



# BMC News



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH MILERS' CLUB  
VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1 – SPRING 2019



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*Glasgow 2019 – 800m finalist Mari Smith opened up her season in the Sheffield BMC meet in December*

**Cover:** Laura Muir Glasgow 5000m – GAA Milers Meet 2019 © Bobby Gavin

**Back Cover:** Back Picture Euro Indoor Medallists Laura Muir (Gold 1500/3000m) Shelayna Oskan Clarke (Gold, 800m), Jamie Webb (Silver 800m) Melissa Courtney (Bronze 3000m) Chris O'Hare (Silver 3000m) – Mark Shearman

**Printed by:** Cliffe Enterprise Ltd

Tel: 01323 419 701

Web: [cliffe-enterprise.com](http://cliffe-enterprise.com)



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All official correspondence to the BMC should be addressed to the National Secretary at the above address. All matters so received will be addressed by the national committee at their next meeting. All other requests should be sent to the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald and will be dealt with as soon as possible. Matters concerning specific areas of the club should be sent to the relevant person from the above list.

The BMC are always looking to expand its network of people and locations that host BMC races. If you feel that you can help or want to get involved then please contact the BMC Administrator Pat Fitzgerald.

### WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF BMC NEWS 2019.

*"The mastery of the true self, and the refusal to permit others to dominate us, is the ultimate in living and self-expression in athletics."*

Percy Cerutty

Welcome to the Spring Edition of BMC News. The winter season has been special in so many ways for BMC Athletes. Tim Brennan reflects, that we are looking forward to our best summer ever with the World Champs taking place at the end of September. The value of BMC races should be enhanced as all take place before the UK trials on August 24th.

This edition could be termed the 'coaching special' as we pay tribute to the driving forces behind our great athletes. Matt Long and Chris Hollinshead reflect on philosophy of the BMC Coach of the Year Geoff Wightman, who has led son Jake to the precipice of World Class.

It was my pleasure to look at the work of Joe and Margaret Galvin in Leigh and talk to their latest protégé BMC Young athlete of the Year Keely Hodgkinson, plus get an insight into the drive and ambition of Welsh coaching 'Maestro' James Thie. Simon Taylor illuminates our knowledge of the success behind rising star Melissa Courtney with coach Rob Denmark. Matt Long also provides a telling insight into the team of Geoff James and former commonwealth champion Mary Stewart.

Tim Egerton, Charles McConnell and Dave Lowes delight us with their technical knowledge. Whilst Brendon Byrne provides a revealing insight into British marathon standards.

Peter L. Thompson shares with us some rare and treasured memorabilia celebrating the life and career of world record holder and first sub 5 minute miler Diane Leather.

We are grateful all our contributors and again this magazine is illuminated by our photographers, and Britta Sendlhofer for her superb design work.

Glasgow 2019 was special for many reasons; Tim Brennan has already mentioned our medallists who are celebrated on our front and back covers.

The performances of Neil Gourley, who made the 1500m final, but was unable to take his place through illness, and Mari Smith, qualifying for the 800m final were also special for the BMC. We also celebrate the fine GB performances at the Aarhus World XC led by the women's squad who finished a stunning fourth through the images of Mark Shearman.

Athletics is looking fashionable again, and our young athletes now have aspirational role models who they no longer watch from afar, they brush shoulders with them at BMC races.

**Stephen Green, BMC News Editor**





# Chairman's Notes

**W**elcome to the Spring 2019 BMC News. The 2019 Season started well with some great times in our indoor races. Top of the pile was Laura Muir's 14:52.02 5000m at Glasgow in January. It was also good to see four under 8 mins in the men's 3000m at the same meeting. Athletes such as Jamie Webb (1500m), Joe Reid, and Mari Smith (800m) all opened up their seasons in the Sheffield BMC meetings before going on to the European Champs.

The action in Glasgow in March was the European Championship and British middle distance had one of its best championships for years with Laura taking Gold at 1500m and 3000m, Shelayna Oskan-Clarke at 800m, with Jamie Webb 800m, Chris O'Hare both picking up silvers and Melissa Courtney a Bronze over 3000m. This is a fine return from a championship and hopefully a good sign for the outdoor season to come. Medals indoor have been an important development stage for many athletes in the past who have gone on to outdoor honours.

The pattern for the outdoor season is going to be a strange one. The World Championships are at the end of September

meaning that the entire 'normal' season is before the qualifying date. Athletes and coaches will be planning strategies around that. For those successful in the outdoors there is time to recuperate, do some base work and hit the outdoors in good time.

The age group champs though maintain their usual dates with the European U23 and U20 championships in Sweden during July and domestic age group championships also follow the normal pattern. What this all means for the BMC is that we have planned fixtures to meet all our members needs. The early Grand Prix and Gold Standard meetings should cater for the U23 and U20 qualifications but the later meetings which are normally post-qualification date are going to be extremely important at senior level. Just as important is athlete development. It will be English Schools qualification which will be the aim in our fantastic PB Classic and Regional meetings.

This year we are grateful for some funding from UK Athletics which will be used in particular to make the Watford Grand Prix as strong as possible. This is already a

meeting which regularly produces world class performances and attracts many international competitors. The aim is that it is a must do meeting for the best of British.

For the first time ever all the Grand Prix's take place before the British Champs in August, with the first meeting taking place, which gives a great opportunity for athletes to target qualifying times ahead of the late August Trials.

Of course, the reason for the lateness of the world championship is the temperatures during the summer in Doha, but even in September it will be hot! I visited the city many times and can vouch for that. You had to brace yourself to walk the few hundred meters from our hotel to the offices of the company we were visiting and plan in a cool down period before any meeting. Even the autumnal weather would be what most of us would think was hot for warm weather training. It is though what you are used to, and the locals perceived the same autumn weather as cold, you would see runners in full tracksuits and the guys on the hotel doors in balaclavas to keep out the cold!

In this long season stretching from the not always sunny Glasgow to the always sunny Doha I wish you all the best and hope that your ambitions for the season are fulfilled.

Tim Brennan  
BMC Chairman

*Watford GP 2018 - Lovisa Lindh breaks the tape ahead of Katy Ann McDonald and Khahisa Mhlanga in the 800m*





# Indoor Season

BOBBY GAVIN



Start of the 5000m

## GAA GLASGOW MILERS MEET, 4TH JANUARY 2019, EMIRATES ARENA

By Norrie Hay

The indoor Glasgow BMC Miler meet continues to go from strength to strength. Entries opening and closing again within four hours such is the demand for spaces. Whilst we have a great quantity of athletes we also have a meeting that delivers top quality athletes and action.

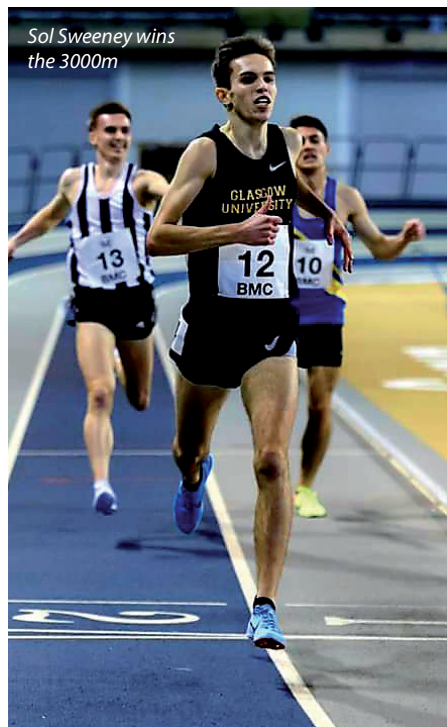
The forthcoming Euro Indoors, also being run on the Glasgow track, gave added incentive to those looking for a preparatory competition to come to

Glasgow in early January.

One who took that opportunity was Laura Muir. Again the UK's top female endurance athlete entered and there to have another crack at the UK 5000m indoor record. The large crowd in attendance were not disappointed as Laura put on a tremendous show running 14.52.

Her training partner Gabriella Stafford made it a race rather than a solo time trial running a new Canadian Indoor record of 14.57 for second place. Laura's showing her preparations for Euro indoors were in a good place.

Not to be totally overshadowed by



Sol Sweeney wins the 3000m

BOBBY GAVIN

the women the men put on a strong showing as well. In the men's (A) 3000m we had four men, in the same race, under 8.00mins indoor in Scotland for the first time ever. The race was won in 7.56 by another Scot Sol Sweeney.

In the age groups there was another top run by Kane Elliot (Euro Youth 1500m gold medallist) who ran a sparkling 8.24 for a Scottish 2nd all-time u20 performance.

Finally we aided Eilidh Doyle's Euro preparation's by staging an invitation 200. Both Eilidh and Laura's subsequent medals at Euro Indoors shows the value of Glasgow in January.

BOBBY GAVIN



Laura Muir receives her BMC award from Matthew Fraser Moat and 4:01 miler Hugh Barrow



Eilidh Doyle winning the 200m

BOBBY GAVIN





John Ashcroft leads  
the 3000m

## SHEFFIELD INDOOR GP, 6TH JANUARY 2019, EIS, SHEFFIELD.

By Stephen Green

The BMC indoor GP is now into its seventh year and continues to be the be a fitting event to start the season with a strong mix of aspiring and more established internationals.

Jamie Webb dominated a top domestic field over 1500m, with a new meeting record of 3:43.59. Webb later dropped down to his favoured 800m for the rest of the season,

culminating in a superb silver medal in March at the Euro indoors (with an indoor PB of 1:47.13).

