



Coaching Plan

1 Introduction

The Club's aim is to provide athletes of all ages and abilities with a pathway to move from Run, Jump, Throw-type training through to elite training in all events. The geographical spread of the Club raises particular challenges and requires the provision of similar coaching in more than one venue, thus increasing the need for coaches. Some aspects of this plan are already in place and working well while others will materialise only with an increase in the availability of coaches. The new track in Glenrothes is timetabled to open at Easter 2013 and thereafter the Club intends to have two main parallel coaching hubs, in St Andrews and Glenrothes, with satellites elsewhere throughout the Club's boundaries.

The aim is to significantly increase both the number of qualified coaches and the spread of disciplines in the Club. Currently Fife AC has several experienced endurance coaches but there is a lack of coaches for other disciplines.

2 Coaching Structure

One major development within Fife AC's coaching structure will be the appointment of a volunteer Club Coaching Convenor, who will oversee the development of all aspects of coaching within the Club, encourage new coaches to become qualified and increase the diversity.

There will be three broad levels of coaching, predominantly but not exclusively age-based. It is clear that a talented younger junior might be moved to a training group of older athletes should it be appropriate while some older juniors might remain in a slightly younger training group if that were more appropriate to their ability. The Club welcome athletes with disabilities and strives to ensure it caters for their particular needs.

2.1 9-12

Children between the ages of 9 and 12, to the end of primary school, will be offered Multi-Event Coaching, of a general nature. There will be a Lead Coach, supported by assistants. Fife AC will need several of these training groups, ideally one in St Andrews and Glenrothes and also in all the feeder centres. Children at this age will be encouraged to compete in appropriate competitions, such as the Pitreavie Trophy Meeting.

2.2 12-15

Once athletes start at secondary school, from the age of approximately 12, they will move on to more focused either track event-based or endurance training. The endurance groups are already operating successfully and are also open to adults of a similar level. There are 3 groups currently based in Kirkcaldy, Cupar and St Andrews. These groups have an adequate number of qualified and experienced coaches and assistant coaches who produce appropriate coaching plans for their groups.

The Club is also working towards developing larger and more organised training groups for sprints, hurdles, jumps and throws. These do already exist and the coaches produce appropriate training plans for their athletes. Creating larger groups that can adequately cater for all athletics events in both locations remains a challenge because of a lack of appropriately qualified and experienced lead and assistant coaches. However this is crucial to the development of the Club and to the retention of enthusiastic and talented athletes. Coaching needs to be event-specific, with the opportunity for athletes to try a variety of events. There would be a strong expectation that these athletes would compete for the Club in appropriate competitions.

2.3 15+

From the age of approximately 15, athletes will train in event-type squads - sprints, middle distance, throws, jumps or hurdles. Each squad will require a lead and an assistant coach or coaches, depending on athlete numbers.

Again the endurance groups already exist, as above. There are in addition two elite endurance groups operating in St Andrews and Kirkcaldy and talented athletes from the general endurance squads progress to these squads as appropriate. The coaches are experienced and well qualified. As with the 12-15 section, the challenge for the Club is to find appropriate lead coaches for each of the other areas of athletics and then find assistant coaches to support them. Once coaches are in place, the squads can be developed over time. Finding appropriate coaches is crucial to the development of the Club. It is possible the same individuals could coach both for the 12-15 and 15+ groups. There is a very strong expectation that these athletes regularly compete for the Club, both within Scotland and at UK-wide competitions, up to and including national championships and competing internationally at an elite level.

In order to try and achieve the above, the Club will invest in coach education and encourage mentoring and professional development, through, for example, paying for coaches to attend coaching conferences or development days with more experienced coaches.

Athletes for all the above squads would come from a variety of sources. Athletes already contact the Club themselves and join appropriate training groups. Better links with primary and high schools throughout the Fife AC catchment area will be developed and the expertise of school PE/Active Schools staff better exploited. This will bring in more athletes but the initiative will only be successful if new coaches are also brought into the Club. The role of the new Club Together officer and the Coaching Convenor will be crucial in recruiting new coaches. Once new coaches are found, the Club Together officer and Coaching Convenor will ensure they are, or become, appropriately qualified and mentored.

2.4 Adult Beginners

Fife AC also recognises that not all members join the Club as juniors. The club also has a keen interest in promoting health and well-being within the community and as a consequence we already have three Jog Scotland leaders and are trying to recruit more. This will ensure that adults can begin athletics in a supported and unthreatening environment. Through the Jog Scotland groups, adult beginners can begin to compete in appropriate events if they wish. They can also progress to the main training groups in either of the hubs as they become fitter and more confident.

3 Conclusion

Fife AC has a clear vision of the pathways which already exist within the Club and those which need to be developed and strengthened over time. The intention is, over time, to extend the number of venues where Run, Jump, Throw Groups and Development Groups train. Key to the success of the plan is the recruitment and training of more coaches, and specifically non-endurance coaches. Training will be more formalised, with registers of juniors

taken, and an appropriate ratio of athletes to coaches maintained. Existing coaches do already maintain coaching programmes and new coaches will also be expected to do this. The Coaching Convenor will maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of qualified coaches within the Club.

4 Current Coaches

The Club's current coaches are listed on the Club website:

- www.fifeac.org/about/contacts/coaches.html

