, funding could be accessed to make these projects happen. The initial plan was not completely accepted and needed some adjustments to receive full England Athletics financial support. However England Athletics did release money to contribute to the first year salary of an Athletics Development Officer and here I am today.

### Present

The Development Committee and I have since done further work on the plan, and after a recent meeting with England Athletics North Manager Andy Lee, I am pleased to announce that £30,000 has been put aside for our plan which will be accessible in the coming months and profiled over three years in various projects. £10,000 of this money will provide the England Athletics continued contribution to the Development Officer salary for the remaining two years of the contract and £20,000 will remain for the projects in the plan.

The major projects for year one are as follows;

- To identify the coaching and officiating needs of the islands athletics community and implement a targeted coach/officials education programme to ensure these needs are met.
- Create a coach mentoring structure where local coaches meet with Flying Coach Mentors to share ideas and resources to improve their knowledge and coaching skills. This is to ensure the islands athletes have a positive experience in the sport and receive the necessary support from coaches to reach their full potential.
- Set up running groups to attract newcomers of all ages, gender and ability to the sport. Running groups can form good links with the various events and races on the extensive race calendar which the island boasts.
- Develop Sportshall Indoor Athletics opportunities for junior athletes in order to keep more athletes involved in the sport through the winter months.

Other projects undertaken in the last nine months have been;

- Arranging a jumps and throws coach mentoring weekend with guest coaches Dave Hoare and Syl Sampey. A very successful weekend with good attendance especially as it was during the snow drifts.
- Roger Black Master class session with local young athletes and coaches.
- Sport Relief Fun Run on Douglas Promenade in March.
- AVIVA Sportshall Primary Athletics Championships in June
  - Teacher Training in Sportshall Athletics
  - Initiating after school clubs in Sportshall Athletics
  - Mentoring of school teachers in athletics coaching
- Level One and Two Athletics Officials Courses in July
- Currently promoting Coaching Assistant course for October
- Co-ordinating Commonwealth Youth Games Athletics
- Revision and possible restructuring of the fixtures schedule
- and more....

How does the IOM Veterans Athletic Club fit into it all?

Most of the projects are geared toward coach/officials education and youth age groups which have direct and indirect benefits for the IOM VAC.

Training of officials directly helps the VAC in the provision of qualified persons to competently deliver athletics events under relevant rules and regulations. There are many competitions held throughout the island by the various clubs where VAC members compete so continued investment in the education of the Islands officials is vital for athletes of all ages to continue their enjoyment of competition throughout their life.

Coach education will help keep athletes up to date with advancements in training theories and practices. With VAC athletes continuing to compete through much of their lives and a number of vets vying for island games representation there are direct

benefits for these athletes in accessing coaching expertise with the set up of a comprehensive coach education programme.

A large project currently underway is the possible revision of the competition structure which aims to create a fixtures programme that is athlete centred and considers how an athlete sets out his or her yearly plan of events. If the revision is accepted it is hoped that competition entries will increase along with performance standards and of course the enjoyment of athletics.

I hope this report has given you all an idea of what a development officer's role entails and that you can relate to the projects and see how you club benefits through having a dedicated development officer for athletics.

Should you wish to contact me to discuss any of the above initiatives or any other athletics related topics please do not hesitate to contact me at the Sport Development Office on 688592 or email [trevor.christian@gov.im](mailto:trevor.christian@gov.im).

Yours in sport

Trevor Christian ADO