The BUCS 1500m champion, was content to follow Spencer Thomas through 800m in 2:01 before unleashing a last 400m in the region of 56 seconds to return a lifetime best figures. Jonny Hay impressed with 3:45.64 in second place.

Claire Tarplee showed strong finishing speed, and a return to form, in moving 15m clear of Amy O'Donoghue to record a decent 4:21.85 metric mile.

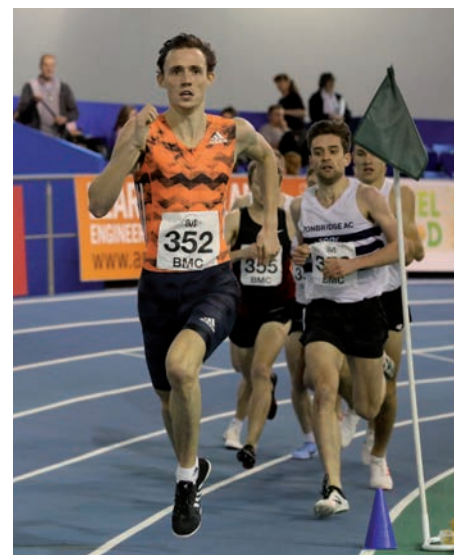
Another athlete signalling their arrival was Joe Reid. The Isle of Man half-miler recording negative splits to edge out Alex Botterill, with 1:50.29. Botterill (1:51.16) just had enough to stay ahead of George Mills (1:51.18).

Like Webb Reid went on to qualify for the Euros, following a 1:47.83 PB in the Birmingham GP, where he made the semi-finals.

Tamsin McGraw dipped Georgia Yearby in the closest of finishes by 5/100th with 2:13.03 over 4 laps of the 200m oval.



Daniel Mees looks strong  
in the 1500m B race



Euro Indoors Silver Medallist - Jamie Webb powers  
away in the 1500m



James Gormley and Eoin Everard duked it out over the last four laps of the 3000m. The Sheffield Man closed impressively to take a popular win with 8:12.56 just over a second ahead of the Irishman.

The BMC is proud of our continued partnership with England Athletics who host us as part of their combined events meetings.

In addition to Webb and Reid, Tamsin McGraw, Alex Botterill (800m), Jonny Hay, James Gormley (1500m) and Kieran Kelly (1500m) gained England selection for the England Athletics European tour in Bratislava and Vienna in January.

PETER BROWN



*George Mills and  
eventual winner Joe  
Reid in the 800m*



PETER BROWN

*Winner Claire Tarplee  
leads the 1500m from  
Amy O'Donoghue*

PETER BROWN



*Tamsin McGraw (343)  
edges Georgia Yearby  
over 2 laps*



# Courtney Eyeing Olympic Glory

**Simon Taylor talks to the Rising Star and Euro and Commonwealth Medallist along with her coach Rob Denmark.**

When Melissa Courtney looks to the future, her gaze is inevitably drawn Eastwards, toward the Land of the Rising Sun, where the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games are already beginning to loom large on the horizon.

"The Olympics is something I've dreamed of since I was little," she confirms, relaxing in the Student Union café at Loughborough University following a gruelling track session with Sarah McDonald and Rosie Clarke in unseasonably warm February weather.

"I remember watching in 2012 and never even thought about it," she says, "in fact I was only 7th in the BUCS 1500 in 4:28 that year so I was very, very far off it, and it seemed so distant, but when Rio came around and I only missed the Qualifying time by, I think, half a second, it became realistic that I can actually do this, and now it's finally coming around."



*Melissa Courtney heads for 3000m Euro Indoor Bronze (MS)  
Courtney in the 2017 Watford GP*

MARK SHEARMAN



Before Melissa can think about packing for Japan, however, there is the small matter of the 2019 season to negotiate, with its late peak; the 5000m at the World Championships in Doha are not due to take place until October.

"It's not traditional," says Rob Denmark, Melissa's coach since 2017, "It's not like you come out in June and you get ready and then you race in August. There's none of that, you've got to be flexible."

That flexibility is evident in the approach the pair have taken to the current campaign, with variety being the spice of athletic life over the winter months

"It's so long to Doha," Denmark continues, "you have to break it up, so we did a bit of cross-country, and then a bit of indoors and then looked towards the outdoors, and these are all the components you want to be working with anyway".

Melissa linked up with Denmark's group when she moved from London to Loughborough with her partner, decathlete Ashley Bryant, having worked with Mark Paulsey in her home town of Poole since the age of 11, where she excelled not only at Athletics, but Swimming and, of all things Modern Pentathlon as well, although running was always her first love.

"A guy at my running club and my swimming club did Modern Pentathlon," she laughs, "and he was doing biathlons, so I started doing loads of them, and loved them, and it was part of the Modern Pentathlon programme so I started shooting, and fencing and all the other bits, and ended up doing a few weekends away with Great Britain squads, but it wasn't the same buzz as you get from running or winning a race, so running was always my favourite thing."

Modern Pentathlon's loss has proved Athletics' gain, but it hasn't always been plain sailing for the 25-year old.

"I think I had a lot of talent when I was younger," she says, "I did well on the country, and at 1500, and even when I was 13 I ran, like 4:30 but then I just plateaued, like many people do, boys and girls, at that age, so I had about five years where I didn't run a PB over 1500m. From 14 to 19, I was just stuck on 4:25."

The curve began to arc skywards once again with a breakthrough 4:17.57 indoors to take third at the 2013 British Indoor Championship and since then the improvement has been significant, with the BMC playing its part along the way.

"I've done BMC races since I was about 11 or 12," she tells me, "and without them I don't think I would ever have made that extra step up. There was a stage when I just couldn't



*Rob Denmark wins the Commonwealth Games 5000m (1994)*

MARK SHEARMAN

get into any races abroad, and I was running around 4:11 trying to get under 4:10. I had such good races with the likes of Charlene Thomas in the BMC events and they brought me to on to where I am now, really."

Paulsey continued to guide Melissa's training once she made the move north, and initially worked in tandem with Denmark to make the transition to Loughborough as smooth as possible, before the 13:10 5000m man assumed full coaching responsibilities in early 2017.

Although a tough decision to take, Melissa remains convinced it was the right one, and whilst she is quick to point out that the training hasn't changed significantly under Denmark, her progression has clearly been aided by the time she now has to devote to training, and the facilities at her disposal in the East Midlands.

"It's more that the volume has increased." She says, "I do a lot more mileage than I used to, but it's been a very gradual step up, and just harder sessions really, a lot more 5k sessions."

"Rob is very good at planning the overall programme and seeing what session links to the next session. There's always a lot more

to it than me saying 'I just want to do 400's today'. Rob will say 'No, we're going to do this session, because it leads to this session, and that's going to get you ready for that race'. I like that, and the fact there is a lot of science behind it."

Melissa began to take the 5000m seriously in the winter of 2017/2018, having previously specialised in the metric mile. "When I moved to Rob I said, 'actually I think I want to do the 5000 at the Commonwealths', as I thought that could be where I was going." She explains.

A welcome, if unanticipated, consequence of the increased endurance work was a huge step forward in Melissa's 1500m running, with no better illustration than her bronze medal in the Commonwealth Games final last April, sprinting past home favourite Linden Hall in the home straight to finish on the podium in a personal best of 4:03.44.

The Gold Coast experience, along with the European Championships later in the summer, where she placed 5th in the 5000m in another personal best, and Welsh record, of 15:04.75, gave Melissa the taste for the big stage, and she stepped onto the podium once again in the European Indoor

Championships in Glasgow this March, where she lowered her overall 3000m best to 8:38.22, earning a second career bronze medal behind the peerless Laura Muir and Germany's Konstanze Klosterhalfen, and moving into fourth on the UK Indoor All-time list in the process.

Another major medal earned Melissa a whole week off running, but soon it was back to the coalface in preparation for the second major goal of 2019 in Doha, where the 5000m final takes place on October 5th, the penultimate day of competition.

"We're going to altitude first," she says, "We'll be in Flagstaff for a month from the end of April. Being at altitude really does suit me, I've been to Kenya five times since 2014, including this winter, and I know what works for me."

"You really need to respect it." She says of Flagstaff's 2,100m altitude, 300m lower than that of Iten in Kenya where she spent the early part of the year, prior to coming back to Europe to race indoors. "You have to take it really easy and be really careful. You can get yourself into a hole very easily by going there and trying to hammer it. It's about knowing your body."

Once back in the UK, Melissa's first planned outing will be over a mile around the roads of the capital in the Vitality Westminster Mile, which she is relishing, "it'll

be nice to run on the roads, a bit different." She says.

After that, all roads lead to Qatar, via the usual outposts of the European track circuit, and Melissa is targeting improvements across the board, from 800m to 5000.

"Sub-15 is the big target," she says, recalling last season's European Championships final. "Berlin was incredible, but I just remember crossing the line in 15:04 and thinking I had so much more in me, and I know I could have run quicker."

"Rob has got me really strong," she says, elaborating on her aspirations for the year, "I've done lots of running, endurance sessions, gym work, and I think if you're really strong the speed will come from that. I do feel like I need to get rid of that 800pb (2:04.03) this year, and I'd like to go under 4:03 for 1500 too."

But Tokyo is the ultimate goal. Melissa will be approaching her peak at 5000m in 2020 and already the Games are dominating the plans of both athlete and coach.

