

OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first Officials Newsletter!

The aim of this newsletter is multiple. We want this to be a platform to feature meetings where we need volunteers, a way of advertising technical officials courses, and perhaps most importantly, a way of saying thank you and highlighting those existing, hardworking officials, whether they are affiliated to CoPAC or not.

There is so much in every voluntary organisation that happens behind the scenes, by the same handful of people who receive very little credit for what they do. Identifying these people is something I feel very strongly about.

So I want to identify every official who has given up their time for the club this season and say a big **THANK YOU**

Graham Foden	Chris Jones	Kim March	Alan Powell
Doug Scott	Jane Scott	Janet Smith	Jez Pigden
Wendy Dunsford	Paul Duxbury	Sarah Hine	Pam Rogers
Helen Lockyer	Sophie Lockyer	Simon Brain	Charles Bromley-Gardner
Terry Williams	Lynne Newton	Jackie Chandler	Mike Barratt
Eileen Williams	Peter Newton	Graham Bungay	Malcolm Wise
Wendy Jackson	Vicky Taylor	Pam Bungay	James McGregor

Thanks also to the many unqualified folk who have supported the officials.

Why do we need Officials?

The short answer is because the sport will simply stop without officials willing to run the events.

The declining number of volunteers is not unique to our club and the reasons are numerous.

In an ideal world the club would have multiple officials to call upon which will allow parents to share the duties throughout the day, ensuring they never miss their own off-spring's event.

The reality is that we do not currently live in this ideal world, but that's not to say it cannot exist.

We just need **YOU!**

Up-coming meetings needing Officials and not-yet qualified volunteers

Away	13 th July	Southern Athletics League	Basingstoke
Away	14 th July	Wessex League	Isle of Wight
Away	20 th July	Youth Development League- Lower	Guildford
Away	28 th July	Youth Development League- Upper	Southampton
Away	3 rd August	British Athletics League	Basingstoke
Away	17 th August	Southern Athletics League	Swindon

If you are available, email Matt: mwr1304@gmail.com

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Official in Focus – Mike Barratt

'The Ramblings of an Ancient Timekeeper'

I have always had an interest in Sport, as a participant, a spectator and finally as an Official.

In 1985 one of my daughters joined Portsmouth AC, the Club having only just admitted Ladies for the first time. Down to Mountbatten on Tuesdays and Thursday for training nights in all weathers.

In 1986 Pat Butcher asked if I would help with the Club Championships, different events were held on training nights during the early Summer evenings. Little did I know that it would be the start of my Officiating career.

In the late 1980's the Club were strong enough to enter a team in the Southern Women's League (SWL). The first home fixture was held at Burnaby Road and at the end of that first Season the Club gained promotion. I generally helped as a Field Official and occasionally as a Track Judge.

In 1988 on a coach trip to Basildon for a SWL fixture the team manager asked me to act as Timekeeper for the Club. I did not have a stopwatch, had never used a stopwatch but he was very persistent. He said here is a stopwatch, when we get to the track go to the timekeepers stand; explain the situation and they will help you. By the end of the meeting I was hooked. The rest is History!!!

In 1989 I became a graded Timekeeper, by taking a practical test and an exam paper. I was only intent on helping the Club whilst, at that stage, two of my daughters were members. However I became more and more involved and gradually progressed through the Grades reaching the dizzy heights of Grade 1 with the designation of "Chief". This enabled me to Chief meetings from Club/County/Region/National to International level. I should add the grading structure for Officials changed a few years ago with Level 1 now the starting point.

Whilst in any Sport, the participants are all important; they could not perform to their best without Referees, Umpires and Officials to assist them. At Club level, in Athletics, unless people are prepared to help in a number of capacities, Coaches, Meeting Coordinator, Announcer, Team Manager, Refreshment provider, Technical Official etc, then Meetings would not happen and athletes would not be able to benefit from all those hours of training and be able to compete. Competition is, after all, the essence of all Sport.

Many current Officials started as parent helpers and have continued long after their children have moved on to other interests. It is important, whilst your children are members of the Club, that if you can, you offer to help in some capacity so that all Young Athletes can enjoy their Sport to the full. You may even continue to enjoy it as a personal hobby, who knows.

Summary

If you take anything from this newsletter, I hope it is this; every athlete, of every discipline, of every age group needs generous people, willing to give up their time to allow them to compete. I won't pretend that officiating is always glamorous and exciting, it can be the complete opposite, but it is always rewarding. When you see an athlete achieve something they work so hard for, when they throw that PB, when they run a new club record or jump a championship best performance. That is what makes it worthwhile. And you never know, maybe, like Mike, you will catch the bug, you'll progress through the ranks of officials, and the athletes you watch achieving may be the future Jessica Ennis-Hill, Mo Farah or Greg Rutherford. Now that is exciting, trust me! (I was there).

But until then, **YOUR** Club needs **YOU** to allow the next generation of athletes to fulfil their potential.

Matt Bartlett

