

Reports from the
**General Competition
Division**



Associations
Masters Track & Field
Youth Athletics

Associations

This has been a very busy year with attention focused on the launch of the Criminal Background Check Program and an increase in membership fees. The former has been a work in progress for three years. I want to thank Robin Beamon for her work on this in Florida and Patti Petesch as our task force chair. Also Harry Simonis made important contributions in finding an alternative screening service and providing a test bed for this service in a difficult state for database access. With very significant National Office leadership from Andy Martin and strong legal support from Jill Pilgrim, we were finally able to put together a comprehensive package for mandatory application in 2007. However, despite a tremendous amount of research and a year of trials, we still have a steep learning curve as Associations around the country endeavor to implement a complex process. These are lessons that have to be learned on the ground so 2007 will be a challenging year for this program.

The membership fee increase has been quite controversial and was troublesome for the Board of Directors, which has the decision-making authority on this, to arrive at decisions that met the needs of the National Office while not causing distress among our Associations. Unfortunately, grass roots do not have a majority of votes on the Board and the result was a fee structure that was higher than this Committee wanted. We had positioned ourselves for \$25 for adults and as close to a zero increase for youth as possible. However, we had to contend with the added cost of the Criminal Background Check Program which includes providing Directors and Officers insurance for all Associations and conducting a Workshop for all Association screeners. Since youth members represent a strong majority of the overall membership, a youth fee increase was needed to accommodate this added cost.

This year's Associations Workshop got high marks from the attendees and for the second time that a mock grievance was presented, it was the biggest hit of all the sessions. Kevin Lucas led a course measurement clinic and there was also a special session for Criminal Background Check screeners. It looks like next year Association youth program administrators will get special attention.

This year, there were conflicts in a number of Associations that needed resolution with help from the Committee and the National Office. Regulation 15 had been developed some years ago, in part to provide for more opportunities for people to move up the ladder in Associations. Some leaders had established themselves over time and had created barriers to others who wanted to share in the leadership. Reg 15 provides for fairer elections and adequate pre-election notification so the membership will know when and where the election is to be held. Some associations still are not providing adequate notice and in some associations there is still some discrimination against sports that aren't the primary interest of the officers. While the Organizational Services Committee plays the police role when it comes to infractions (i.e. failing to comply with bylaw and regulatory requirements such as Reg 15), the Associations Committee strives to help associations to broaden their capabilities and strengthen their administration to comply and excel. Although a few associations got attention this year for their laxity in complying with Reg 15, the Committee needs to reach out more to associations to provide necessary assistance.

One of my objectives is to increase contact of the Federation with our broad constituencies around the nation. The largest contingency is the road runner. While USATF is considered by the public mainly as an organization that deals with high performance athletes, we also certify race courses and sanction road races that are run by many millions of road runners. Most of them are unaware of the role of USATF in their sport at the amateur level and most of those who know of USATF, don't think of it as an organization that is interested in their training and their well-being. Some of the projects I've started are meant to change that perception. The more we can create the sense of being a close part of the running community, the closer we get to when some of them would consider becoming members of USATF. Just a small percentage of these runners would provide a big jump in overall membership and significant revenue for associations.

One of the projects, America's Running Routes, has started to have an impact. We launched it December 1, 2005, and runners started saving their favorite training routes in the database at a rate of about 1,000 per week for some months. Then, with some media attention, we were able to

increase the number to about 1,000 per day. While it hasn't stayed at that level, it is still growing fast and at the time of this writing is at almost 85,000. The database has now become valuable for runners who are traveling and looking for routes from hotels or who are new to an area and want to know good places to run. Keith Lively has done a masterly job in programming the site and has most recently added an elevation feature. Andy Martin and Keith worked together on many of the features, making this service quite an attraction for runners around the country who now see USATF as having an important role in their running program.

Another project is the Pre-Run Stretch Study that has yet to be launched. Hopefully that will happen before the Annual Meeting. It has already taken more than a year to prepare the questionnaire and design the survey. The principal investigator is Dr. Daniel Pereles, an orthopedic surgeon who has been an advisor to Runner's World magazine and a volunteer MD for USOC. I'm filling the role of Study Coordinator with Darby Thompson of the Emmes Corp. as the chief statistician. I want to thank Bob Adams, Chair of the Sports Medicine and Science Committee for his support, and members of that committee for important input. The National Office is also playing a major role in this as the study will be online on our website. Jim Estes, Andy Martin and Keith Lively have already helped the study along and will have a continuing role.

The study is to see whether pre-run stretching helps prevent injury or helps promote injury. A study of 531 stretching studies by the CDC concluded that a large randomized study on this subject is urgently needed. The CDC has been helpful in reviewing our protocol and questionnaire and suggesting some important changes that will help make the results much more valuable.