"It sounds very clichéd but that's where we want her to be as optimal as possible." Says Denmark, warming to the theme. "It comes around pretty quickly next year, and there are lots of things you have to consider when you go to Tokyo, the conditions will be very different to anything anyone has experienced. But it's the Olympic Games, it's

the pinnacle."

Tokyo may represent the pinnacle, but it's far from the final destination. Melissa's sights may be fixed on Japan 2020 for now, but she's also looking far beyond when it comes to the remainder of her running days.

"I think it's good that I've made steady progression throughout my career," she says, reflectively, "lots of athletes peak when they're young, when they're 18 or 19 and then don't go on to do anything else. For now, I think 1500 and 5000 are enough, but I'd be tempted to run 10,000m on the track and one-day I definitely want to do half-marathons and marathons. Tokyo might be the immediate goal, but I feel like I've got so much more in me to keep going for many, many years."

### Training:

A typical week in winter usually sees Courtney clocking up 85-90 miles per week, with two or three key sessions, depending on whether it's a 90-mile week or in the low-80's. Tuesdays will see a track or hill session, with a threshold session scheduled for a Thursday and a long run of 14-15 miles on Sunday morning.

"I get a rest day, I'd say every three to four weeks," she says, somewhat unenthusiastically, "although when we're racing in the summer I get rest days a little

*Joy and Disbelief as Melissa takes 1500m bronze in the Gold Coast*



MARK SHEARMAN



more often. I'll still do drills and stuff, but it'll be a running rest day."

Drills are included once per week, along with a twice-weekly S&C session under the supervision of Rob Miller the British Athletics Strength and Conditioning coach. "We do half conditioning first," she says, "then lifting; cleans, squats, snatch as well as some accessory exercises and core."

The pattern is similar in Summer, twice a day training most days, with less volume, and quicker track sessions.

"I don't have a 'go to' session that I do before a big race. I used to the with Rob we always try to mix it up a little bit, so we don't get set on a particular thing."

"Going into a race, the week I'm tapering, we'll always do a cut-down session when I'll start doing a bit of threshold on the track, and then I'll be getting quicker and quicker and quicker, so I'm doing something like a 200 in 29. That just makes me feel good, going down the distances, so that's normally only the week of a race, but it's not set in stone."

*Courtney alongside Jess Judd in the CG 2018*



MARK SHEARMAN

#### IAAF WORLD CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS AARHUS 2019

*Aarhus March 2019 Joshua Cheptegei wins the World XC title from compatriot Jacob Kiplimo as Uganda sweep to team gold*



MARK SHEARMAN



# Keely Hodgkinson

**Stephen Green visited the Leigh track to talk to the European Under 18 800m champion, and her coaches Joe and Margaret Galvin, to try and uncover the magic behind this 'talent - mining factory' in Leigh.**

**L**eigh is an area that has had its share of social and economic challenges. Blighted by the decline of the coal industry in the 1980's this proud and hardworking people have endured some hard times. However, if you look into the heart of the town there are some signs of social and economic recovery.

Nowhere is the bright future of the town more evident than on any given weekday at Leigh Sports Village where husband and

wife Team Joe and Margaret Joe Galvin have been nurturing the young talent from the town since 1981. The club used to train on a 350m gravel track nearby and it was Joe who ensured the facility, complete with 400m and indoor 100m straight through negotiating the sale of their old facility, was gifted to the club in return for a peppercorn rental.

Products of the Leigh stable, as young athletes, include GB International Lauren Heyes, Peter Riley (former National Cross-Country champion, and British 5000m champion in 2006, plus Olivia Stones (3rd in the 2018 Inter Counties XC).

The club has also punched above their weight in road relays joined by the likes of Abigail Howarth (Lauren's sister) and Laura



*Keely gains strength and confidence from XC races*

Riches they were narrowly pipped for gold by Leeds in the Autumn 4 stage and took bronze in the recent six stage relays. All of the team have been members of the club



*Hodgkinson takes the British U20 title in 2018*



since their teenage years.

Their latest prodigy is Keely Hodgkinson, European U18 800 champion and 2:04.26 800m runner.

We sit and talk the gym in the Sports Village, Keely is delighted to have received her BMC Young Athlete of 2018 award. Margaret and Joe have just finished a track session with their young group, and Keely has completed some gym work.

"I remember Keely's first ever race, she was about ten and it was a muddy and rainy XC in Rossendale, she didn't do too well, and jumped straight into her parent's car in tears and went straight home," Margaret recalls.

"Even then, I knew that she had something so I kept on e-mailing her mum Rachel, and eventually she came back, after that I really can't recall her missing training," Margaret adds.

That dedication paid dividends over the years and a careful plan that involved their young athlete competing in several events including field events and sprints, was borne (Keely has a best of 56.2 over 400m and has run 26 seconds for the half lap). Track sessions included sets blocks of 16 x 200 (split into four sets) and in summer long recovery 400's.

"Knowing she had such ability and belief we have had to be careful not to over train her, and we have really not pushed Keely to anywhere near her limits," she is keen to mention.

In 2017 she returned 2:06.85 and finished 4th in English Schools over 800m. The following year she went further into the stratosphere qualifying for the England team after taking 2nd in the English Schools XC at Leeds.

The summer was a song for the Leigh runner, her breakthrough came when she returned 2:04.26 at the Watford BMC, where Alex Bell went sub-2. She then defeated athletes two years older to win the UK U20. She crowned the year with a magnificent Gold in the Euro U18 Champs in Gyor, Hungary.

"The work that we did over the winter really paid dividends for Keely," says Joe of the Euro win with characteristic understatement.

"We couldn't make it out to the champs, but we spoke to Keely on the phone she had looked at the field and observed that many of her rivals were speed rather than endurance based which have her a lot of confidence," he added.

"Everything was so different out there, I was drug tested, you have your name on your number, and everyone is so focused," says Hodgkinson of her GB debut.

Once into the final, she ran a perfectly

Keely with coaches Joe and Margaret Galvin and her BMC Young Athlete of 2018 award



STEPHEN GREEN

executed race, taking the race on from gun to tape, to win with a superb 2:04.84, fending off a challenge from Ireland's Sophie O'Sullivan with 250m to go. She was emulated in the Gold medal club by another young Northerner Max Burgin, who employed similar tactics to take the men's 800m title.

"I'd discussed the race with my coaches, trusted my training, and decided this was the best way I could win and run a fast time, so it worked out perfectly" she adds.

We discuss the training that got the young Leigh Starlet to the Euro crown. Keely competes regularly on the mud and took the Greater Manchester title earlier this winter. XC is a discipline she considers 'tough, but necessary.'

Key to this winning formula are the long road and hill sessions. Keely and her friend Olivia Stones have a laugh about what is the toughest workouts set within the Leigh group

A number of sessions are bounced into the mix including Warrington Road mile tempo runs, 800m tempos and continuous

Kenyan Hills. It is clear from the conversation that both enjoy the training, however tough it is. She is quite clear her favourite track workouts consist of 200's and 300's with 3 mins recovery.

Of the future Hodgkinson has a clear sense of purpose, reflecting the self-belief that her coaches had identified in that very early stage in her development. "I can't imagine my life without running," she says with no prompting and with absolute conviction.

"One of the big aims is to improve my 1500m time as it's 'only' 4:29. Over two laps we're targeting 2:02 this year, and to defend my U20 title, then I'm looking towards qualifying for the European Under 20 final in Sweden in July," she adds candidly.

It is from tough working-class towns that some of our best talent has emerged. Across the UK, we are in the debt of coaches such as Joe and Margaret. It is a fitting tribute to their dedication that in the twilight of their coaching careers a young starlet such as Keely Hodgkinson has emerged as a testament to their service to the local athletics community.





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## REGISTRATION & BOOKING FORM Mount St Mary's 25-27 October 2019

The British Milers' Club coaching courses are for the benefit of athletes and coaches and we try to ensure the following:

- ▶▶ All young people are as safe as possible ▶▶ Provide information on further opportunities available
- ▶▶ Provide top-class coaching and advice where required ▶▶ Ensure that all BMC activities are open to all communities (equal opportunities)

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth/Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Academy Member: Yes No \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency contact details

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is authorised to take and collect your child at this activity?: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child suffer from any of the following?

☐ Asthma ☐ Skin Problems ☐ Diabetes ☐ Epilepsy

☐ Fainting ☐ Heart Problems ☐ Migraines ☐ Allergies

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child currently on medication or have any injuries?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider your child to have a disability?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your child's Ethnic origin?

☐ White ☐ Mixed Race ☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Chinese

☐ Other

Do you object to photographs of your child being taken for publicity purposes? (NSPCC guidelines)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary requirements (please state): \_\_\_\_\_

Please state pb's (for squad allocation):

800m \_\_\_\_\_ 1500m \_\_\_\_\_ 3000m \_\_\_\_\_

### For Coaches Only:

What is your current UKA coaching level? \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose photocopy of licence:

Do you have a UKA CRB certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please enclose photocopy of certificate.  
(If no, please contact administrator (contact details above).

**For Parents/Carers:** BMC courses involve vigorous, but beneficial athletic training, to a high standard. Please confirm that your child is physically fit and capable of participation in this training over the duration of the course. Please note a physio/masseur (if available) will only treat a person under the age of 18 if a chaperone is present. Do you give permission for your child to be treated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I confirm that consent is given for my child to attend the BMC activity and I agree to the conditions laid out below\*. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The BMC cannot be held responsible for any improper use of mobile phones including photography. Please note that inappropriate language or actions will not be tolerated.

