

THE MINDSET OF A VOLUNTEER SEEKING THE CLOSURE OF UK ATHLETICS & ENGLAND ATHLETICS

Many who claim to dislike athletics politics, are actually engaged with the political process by seeking to defend the centralised, state funded system we currently endure.

This paper is intended as a contribution to the athletics debate, explaining the mindset of someone who argues strongly against the centralised system administered by UK Athletics and England Athletics, which is funded by government through Sport England and UK Sport.

For those wishing to end the centralised system of athletics governance, the objective is the closure of UK Athletics and England Athletics. This means an end to state funding. All people receiving wages from UK Athletics and England Athletics must lose their publicly funded jobs.

As a result of the closure of UK Athletics and England Athletics organisers will be empowered to create competition opportunities free from the obstacles imposed by governance. Many varied competitive opportunities will emerge. The competition organisers will network so as to avoid clashing dates. Clubs will again take responsibility for hosting competitions to meet the needs of their own athletes. In addition clubs will host competitions to earn money from visiting athletes, and to attract new members. By embracing these responsibilities at club level, growth will return to the grass roots as volunteers once again start learning on the job.

Free from government control, coaches and officials will gain experience by coaching and officiating, rather than form filling and sitting in classrooms. Parents and former athletes will become empowered to be the next generation of "volunteers". Parents will be required to protect their own children by getting involved with their interests and adding to the pool of helpers.

Many of us consider UKA licensed coaches and officials as contributing to the creation of barriers which exclude others from the sport . If coaches wish to acquire a deeper understanding of their event, it is proposed they study a biology, physiology or psychology degree. This is real education, rather than pseudo education. The only way to demonstrate to the world what a coach has achieved is by regularly delivering high performing athletes into the national, regional and county championships. As regards officiating, all that is required is a rule book, common sense, a sense of fair play. Experience will fill in the gaps.

Some will say we need UKA and England Athletics to select and administer international teams. Organisers who promote the trial competitions (National Championships) are well qualified to select and administer the international teams. In fact, nobody is better qualified than those championship organisers.

Readers are reminded that this is the mindset of an individual who wishes to close down UK Athletics and England Athletics. It can therefore be taken as given that any positive word said about UK Athletics and England Athletics will be perceived as coming from someone who either has not thought deeply about the sport, or has a financial interest in keeping the gravy train rolling.

The idea that athletes would stop running, jumping and throwing simply because they have no governing body is laughable.

If a centralised system of governance had any benefits for athletics it would be to protect the sport's athletics facilities. To gather experience about how to work with government and local authorities to ensure athletic tracks were maintained up to competition standard. UK Athletics and England Athletics have proven to be disgracefully ineffective in this respect. The demolition of the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield, and the similar fate which now hangs over Crystal Palace are a shameful reminder of how little UK Athletics care about the sport they govern. The degradation of many other athletics facilities around the country is the lasting legacy of the wasted millions, from which the sport will need to recover, after the wage earner's have been handed their P45s.

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