Because this is "Medical Research on Human Subjects", the study needs approval by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has to agree that the *Informed Consent* that participants sign is clear and thorough and much work has gone into it to make it so. The IRB of Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, MD, has done a review and has requested some minor changes which are currently being made. Final approval is expected

shortly. The study will help runners know whether they should be stretching before running. It will look at all kinds of runners, from sprinters to ultra athletes, from joggers to high performance athletes, and give us an idea of how stretching impacts many sub-population groups divided by gender, age and other factors. Not only will runners learn a lot about the role of stretching, but they will learn that USATF is an organization that cares about them and their well-being.

Another project is a service for road races and other events that put USATF in a leadership role, offering these events a means for better event management. It is through the use of conference calls. Now that most volunteers carry cell phones, and cell phone use is generally free on weekends when most events take place, conference calls can provide for broad communications for event staff and volunteers. This concept has not been known among event managers so USATF can educate and give them a sense that this Federation has more to offer them than they thought. Also, we have an agreement with a conference call service provider, Global Crossing, to offer all sanctioned events a rate of 5.5 cents a minute, without any start-up fees or service fees. Events can use the service for 2 weeks prior to the event and one week after the event and can have as many conference calls going on at the same time as they need with a ceiling of 95 callers per conference. The deal with Global Crossing also gives us access to the service at that price for all USATF and all Association conference calls, so this will save us quite a bit of money.

An issue that has popped up recently is the introduction of a new USATF logo. The new logo was approved by the Board in October and will be formally introduced to our membership at the Annual Meeting. Word about this has gotten out to Association leaders and some have expressed concern about the cost burden of this to Associations. At the October Board meeting I raised concern about how the logo will be implemented and was assured that at least some of the cost at the Association level will be borne by the national office. While there are considerable advantages to having an attractive new logo, it is important for this Committee to make sure that associations will not be seriously burdened with its implementation.

Kevin Lucas has asked us to look at how course certification is conducted in Association territories and to see how Associations can be more involved in the process. This is a work in progress and will be examined in more detail in 2007 with the hope of creating some synergy between associations and the Road Running Technical Council.

The Associations Executive Committee has had many well-attended conference calls, with as many as 15-16 people on board the calls over the past two years. This has enabled quite a log of Committee business to get accomplished. I want to especially thank Ruth White for her dependability and strong voice on the calls and both George Regan and Steve Vaitones for their continuing important contributions. Karen Krsak has produced the minutes in a rapid fashion and her repeated notifications of the calls helped get more people on them. Bill Roe and Ed Koch have been on many of the calls which significantly added value to them.

I can't say enough about the contribution that Andy Martin has continually made to the Committee and to Associations in general over the years that he has been involved. While he has moved up to be Director of Grass Roots Programs, he continues to serve Associations with tremendous dedication, perseverance (especially in dealing with wayward Associations) and innovative thinking. That is not to diminish the important role of Sherry Quack in the National Office operations that provide us with outstanding support. Now that the staff will have some more people on board due to the increase in membership fees, we can expect an even higher level of service.

Submitted by:

Alan Roth, Chair

Masters Track & Field

Administrative Leadership

The resignation of George Mathews as chair of the Masters T&F committee, September 13, 2006, will prompt an election for a new chair during the annual meeting in Indianapolis. Meanwhile, I will try to do a brief report for the committee. The elected officers for the committee are composed of Suzy Hess, Vice Chair, Lester

Mount, Secretary, and Joy MacDonald treasurer. These officers were elected at the 2004 annual meeting. I am serving in my second term.

There has been much discussion regarding the Strategic Plan, which was further developed in 2006 by Todd Taylor. It has helped to identify the goals and objectives and to look for ways to turn these into action for the future. We are a grass roots committee that derives our base from the Association level.

Championships

International

There was not international outdoor competition this year, but world indoor competition was held in Linz, Austria. There were 97 U.S. athletes attending out of a total of more than 3000 masters from all over the world and over 50 medals were won by them including 24 gold. This was the largest attendance at a world indoor meet by U.S. athletes. Bill Collins won the M55 60m, 200m and 400m (54.22), and established en route, two world records in each of the semi-finals and finals of the M55 200, with 23.70 and 23.36, respectively. He also broke the world record in the finals of the 60m with 7.34 and earned the USATF "Athlete of the Week" honors for March 21, 2006.

National – Indoors

The 2006 Indoor Championships returned to the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center in Boston on March 24-26. It was the 10th USA Masters indoor meet held in Boston and drew 761 people, which was a little higher than the 726 of 2004. This year's meet yielded seven world and 27 national age-group records. For three days, the athletes ranging in age from 30 to 92, competed in five-year age groups in events ranging from the pentathlon of Friday to the mile on Saturday and the Superweight on Sunday.

National – Outdoors

The 2006 Outdoor Championships were held in Charlotte, North Carolina at the UNC-Charlotte Irwin Belk Track Complex, August 3-6. After 39 years the Masters outdoor track and field championships finally made national news. Not for the records being set, or the quality of the competition, but because of record temperatures. Unfortunately due to the heat-wave that swept through the East, Southeast and Midwest, the competition was stopped by campus police and EMR personnel. The Masters Games Committee

and Chair George Mathews worked long and hard to reschedule events during evening hours, provide liquids, and transport athletes in the heat. Most of the athletes understood the problems. There were 1367 athletes who set 40 records. The USATF national office with Andy Martin and Tom Surber, and the Masters Media committee, chaired by Robert Weiner, did a great job promoting the meet, and media coverage was exceptional.