\*Information used in this form will be used to monitor and evaluate BMC activities. All information will remain confidential and no reference to individuals will be made in written or verbal reports. It is your right to decline for your child to be excluded from this evaluation. I have read and understood the above information and agree for my child or myself to participate further in this study, if so requested.

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# The Front Runner

**Matt Long uncovers the coaching lore behind the success of the legendary Scot Tommy Boyle**

## **Toronto 1993. The World Indoor Athletics Championships.**

The Canadian crowd hushes as the starter prepares to set 6 men on their way to cover 4 circuits of the track. The camera pans in on lane number 3, to a 29 year old Scot wearing 211 on his red, white and blue Team GB vest. The main threat to Tom McKean appears to be from the blue vested Brazilian, Jose Luiz Barbosa, who responds to the gun from Lane 1 and after just 100 metres his literal bumping of McKean almost seems to a metaphorical reminder to our man that the 1987 world indoor champion means business in trying to regain his title.

The first circuit is covered at breakneck speed in 24.86s, with the affable David Coleman echoing the nation's collective sigh of relief in pointing out that its, "McKean leading. Out of trouble". By the half way stage, the BBC commentator tempers his optimism with a cautionary note- "McKean where he likes to be. In charge and controlling the pace. But of course he's there to be shot at", as the 400m split shows 51.89s. Moments later, there's a clip of heels and Coleman exclaims, "Barbosa's gone -fallen!" as the aforementioned Brazilian stumbles and bows to the torrid pace being set by the front running Scot. With 300m remaining McKean senses the fall of his main rival has given him the daylight and breathing space of 3 metres which stretches to 4 at the bell. With 100m to go Coleman remind us that there is still work to be done with, "Nkazamyampi of Burindi waiting to attack". Around the final bend he continues that, "Pace judgement is so important. What's McKean got left?"

As McKean hurtles towards the finishing tape with the chasing pack in hot pursuit, who better to answer that question and to provide a clue to the race outcome than coach Tommy Boyle?

We start by exploring what attracted him to the sport in his youth. He shares that, "I was the eldest son in a family of eleven, living on the edge of the village of Newarthill in Lanarkshire. My earliest memory of athletics was winning the village gala day, then the school mile, Jimmy Hogg, Legendary PE teacher at Dalziel High



*McKean with his 1993  
World Indoor Gold Medal*

School, ignited the spark which lit the flame of athletics in me. Jim Sherwood the Boys Brigade captain asked me to coach the cross-country team where I learned about leadership and developing a positive team spirit and we won the battalion champ. I was recruited to Bellshill YMCA Harriers and competed for a few years before joining the Navy to see the world and change career pathways to electronics."

Following these formative experiences, I am keen to know what made him carry on as a coach. With enthusiasm he continues, "I returned to the YMCA after the navy, Jimmy Love Bellshill and World YMCA president said, 'Tommy you must put something back into our community' and enrolled me on a Coach Education course. These were massively inspirational in those days loaded with great coach/educators- Frank Dick led the evolution supported by legends like Sandy Robertson, Sean and Maeve Kyle, Tony Chapman, Jimmy Campbell, George Sinclair, Bill Walker. The YMCA had a great culture upon which to build a strong athletics club. 48 local schools joined the cross country comps, hundreds of kids joined the club one of whom was a young

unknown Tom McKean. I spent ten years learning my coaching trade, all the time gradually understanding the true value of sport as a vehicle in developing every young person who joined to become the very best that they could be in sport and life - and thousands did!"

At this point I begin to unpick the extent to which his considerable experience in industry has aided his work in track and field. He discloses that, "Throughout my engineering apprentice I was taught by fantastic craftsmen in Honeywell. I learned the theory and practice of world class manufacturing and how to use that experience in developing an efficient and successful business model, visiting the US, learning about Japanese 'Kaizen- continuous improvement for all for ever', I was recruited to Scottish Coach Education and group organiser for sprints mentored by Bill Walker. I noted the gulf that existed in performance coaching and realised the synergy between managing and coaching it was clear I could improve my management by employing sound coaching practice and my coaching by utilising a more professional business approach, which was crucial to me staying





*Yvonne Murray en-route to 3000m bronze in the 1988 Seoul Olympics*



*Tom McKean strikes gold in Toronto 1993*



*Boyle in reflective mood*

in athletics and developing a successful coaching model, securing funding from Glen Henderson Mercedes Cars enabled us to take a more professional approach, recruit a support team. Professor Myra Nimmo did the sports science Dave McLean the physio, Tom McKean and Yvonne Murray became semi-professional athletes, meantime like most coaches I juggled the coaching, job and family and yes got priorities wrong a few times!"

In managing to balance the aforementioned juggling act, what core principles have guided his philosophy of coaching? With honesty he tells that, "My Father and Grandfather inspired me to work hard, learn from my mistakes and become the very best that I could be. My primary objective as a coach was always to help and support every young person to become better people and better athletes. Fundamental to this was creating a positive learning culture in the club, squad or team, getting everyone on the same page, leaders, coaches, parents and athletes, ensuring that the focus was on the process and not the outcome, educating every child and parent that "winning is best achieved through

sustained effort" like fellow engineer Peter Coe - who guided his son Sebastian to Olympic 1500 golds in 1980 and 1984- I did dig deeper than most into theory and sports science however always a big emphasis on work ethic".

I remind Tommy that Scotland has produced some legendary coaches not just in track and field but across a range of sports. As a proud Scot how does he account for this? With vigour, he answers that, "Historically we have had to fight over many generations for many reasons, so it's in our genes, we are a small nation we have always had that pioneering and inventing spirit, we instinctively do things our own way, if you look historical at Scottish athletic successes you will find that is seldom about a system more about an obsessive desire to create a better way of doing things and tends to come in cycles through the generations. I think about the professional sprint system developed by Jimmy Bradley using speed ball, developing a culture which arguably produced the best series of sprinters we have ever had. I've already referred to Frank Dick - a giant among coach educators had massive impact on me - Coach Wooden

-truly understanding teacher /coach. Ron Pickering for the educational books. Jimmy Campbell for his work on anaerobic training with girls- Gordon Surtees his ideas on stamina for Yvonne Murray. Percy Cerutti with his forward to 'The golden mile' book about Herb Elliott was the most inspirational read I've had".

He acknowledges that he is perhaps best remembered for his work with McKean and Yvonne Murray who gave us so many magic moments in the late 80s and early 90s. I sense I am being a little unfair but nevertheless ask him to pick out a couple of magic moments from the highlight reel. It is McKean's 'silver year' of 1986 where he placed second beyond the imperious Steve Cram at his home Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh plus his runner up spot behind a 'come-backing' Seb Coe later that summer in Stuttgart, which appear most vivid in his sharp memory. There is a reason that the Olympics is known as 'The Greatest Show on Earth' and for Tommy it was Yvonne Murray's marvellous 3000m bronze in Seoul back in 1988 which is top of the pile and off course as a coach the double-double both Tom and Yvonne striking gold in 1990 Europeans and the World indoors 1993 as



pretty unique in coaching. This being said, he's rightly keen to treasure memories of other athletes who reached their potential, not least Peter Meechan who won Special Olympics Gold in the Pentathlon in Glasgow back in 1990 and Susan Scott who placed 4th over two laps at both the 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games on her way to setting new Scottish records.

I dig deeper at this point and ask him to reveal more about the coaching which he has been involved in since the glorious McKean/ Murray era of the 80s and early 90s. With typical enthusiasm he tells me that, "I refocused my life on to family and career, briefly coming back to coach Grant Graham, Neil Dougal and Susan Scott whilst pursuing my passion of managing people in a world class business, eventually becoming a successful director of operations at Packard Bell Computers. I retired from industry in 2007 and felt a compelling urge to put something back into sport and society. Joining Winning Scotland Foundation allowed me to achieve this (see [www.winningscotlandfoundation.org/](http://www.winningscotlandfoundation.org/)) I searched the world for coaching models, which could be better utilised to tackle the myriad of challenges facing today's sport, I found PCA (see <https://www.positivecoach.org/>) The brainchild of Jim Thompson, we brought Positive Coaching from Stanford to Scotland and with our team created a programme which was rolled out across Scottish local authorities and major sports. The SFA used it to its max, Chris McCart Celtic FC embedded the methodology in the youth academy, My colleague Gregor Townsend moved to Glasgow Warriors and moulded into their Culture, and no doubt it has enhanced his coaching tool kit as SRU Head Coach. We developed our own PCS plus programme founded on the proven methodology of Mastery Coaching and incorporating Growth Mindset methodology by Professor Carol Dweck, it's now being rolled out in a few sports and in my opinion every club, coach and parent in sport should embrace to equip themselves for today's world of sport"

When mentioning our own club, it's clear he's a genuine fan as he keenly points out that, "I would advocate using the BMC comps indeed my son Christopher did five BMCs at Stretford in 2018, great indicators of improvement and confidence boosters as he returned from injury. I think the BMC graded comps, informal and over in a few hours, really are fit for purpose in today's world".

