

Head of Performance (Athletics)

Report 2010/2011

Athletics – The Objectives/Plan

- - Improve medal tally at Island Games, turn finalist into medals, medals into gold medal winners.
- - Support athletes competing at the appropriate level to ensure they qualify for Glasgow and future Commonwealth Games.
- - Encourage athletes and coaches to target, County, Open, Regional and National competition, when appropriate and in a planned manner.
- - Ensure talented athletes from all disciplines of the sport have a clear route into the sport, and have access to the support and guidance required to improve and develop as an athlete.

Key Partners

- *- IOM AA
- *- Coaches
- *- Performance coordinator
- *- Sports Aid
- * - Isle of Man Sport
- * - Manx Sport and Recreation
- *- Athletic Development Officer
- *- IG Team Manager
- *- CG Team Manager
- *- England Athletics
- *- UKA

As Head of Performance, I have continued to focus on ensuring that athletes and coaches are aware of my role and the potential support that is available to athletes who are competing and have aspirations of competing at Commonwealth, National (Great Britain) Island Games, Regional, County, and National (Isle of Man) level. I have also endeavoured to ensure that coaches are involved in any support or processes that are offered.

2011 will be measured on the sports performance at the Island Games. Athletes, management and coaches can be proud of the performances in the Isle of Wight, and in general the Games were a success.

However, there is still work to be done, a number of athletes under performed. I feel there are opportunities to win more individual medals. It is important that athletes and coaches have had a period of reflection, identify areas that need attention and start to plan training and competition in preparation for Bermuda.

In 2011, two athletes took part in the Commonwealth Youth Games, the experience will serve them well for future Island and hopefully Commonwealth Games.

I feel it is important that athletes and coaches use the County, Regional and National competition structure that exists in the UK to help them develop as athletes, there are also good level open meetings available across the country. The Northern League still offers good, off Island competition.

Key events and opportunities that have taken place since November 2010.

January 2011 – Second IOM AA squad training day (KWC), again coaches work together to deliver, a throws, jumps, sprints and endurance session.

March 2011 – Arranged a meeting with all coaches, who coach groups, individuals aspiring to IG + level and who are also supporting the IOM AA sessions. An aim of the IOM AA sessions is to support coaches allowing them to learn from more experienced and senior coaches.

March 2011 – Four athletes successfully nominated for Sports Aid.

April – June 2011 – In preparation for the Island Games, there were two squad training session which took place at the NSC, although the sessions offered an opportunity for all the IG athletes to get together, athletes who had missed out due to age, injury or loss of form were also invited.

Strength and Conditioning sessions continue throughout the season in the IOM Sports Institute, the only month that sessions did not take place was in August.

July – Island Games 2011 - 16 medals, 7 Gold, 7 Silver and 2 bronze

September 2011 – 2 local athletes complete in the CYG

September 2011 – An IOM team takes part in the Commonwealth Mountain + Ultra Distance Championships

September 2011 – Strength and Conditioning sessions re commence, all athletes must have a screening and will then be encouraged to have a second screening following their first block of sessions. Cost per athlete is £50.00, 20 athletes have applied to attend the sessions.

September 2011 - Once again I arranged a meeting in the institute for all athletes who have aspirations of competing at Commonwealth, CYG, IG, regional and county level. This meeting was used as an opportunity to draw a line underneath the Isle of Wight, and move forward towards Bermuda and other competitions. IOM AA squad sessions were discussed and sessions mapped out until June 2012, trying to avoid clashes with competitions etc. Harriet Pryke gave a very good presentation, offering an insight to all present, of what the life of a committed athlete looks like.

IOM AA dates agreed at meeting

22nd October, 9.30 – 12.30 – King Williams College

10th December, 9.30 – 12.30 – Blue Point

24th March, 9.30 – 12.30 – NSC

21st May, 6.30 – 8.30pm – NSC

16th June, 6.30 – 8.30pm – NSC

October 2011 – First IOM AA squad session takes place at KWC, 36 athlete and coaches attend.

December 2011 – Second IOM AA to take place at Blue Point.

The Future

The challenge for me and the role is still to get coaches on board, not only in relation in the support that is potentially available to athletes, but also the importance of the IOM AA squad sessions and the opportunity these sessions present for coaches to learn from each other. Also, for me, creating, a clear route into the sport for talented athletes is important, and key is retaining and developing the athletes. It was encouraging to see a number of new faces at the first IOM AA squad session, who in the coming seasons will challenge established athletes for places at Championships and Games.

A challenge is also to ensure that, fell running, race walking and road running are included in programmes and athletes in these areas of the sport aspiring to improve, are supported.

Funding that does not have a direct impact on the IOM AA, would be useful, to subsidise the support/services that are available through the IOM Sports Institute and to support athletes/teams competing off Island.

There is the possible opportunity to send a IOM AA team to an event in Guernsey (track and field meet) next year. Priority for selection will be given to athletes who have attended S+C and IOM AA sessions.

Gianni Epifani
November 2011