Regional

The following locations and dates held Regional Championships:

Indoor

East-Susquehanna U., Selingsgrove, Pa., March 19
Midwest-Carhage College, Kenosha, Wisc., March 5
Mid-America-USAF Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo, Feb. 26
Southwest-Texas Tech U., Lubbock, Texas, Jan. 14

Outdoor

East-Springfield, Mass., July 22
Southeast-Duke U., Durham, N.C., May 5-7
Midwest-Grand Valley State U., Allendale, Mich., July 29
Mid-America-Colorado State U., Ft. Collins, Colo., Sept. 2-3
Southwest-Austin, Texas, July 15
West-Carson (L.A), Calif., July 22-23
Northwest-Hayward Field, Eugene, Ore., June 24-25

Other Committees

The committees that have made significant contributions during the past year include; media committee, Active Athletes, Awards, Championships Sites, Combined-Events, Masters Invitational, Race walking, Rankings, Records, Hall of Fame, Team Manager, Weight Events, WMA Delegates (Indoor), and most of all the Games Committee, who spent a tremendous amount of time helping to coordinate our National Championships. Thanks also to our regional coordinators who help to make masters track & field a success.

With much appreciation,

Suzy Hess, Vice-Chair (Acting Chair)
Masters Track & Field

Youth Committee

The youth program sponsors three meets each year. A Junior Olympic meet in Track and Field, a Junior Olympic Cross Country meet, and a Youth Championship Track and Field meet which includes a team component. In 2006 three meets, the two youth sponsored track meets along with the Junior National meet were the qualifiers for identifying athletes for the 5th IAAF World Youth Championships to be held in Ostrava, Czech Republic in 2007.

The Youth Athletics National Championship meet was held in Greensboro, in early July at NCA&T. This championship meet is for athletes who qualify based on standards and includes a team championship component. I would like to thank Henri Fourrier and the staff of the Greensboro Convention & Visitors Bureau; Billy Edrington and Delores Todd of NCA&T; Demp Bradford of the Greensboro Sports Commission; Charlie Rhodes of the North Carolina Association and Gloria Louis, officials coordinator. Additionally, a special thanks to Coach Charles Oliver and several members of his staff from the University of Tennessee (last years host) who again supported this event.

The Junior Olympic Outdoor Track and Field meet was held at Morgan State University in Baltimore the last week in July. This meet is the culmination of efforts of our youth athletes who advanced from Association and Regional competitions to attend this championship meet. I would like to thank Tanya Rush, the many staff members from the university, Henry McCallum, Barbara Smith, Dr. William Price, Alma Price and many other members of the Potomac Valley Association who made this event such a success.

Last year our youth athletes successfully competed in the 4th IAAF World Youth Championships in Marrakech, Morocco. This year members of that team were part of the junior team that competed in Beijing, China. Our congratulations to these outstanding athletes: Ebony Collins, Brandi Cross, Kamorean Hayes, Walter Henning, Bryshon Nellum, and Scott Roth.

The youth executive committee held both its spring and fall executive committee meetings in Indianapolis this year. These meetings and monthly conference calls provide the planning for

the summer championships, cross country championship and annual meeting. Two of the committee's members attended the Association Workshop in Indianapolis in August.

The final event of 2006 will be the Junior Olympic Cross Country meet to be held at the Plantes Ferry Sports Complex in Spokane, Washington. Top athletes from association and regional meets will be traveling to attend this meet on December 9. This year's organizing committee has assured us that weather is no object. They are prepared for all possibilities after observing the almost two feet of snow at Bryant University in Rhode Island at last year's championship meet.

At last year's annual meeting, the committee awarded the 2007 meets. Plans for these meets are well underway:

- Youth Athletic Track & Field Championship – Lisle, Illinois
- Junior Olympic Track & Field Championship – Walnut, California
- Junior Olympic Cross Country – Lawrence Kansas

This year the committee received numerous queries from organizations interested in hosting these championships. The committee will be reviewing eight bid proposals for the 2008 meets.

In 2006, the Mark Springer Travel Grants provided a total of \$40,000 to USATF clubs to travel to our championships. The youth committee expresses special thanks to the USATF Foundation for matching the funds from USA Track and Field to expand the outreach of this program.

Finally, the youth committee undertook a new project this year. A task force from the Youth Executive Committee, lead by Dorothy Dawson, is working with Brian Fields, a specialist sponsored by Pete Kight one of the USATF Foundation Board Members. The project entitled "Youth Experience Project" is gathering information from the administrator, athletes, coaches, and parents in the youth community. Brian Fields will then analyze the information using proven industry programs and provide recommendations to further develop the youth program. It is expected that with these recommendations financial support will be allocated to allow full implementation of the development programs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Phelps, Chair