Tommy is clearly delighted with the state of Scottish middle distance running. As well as the obvious allusion to Laura Muir, he credits the work of coach Andy Young with a former BMC Young athlete of the Year in



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Jemma Reekie before adding that Eilish McColgan, "has the genes and mother Liz is a massive inspiration". He gives a similar nod to genetics on the male side with reference to our BMC Coach and Athlete of the Year- Jake and Geoff Wightman respectively as well as being excited by the talents of European indoor 3000m silver medallist Chris O'Hare, the "strong and brave" Josh Kerr and Neil Gourley. So clearly there's much to celebrate but adds caution that the real measure of the sport in the longer term is what athletes and coaches are in the pipeline. Is he an optimist for the future of British middle distance running long term? With a refreshing degree of candour and a good dose of sociological insight he concludes with a warning that, "The real challenge for endurance in the UK is a societal one, over the past 40 years young people have exercised less and have reduced levels of physical literacy. Retention is the challenge, an ever-reducing pool and depth of athletes in the key age groups reduced coaching depth are critical. This world is changing, athletics must change, clubs, coaches must change. The days of amateurs coaching for life are dying out. We will require more focused shorter coach education and processes. The facts are irrefutable: volunteers and coaches stay less time in sport. He is genuinely concerned with the, "legacy of austerity on sport where local authorities are cutting leisure facilities, hours and indeed anything not red circled or

compulsory will be cut, including athletics tracks".

As our interview approaches the finishing line, we once again go back in time to those world indoor championships 26 years ago for there is a race to be won! Tom McKean has led all the way but David Coleman reminds his BBC audience that, "He's really going to have to kick off this bend". Instantaneously McKean responds to Coleman's obvious delight... "AND HE DOES JUST THAT!". The world title is in the bag and sportingly the Scot takes Nkzamyampi on a joint lap of honour, both men clasping hands with one arm aloft. As the two athletes swap vests in the manner of footballers after a Cup Final, Coleman continues to wax lyrical, noting that. "The Boyle stable (is) in very good form indeed. It's hard to win from the front like this but he's done it supremely well". If you go onto YouTube and type the name Tom McKean you will be treated to a highlight reel which confirms that said athlete was indeed a 'front runner' – someone committed from the very start – prepared to set their stall out from the gun. Dig a little deeper than the superficiality of social media and take a look at the article below – when you have read it reflect not only on an athlete prepared to 'run from the front' but on a coach who's been leading the pack not just for 4 indoor laps but for four decades!

[www.anentscottishrunning.com/tommy-boyle/](http://www.anentscottishrunning.com/tommy-boyle/)



# People management and good fun

**Matt Long and Chris Hollinshead get the splits on our BMC Coach of the Year, Geoff Wightman.**

It's Sunday 16th March 2003 and a bitterly cold, wet and windy half marathon in Bath. The announcer takes his place in the makeshift commentary box as the mini fun run which precedes the main event get underway. A nervous nine year old is having one of his very first fledgling athletic experiences outside of the

comfort of his school cross country fields. Tears fill the youngster's eyes as he slips and grazes his knee on one of the turns around the recreation grounds of Bath RFC. Spectators politely applaud him as he gets to his feet and soldiers on but his misery is compounded as his twin brother Sam goes past him and away into the distance. He trudges home at the back of the field to disappear down the finishing funnel which in all likelihood will take him away from the sport when he finds nightclubs, alcohol and

a partner. He's likely to be just another minor blip somewhere off the radar on Power of 10. He's at the opposite end of the sport to a European and Commonwealth middle distance medallist and a million miles away from your Diamond League Winner. He's certainly not the kind of athlete one would associate with our BMC Coach of the Year, Geoff Wightman. So let's leave the young lad to be and focus where we should be.....

We start by congratulating him (Geoff) on his award. We want to know how it feels to join a select list of distinguished coaches in winning the prestigious BMC Coach of the Year Award. With typical modesty he replies that, "I was very honoured and surprised to receive the BMC award. I have always been a big fan of the BMC. I think I made it through to my early 20s without ever achieving the qualifying times that were needed for BMC membership but still striving to get close to them, which would have pleased Frank Horwill".

Has the way in which our club has evolved over the last three decades or so impressed him? With obvious enthusiasm he replies that, "I think the BMC has had a major part in two or three successful eras of British distance running. Most international can trace their racing pedigree back to BMC



MARK SHEARMAN



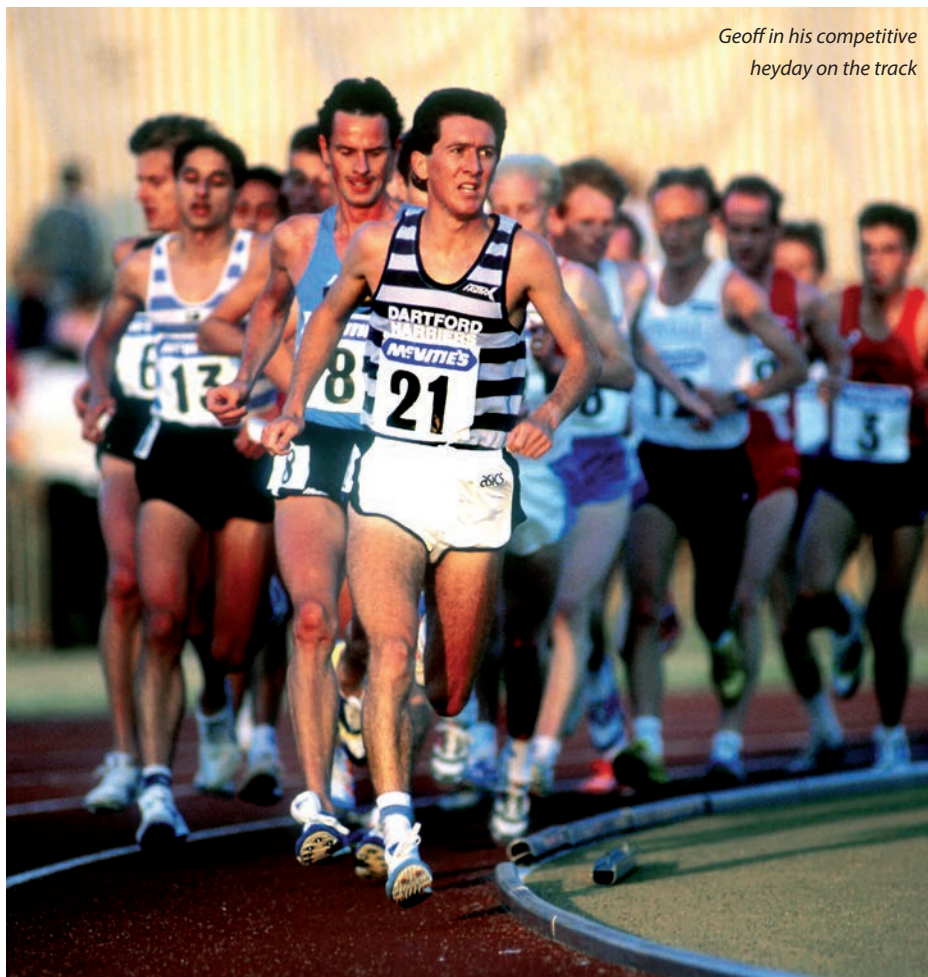
meets. Jake started out in the 'H' and 'F' races in 2012 but he ran personal bests almost every time out and that is a great motivator for all young athletes. To have 6,000 finishers chasing that for the BMC in 2018 is an epic achievement and it is no surprise that other countries and other event disciplines are trying to emulate the format".

A former Team GB marathon runner himself, who was guided by the widely respected Alan Storey whose philosophy has clearly influenced his own coaching practices, we are keen to know what motivated him to get into coaching. He responds by admiring that, "I always had coaching in mind as my retirement project but not as something that I could commit to in my 30s and 40s because of my work regime. I actually took all my coaching qualifications when I was 30 and while still competing as an athlete, during a spell of injury. I subsequently wrote the half marathon and marathon training schedules for Today's Runner/Running Fitness magazine for a couple of years in the 90s. Our daughter Martha is actually following one of those schedules for her Virgin Money London Marathon debut in April".

We press him on the fact that running for the Wightman's is so obviously a family affair.

"My wife Susan (nee Tooby- a former international athlete) coached Jake and his twin brother Sam up until they were almost 16 because she was a PE teacher at their school, Fettes College in Edinburgh. They did sport quite a lot each week but Jake started to make some progress at running, even though he hadn't really grown at that age. It was felt that he needed a bit more input and more regular training, so I took it on in 2010. For the next seven years he was my only athlete. We got a lot of help with him joining in with other people's groups, especially Eric Fisher, Sandy Cameron and John Lees at Edinburgh AC and George Gandy at Loughborough. I learned a lot from them and also the other coaches that I encountered in my work at Scottish Athletics and UK Athletics, including sprints, jumps and throws coaches". Has he enjoyed it as much as running itself? Enthusiastically he continues that, "Athletics has been a big and enjoyable part of my life and if you can no longer compete at a respectable level then I would say that coaching those that still can and helping them fulfil their potential and also calling them home as an announcer are the two next best things that you can do. Both are enjoyable and get the adrenaline going on race day".

So does he regard being a former international athlete himself as a help or a hindrance in coaching terms and why?



Geoff in his competitive heyday on the track

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Thoughtfully he answers, "I think it has to be a help. I know roughly how the training workload will feel and what they are going through to complete it. My athletes are all much better than I was but, in so far as I have any empathy at all as a coach, it comes from having been through the same or a similar regime to the one that I am prescribing".

We dig a little deeper and ask what are the core principles of coaching which guide his session planning. With candour he admits that an injury to son Jake may have resulted because of a deviation from one of his core beliefs. With candour he admits that, "I have always believed in a 'single peak' year, But then the Championships were awarded to London 2017, Birmingham 2018, Gold Coast 2018, Berlin 2018 and Glasgow 2019. If you were an athlete who was only 16 at the time of the London Olympics and missed out, then you would want to do as many of those others as you could. And we tried. It meant that Jake targeted an indoor season for the first time since schooldays in both 2018 and 2019 and probably trained slightly too hard at the wrong time of year". So what has he learned from this process of guided discovery? "It will be different in future", he stresses, "but I think the publication of the IAAF World Rankings in late February this year will mean that most of my athletes will

need to do at least a couple of indoor races in order to support a world ranking position. You may not be able to go from August to June without putting some scores on the board indoors, especially if you want to run both 800m and 1500m but it won't ever be quite like it was in 2018 and 2019, with two home indoor championships".

So Geoff has been brutally honest about having learned through trial and error but as an educated man with an encyclopaedic knowledge of our sport, we are desperate to know which of the all-time great coaches, coach educators or physiologists have most influenced his thinking over the years. He reflects that, "I have read widely around Peter Coe, Frank Horwill, Arthur Lydiard and Percy Cerutti". He adopts an eclectic approach, maintaining that, "I believe in an amalgamation of their beliefs around multiple-paced training across the whole week and sometimes I even go a bit further and try and get 4-5 different paces in one session or even into one interval. I also fully support Lydiard's commitment to a big year-round endurance component to build middle distance pace and strength". At this point he recalls with fondness- "I never met Arthur Lydiard or Percy Cerutti but I did share an Inter-City train from Bristol to London with Frank Horwill once, after a midweek BMC. He showed me the



cosh which he kept in his holdall at all times – ‘I’m a market inspector. You can’t be too careful!’ he whispered. So what did he make of the man – revered by some but disliked by others? He continues, “Frank was a very original thinker but I think he was like an athletics version of Geoffrey Boycott the broadcaster, where the pearls of wisdom were sometimes wrapped up in assertiveness and point-scoring and you had to pick out the nuggets. In the case of Peter Coe, Those men, and a few others, like Harry Wilson and Jack Daniels have helped shape the way coaching evolved through the second half of the 20th century”. So is the message of these great men still relevant today? Very much so is the flavour of his answer. “To succeed in 2020 requires a bit more creativity but sticking quite closely to their methods”.

Whilst TW Track has its own logo and Instagram account with 800 followers and is supported by New Balance, coaching is never a bed of roses – so what does he find hardest about coaching. Categorically he immediately comes back, “Injuries. I was the most-injured athlete in my 20s. I had around 8-10 stress fractures of the shins and am paranoid about athletes getting injured or ill and failing to achieve their potential as a result. Injuries and bugs are an affront to me. About one third of what I set on a weekly basis is designed to minimise that possibility and it was going OK until this winter when I appear to have made a complete ‘Horlicks’ of it!. Sometimes you only discover where the red line was when you have crossed over it”.

At this point we turn to the fact that he has to commentate on his own son’s races.

At the risk of embarrassing him, we mention that he does so as a model pro. He needs no reminder that this must be hard when he is emotionally involved as an athlete’s father and coach. With a shrug he says, “I haven’t yet got too emotional about any of Jake’s races. I got a few pats on the back from colleagues that knew the connection in the commentary box in Gold Coast when he got a medal. I have been announcing his races since his school sports days so it is really just a few more people around now. I also love to do the 800m and 1500m at any meeting and if I ever showed bias, I might not be allowed to do those distances again. You are trying to make it an occasion for all of the runners and also the ‘identification of fast finishers can be a challenge in middle distances so I am concentrating hard on who gets the podium positions”.

As we look to wrap up an informative conversation, a final word of advice for our BMC coaches reading this article who may not be working with elite athletes as he does is sought? Do the same principles apply? He acknowledges that, “There is a big gap between what many British athletes are doing at ages 17-23 versus what those who are full-time are putting into their sport. Many university undergraduates believe they are 100% committed whereas, if they could only see the comparison and the big step that is needed to become professionals, they would realise that they are actually only operating at about 75-80%. It’s lifestyle – diet, sleep, hydration, rest, stretching, prehab, warm-up, S & C, yoga, cycling, sprinting”. Was it like this back in his hay day? He laughs. “A 1970s approach with beer and skittles would no longer cut it in professional athletics. It doesn’t mean that you have to be intense or dull or one-dimensional but you do need to be getting much closer to fulfilling 100% of your capabilities by the time you graduate otherwise your running options start narrowing down. In all other respects coaching is the same whether with club or recreational – 60% art and 40% science and mostly people management and good fun”.

In helping us draw parallels between the elite and the recreational ends of the sport our BMC Coach of the Year has brought us full circle to that 9 year old Bath mini fun runner who tripped in the went on that rainy day back in 2003- you remember the one we told you about at the start of this article. Whatever became of him? Fast forward to 9th September 2018. New York City’s Fifth Avenue is about as far removed from a winter’s day in Somerset as you can get- the winner of the annual mile race is



Jake Wightman in Berlin where he took 1500m Bronze

MARK SHEARMAN



being interviewed. He's a famous face in the athletics world having won Diamond League races both in Oslo and Birmingham and has just capped off his season with a win following his European and Commonwealth bronze medals earlier in 2018. A crowd is gathered around him- some clamouring for autographs as he responds to the million dollar question being asked by the post-race interviewer as to the secret of his success. He looks directly into the camera and says, "I was a bit more patient". Indeed he was. 15 years and 6 months to be precise- since that humbling experience in Bath. Never forget that our BMC Coach of the Year Geoff Wightman fathered the boy and coached the athlete who went on to become Jake Wightman the man.

*Matt Long and Chris Hollinshead work together as England Athletics Coach education Tutors. The latter runs Castle Coaching Fitness. See [www.castlecoachingfitness.co.uk](http://www.castlecoachingfitness.co.uk)*



*Jake celebrates commonwealth bronze in the CG2018*

*Top of page: Geoff interviews a prostrate Chris O'Hare following his UK Champs 3k win in February*



## PB CLASSICS, GOLD STANDARD, ACADEMY AND REGIONAL FIXTURES 2019

All entries should be made on our website [www.britishmilersclub.com](http://www.britishmilersclub.com)

### BMC ACADEMY YOUNG ATHLETES PB CLASSICS (Age Groups U13, U15, U17, U20)

4TH MAY	Millfield	800/1500 M&W 3000 Mixed	5.45pm	Steve Mosley	029 2241 1440
1ST JUNE	Milton Keynes	800/1500/3000/1500sc/2000sc	4.00pm	Jim Bennett	jim_bennett@btinternet.com
2ND AUGUST	Birmingham	Peter Coe & Frank Horwill Miles		David Lowes	07930 318651

**Fastest of U15 & U17 PB Classics to be invited to Frank Horwill & Peter Coe Miles at Birmingham 2nd August**  
**RACES FOR YOUNG ATHLETES ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN REGIONAL RACES**

### OTHER BMC RACES

DATE	VENUE	START	EVENT NAME/TYPE	BMC EVENTS	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS
<b>APRIL</b>						
FRI	19TH	Crownpoint Stadium	6.30pm	Regional (Scotland)	10000	Norrie Hay norrie.hay@glasgowlife.org.uk
SUN	21ST	Birchfield (Alexander Stadium)	12.15pm	Regional (Midland)	800/1500	Paul Hayes hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
MON	29TH	Leeds Beckett University Track	7.00pm	Regional (N)	800/3000	Andrew Henderson A.E.Henderson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
TUE	30TH	Exeter	8.00pm	Regional (SW)	800/1500	John Knowles johnknowles@britishmilersclub.com
<b>MAY</b>						
WED	1ST	Linford Christie Stadium	8.00pm	Regional (S)	800/1500	Pat Fitzgerald patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com
WED	8TH	Birmingham University	7.00pm	Gold Standard	800/1500	Paul Hayes hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
TUE	14TH	Stretford	8.00pm	Gold Standard	800 at 8.00pm 1500 at 8.40pm	Steve Green stevegreen2011@live.co.uk
WED	15TH	Watford	7.30pm	Gold Standard	800/1500	Rupert Waters rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk
WED	15TH	Lee Valley	5.00pm	Gold Standard	5000M	Tim Brennan timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com
MON	20TH	Chester-le-Street (Riverside)	7.20pm	Regional (NE)	800	David Lowes 07930 318651
TUE	21ST	Tipton	7.45pm	Regional (Midland)	800/1500/3000	Paul Hayes hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
WED	22ND	Eltham	7.30pm	Regional (South)	800/1500/5000	David Reader davidreader@britishmilersclub.com
MON	27TH	Grimsby	TBA	Regional (N)	1500	Mick Jagger runjagger@googlemail.com
TUE	28TH	Exeter	8.00pm	Regional (SW)	800/1500	John Knowles johnknowles@britishmilersclub.com
WED	29TH	Brighton	7.00pm	Regional (S)	800, 1500 & 3000	Paul Collicutt paul@paulcollicutt.com
WED	29TH	Loughborough	7.30pm	Gold Standard	800/1500	George Gandy g.gandy@live.com
FRI	31ST	Scotstoun Stadium	6.30pm	Regional (Scotland)	800/3000	Norrie Hay norrie.hay@glasgowlife.org.uk
<b>JUNE</b>						
MON	3RD	Chester-le-Street (Riverside)	7.20pm	Regional (NE)	1500	David Lowes 07930 318651
TUE	4TH	Stretford	8.00pm	Gold Standard	800 at 8.00pm 1500 at 8.40pm	Steve Green stevegreen2011@live.co.uk
WED	5TH	Linford Christie Stadium	8.00pm	Regional (S)	800/1500	Pat Fitzgerald patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com
WED	5TH	Birmingham University	7.00pm	Gold Standard	800/3000 S/C	Paul Hayes hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
THU	6TH	Leeds Beckett University Track	7.00pm	Regional (N)	1500	Andrew Henderson A.E.Henderson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
WED	12TH	Watford	7.30pm	Gold Standard	800/1500 & 5000 (Men Only)	Rupert Waters rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk
MON	17TH	Chester-le-Street (Riverside)	7.20pm	Regional (NE)	800	David Lowes 07930 318651
TUE	18TH	Tipton	7.45pm	Regional (Midland)	800/1500/5000	Paul Hayes hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
TUE	18TH	Stretford	8.00pm	Gold Standard	800 at 8.00pm 1500 at 8.40pm	Steve Green stevegreen2011@live.co.uk
WED	19TH	Eltham	7.30pm	Regional (South)	800/1500/5000	David Reader davidreader@britishmilersclub.com
TUE	25TH	Exeter	8.00pm	Regional (SW)	800/1500	John Knowles johnknowles@britishmilersclub.com



JULY							
MON	1ST	Leeds Beckett University Track	7.00pm	Regional (N)	800/Mile	Andrew Henderson	A.E.Henderson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
WED	3RD	Linford Christie Stadium	8.00pm	Regional (S)	800/1500	Pat Fitzgerald	patfitzgerald@britishmilersclub.com
WED	3RD	Birmingham University	7.00pm	Gold Standard	1500/3000 S/C	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
WED	10TH	Watford	7.30pm	Gold Standard	800, 1500	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk
SAT	13TH	Oxford (Iffley Road)	TBA	Regional	800/Mile	Alexander Gruen	alexander.gruen@balliol.ox.ac.uk
TUE	16TH	Tipton	7.45pm	Regional (Midland)	800/Mile/3000	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
WED	17TH	Eltham	7.30pm	Regional (South)	800/1500/5000	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com
MON	22ND	Chester-le-Street (Riverside)	7.20pm	Regional (NE)	1500	David Lowes	07930 318651
TUE	23RD	Stretford	8.00pm	Gold Standard	800 at 8.00pm 1500 at 8.40pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk
FRI	26TH	Scotstoun Stadium	6.30pm	Regional (Scotland)	1500/5000	Norrie Hay	norrie.hay@glasgowlife.org.uk
TUE	30TH	Exeter	8.00pm	Regional (SW)	800/1500	John Knowles	johnknowles@britishmilersclub.com
AUGUST							
THU	1ST	Leeds Beckett University Track	7.00pm	Regional (N)	1500	Andrew Henderson	A.E.Henderson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
WED	14TH	Eltham	7.30pm	Regional (South)	800/5000	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com
TUE	20TH	Stretford	8.00pm	Gold Standard	800 at 8.00pm 1500 at 8.40pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk
WED	21ST	Watford	7.30pm	Gold Standard	800/1500	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk
TUE	24TH	Tipton	2.00pm	Regional (Midland)	800/1500/5000	Paul Hayes	hayespaul43@yahoo.co.uk
TUE	27TH	Exeter	8.00pm	Regional (SW)	800/1500	John Knowles	johnknowles@britishmilersclub.com

Additional races may be arranged at other venues. Check website for more details.

Entries - priority will be given to paid up members who have achieved the meeting standard.

Please enter at least 5 days before meeting. No entries on the day. (text entries will not be accepted).

## THE BEST OF BRITISH FROM THE BMC

[www.britishmilersclub.com](http://www.britishmilersclub.com)



India Pentland wins the  
Watford 1500m from  
Emily Ruane

DAVID LOWES



# To Thie or not to Thie

**Steve Green takes time out to talk training with the Welsh Coaching Maestro who is still burning up the boards on the masters scene**

**SG: You were an athlete who got into Coaching whilst you were still competing at a high level, before you ran for Wales in the 2010 commonwealth games, not many athletes would do that what was your motivation.**

**JT:** I was always questioning and trying to develop as an athlete. Around 2008 I spent 18 months working with the 1988 Olympic steeplechase bronze medallist and British Record Holder (8:07.96) Mark Rowland where I learnt so much about what it takes to make it as an International athlete in terms of training, diet and lifestyle. I started off coaching Under 10's where you have to learn people skills pretty quickly and how to manage a group. In 2010 Tom Marshall

came to me, he openly stated he had no real plan or aims so straight away I knew I could make some improvements. Dave Bishop joined me soon after and the group just snowballed quickly from that point.

**SG: Can you give me an insight into your Training set-up at Cardiff, believe it's one of the largest groups in the UK?**

**JT:** We use lane 5 and try and do 3 quality sessions a week. With such a large group this keeps the other track users happy, we also have an emphasis on timed runs rather than distance Tuesday is more of a longer endurance session on the track. Thursday we may add a shorter session for the University squad and then Saturday or Friday we do longer hill type work in the winter which become progressively shorter in the summer. It's pretty much an 'open door' policy and anyone can join our sessions. Charlotte Arter, (UK Cross Country Champ) is an athlete I used to coach who has joined us this year for training sessions.

**SG: Is it possible to highlight what performances from your athletes have given you the most satisfaction as a coach?**

**JT:** With such a large group there are always highs and there can be lows in coaching. Tom Marshall running 3.37 in 2017 and qualifying for the commonwealth games last year alongside Dave Bishop who ran for Wales in Glasgow 2014 have been really special for me. Jake's (Heyward) progression has been great to see for me as a coach. Our group is so varied that often it's the less well-known athletes that give the greatest satisfaction as a coach. Stephen Morris (T20) is one of our leading Paralympians, 5th in the last World Champs and this year won the Gwent XC league outright, which is an amazing achievement.

Iuean Thomas is another athlete who has had huge setbacks and has now reached a point where he has run 8.30 for the 3k steeplechase, and the only major games missing from his resume is the Olympics. There's a lot to be proud of but like any coaching squad there are a lot of setbacks and challenges before we got to this stage.

**SG: Jake Heyward, 4th in the World Juniors (3:36.90 PB) really broke through last year – what are the qualities that have made him such a standout young athlete?**

**JT:** Jake came to me in 2017 after a planned



*Thie in action in the Euro Indoors in 2007*

MARK SHEARMAN



transition from his coach Paul Darney. At that point he'd only just scratched the surface of his potential with his longest run being 6k. That year he improved to win the European Junior 1500m. One of the things that has impressed me about Jake is that he is a racer first and foremost, so as long that he's in good shape he will perform well.

He indicated what kind of winter condition he was in winning the trials and finishing 4th in the Euro Cross, however he had a bit of an interrupted indoor season which held him back from running quick. Jake suffers from serious allergies, so the early part of the summer is usually challenging and then he comes good in the second half of the season

Although Jake ran 3.36 last year, went 7.55 for 3k and finished 4th in the World Juniors, he hasn't necessarily had the plaudits and the pressure that is put on some of our young athletes. This has been an advantage in some ways and is possibly due to the fact we have several British Guys running sub 3.35 and winning medals at European and commonwealth level such as Jake Wightman and Chris O'Hare with the likes of Josh Kerr and Neil Gourley moving up to that kind of level.

Jakob (Ingebrigtsen) has dramatically changed our expectations of both what is possible for a young athlete in terms of performance and the level of training possible.

**SG: The BMC recently celebrated it's 60th Birthday. What has the club meant to you and your athletes, and how do you see the future of the club?**

**JT:** The BMC has been great for British athletes including myself, the races are organised and if you're prepared to commit the times will come. There are several similar type races on the scene now, but imitation is the best form of flattery. If athletes want to race each other, and coaches work with the BMC the club has a great future.

The only challenge is if you're looking to go to the next level and say want to have a 1500m in 3.37 for men or 4.10 for women on a regular basis everything must be right, so perhaps pacers need to be fresh i.e. not raced before. I remember pacing a BMC race at Solihul a few years back, where I was asked to go through 800m in 1.53. If I'd raced before there was no way I could have done that kind of pace.

**SG: One of the things you've encouraged is your athletes taking up US Scholarships such as Dave Bishop and Tom Marshall – what is the thinking behind this?**

**JT:** It's something that I encourage all athletes to do if they get a chance. There is a growing trend to go out and do master's degrees out in the States and a few of my athletes have gone out to New Mexico

in Albuquerque, where I'm setting up an altitude camp in April. It's an opportunity to continue to train at a high level and study so for me it's a no brainer. I'm a big fan of the US set-up and although I didn't attend University, although I ran for New York Athletic Club in the early noughties.

**SG: In addition to coaching and being Director of Cardiff Met Athletics, you're Committed on several fronts – and still going well as an Athlete, what motivates you after being a 3:38 1500m man and 4th in the World Indoors in your heyday?**

**JT:** I'm so immersed in coaching for myself running is a welcome escape, as I'm also Director of Athletics at Cardiff Met. It's good for my kids to see me run and I can also help some of my athletes with sessions. I'm competing in Torun, Poland in the World Master's next week, just to see how I fare as a M40 I last did it as an M35 (James went on to win the title in 4:07.33). The running is just something that I'll always want to do – I also do some commentary work for the BBC, including the London Marathon, which again is great as I get paid for talking about our sport.



Jake Heyward - 4th in the Euro Cross 2018 with Rory Leonard

MARK SHEARMAN

Thie in Delhi CG 2010 action



MARK SHEARMAN



# Periodization &/Or Planning: *Are Both Useful Concepts Today?*

By Charles McConnell.

In training theory periodization and planning frequently appear in training articles and presentations- sometimes interchangeably- often they are used as simply alternatives. For Vern Gambetta in his presentation at the Scottish Athletics Coaching Weekend in 2016 the area has three parts:

- Periodization is the big picture over the next four years to the Olympic Games,
- Planning is about this year – with specific goals and objectives,
- Programming is about what you are going to do today.

In his presentation, Gambetta suggested that ‘athletics competition occurs in an information rich, dynamic environment that requires complex, coordination patterns to produce optimum performance’. Periodization is a concept, not a model so the important thing to bear in mind is the process. His presentation was about planned performance training, which he views as:

- the sequence and timing of the application of the training stimulus,
- the interaction and interdependence of the training components,
- timing, not time – when you do what you do,
- being ready on the day- for athletes peaking on the day it matters.

Siff (2003) sees training as an exercise in stress management, which was derived from Hans Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome, and although this was not designed for sport, Selye’s approach was picked up by coaching greats such as Forbes Carlisle and James Counsilman in swimming and Fred Wilt in his classic 1964 work ‘Run Run Run’.

Training theory has a long history in the former Soviet Union. The first work on periodization was by Kotov (1917) who split the year into general, preparatory and specific stages. Another important early contribution was by Ozolin (1948) who noted that the competitive calendar and climatic concerns were also important factors. These, plus other authors such as Gorinewsky (1922), Birsin (1925) and Vsorov (1938) all listed by Ariel (1996) show the long history of training theory of the Soviet Union. Lev Matveyev was a professor at Moscow University and following the Soviet Union’s first appearance in the Olympic



Games in Helsinki in 1952, he summarised what the professional coaches had done; i.e. those coaches who had worked with their athletes. He wrote a theoretical work outlining what can be seen as the ‘classic six phase model of periodization’. It is important to note that no coach was doing what he proposed, his book was simply a theoretical work summarising what others had done. He divided the year into six phases -each with theoretical loadings,

recoveries and so on. He proposed a linear approach- start with low intensity and high volume and move to high intensity and low volume at the seasonal peak performance. So train this, then this, then this and you get the result you are expecting. Its introduction to the west came after his work was published in English. Coaches were looking for the reasons that performances from East Europe were so superior to those in Britain and West Europe. The magic



factor was obviously their advanced training theory and key to it was 'Periodization'. No one was aware of the widespread doping that was rampant in East Europe: it was the periodization not done it.

One of the major problems with this theoretical exercise was the context in which it originated. In the early 1950s, at the peak of the 'Cold War', sport was a battle ground between competing political ideologies. This was still the case until the fall of the Berlin Wall. The GDR training bible edited by G Schmolsky (1978), still stated that 'track and field athletics are an instrument of socialist education' p13. Soviet athletes were used as pawns and to get brownie points it was imperative to do well in international competitions especially against non Iron Block countries -and above all against the USA. That only rarely happened - only every 4 years at the Europeans and especially the Olympic Games. There were no European or World indoors, no World Championships every 4 and from 1993 then every 2 years, no Diamond League circuit. Soviet athletes competed rarely and could peak for one annual meeting and it has been acknowledged above, that it was unpinned by a state supported doping programme. One of the pernicious effects of this was that training levels and therefore improvement rates were heavily affected by doping. Performance levels were inflated over what is possible over doping- yet the drug free athlete was trying to reach qualifying standards that may prove unattainable and lead the athlete into injury through overtraining and ultimately feelings of failure, disappointment, retirement and even rejection of sport -as happened following the Montreal Games in 1976. There have been figures produced which show the gains made by athletes following periodized programmes, especially for events such as High Jump where a two peaks a year scheme, which allows for much more specific training, have achieved high gains. However doubts remain: -can any results be trusted when we know there was wide spread doping behind the Iron Curtain. Just how much of these gains were due to drugs and are there similar results in other drug free (hopefully) programmes?

Matveyev's book was poorly translated and, believe me, as I had to read it, it is no page turner! It is full of the jargon beloved by sport scientists. The year was split into Phases, then further into Macrocycles, Mesocycles and Microcycles. I understand these to correspond to year, month and week but in every article and book I have read, the author has to explain what they mean and how they are defined due to

variations in understanding the basic terms. Beyond this three way split, the basic unit of the Microcycle can be of various forms: ordinary, restorative, activation, introductory, standard, competitive, block and shock. I apologise if I have left any out. All these are then defined and theoretical loading percentages with frequency and time for recovery after sessions specified.

Similarly the Mesocycle can be typified as: (one for each week of the month long Mesocycle)

- Ordinary / ordinary shock restorative
  - Ordinary introductory /competitive restorative
  - Shock ordinary /shock restorative
  - Restorative ordinary / ordinary restorative
- Does anyone think in these terms? If they are foreign to your thinking, then it is best to ignore them and think along lines you are comfortable with. What is wrong with easy/hard, day/week/month and preparation/competition and peaking? In all the courses and training weekends I have attended (there have been a lot) it is only the theoretical Matveyev six phase plan which has been discussed. That there were other types of periodization was never suggested. For all those who have wondered, here is a list of others- and there will probably be many more: Linear, Non Linear, Wave, Block, Undulating, Conjugate, Asymmetric Pyramid Loading, Step Loading, and my favourite NONE! We may be too hard as Matveyev did suggest that his basic model should not be used so rigidly and ubiquitously. However, does anyone know of any publication in a peer reviewed journal that has shown the advantages of one scheme over any other scheme over a non periodized programme? For the endurance athlete and coach,

the question has to be, 'how relevant is periodization to endurance?'

Remember that in the Soviet Union periodization was focused on one peak a year -just how relevant is this to club athletes in the UK or other athletes with multiple peaks a year in xc, road and track and for others trying to earn a living by racing. Athletes may not be competing at a peak level for twelve months every year, but they do compete a lot and their peak competitive season is frequently more than two months at a time. The debate is still ongoing over the pros and cons of the linear approach of Lydiard or a more complex approach to training and racing as suggested by Peter Coe (2004) and Al Salazar (2012). Verkhoshansky (1999) noted that the basis for Kenyan success was they did not integrate periodization into their training. In that same article Verkhoshansky noted that Frank Horwill had suggested in article published in 1992, that one reason for the decline of European distance running was the impact of periodization in training theory and especially from the 1980s this decline was seen in British runners. I think you can see where he stood as his article was titled 'periodization- plausible or piffle?' I would have to agree as I view periodization (and all its jargon) as a complete load of rubbish for endurance.

However, if we chuck periodization out of the pram, what are we left with? Actually, we are left with the crucial skill for all coaches: that of planning. In his work 'Sports Coaching Concepts' (2002) Lyle wrote p125, 'the emphasis given to the planning phase in the proposed model of the coaching process is testimony to its importance...As one of the defining characteristics of the



Jonny Hay wins the Eltham GP  
3000m in July in 8:06

DAVID LOWES



coaching process, it is an essential element of performance coaching’.

Remove all that unnecessary jargon designed and beloved by sport scientists to show how indispensable they may appear to the layman by confusing and complicating everything and just think KISS- keep it simple stupid (or the meerkat approach). What the coach needs to do is, look what the athlete can do now and what he needs to be able to achieve in nine months and figure out what progress needs to be achieved by then. Cote et al (1995) have suggested that expert coaches have a mental model where they can juggle an athlete’s potential in their progress (however straightforward it may be) toward their potential. What type of sessions, on which surfaces and what races need to be done as stepping stones to that goal. Some coaches will be able to keep all this information in their head and continually adjust it during and after each session. Other coaches may need to write things down as the athlete moves or stalls on the way to their season’s goal.

Start at the end and work backwards- simple basic stuff. Work out a season plan -in what ever detail you are comfortable with – based on your previous interaction

with your athletes. On one course, a lecturer told of a Scottish sprint coach who had all his training sessions written down in detail at the start of each new training year and religiously followed them- even in adverse weather conditions. This was obviously before indoor training facilities! However, the further away, the less detailed are likely to be your plans. If you want to go to that championship, athlete X has to do this performance by this date. To do so, X has to be in this shape, and needs to be comfortable doing this by this date and this two months beforehand. Those are far off, so our concern as coaches is on today’s session. This will influence tomorrow’s and then Saturday’s. These will influence what is the outline plan for next week and so on. The coach’s skill in planning is building on what the athlete has done in the past, any strengths and weaknesses addressed and monitoring their athletes to avoid unnecessary periods of non training. Crucial to that is coping with unpredictability. Coaches have to be experts in contingency planning. You want to do 400s on the track in December, but the track is covered in snow and the stadium is closed- thinking on your feet what alternatives do you choose from? Planning is THE coaching skill- not

only how much of that type of running at that speed and with that recovery, but also of reading an athlete and seeing if they are running well or really struggling and having to stop the session. Coaching is the interaction between coach and athlete and without their feedback from sessions and everything else that is going on in their lives, then any plans may be in vain. However starting with a plan is the place to start. Periodization can be relegated to something which has been evaluated and found to have no relevance for endurance coaches. It’s planning instead all the time, every time. It’s simple.

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DAVID LOWES

Trafford GP 1500m 2018 –  
Kate Avery, Mariah Kelly,  
Dani Chattenton, and Jess  
Furlan battle for the line





## By Kevin Fahey

THE BMC has tweaked the 2019 Grand Prix season following extensive discussion with coaches as they plan towards the World Championships in Doha.

The finale of the summer season is later than normal with Doha hosting the Worlds from September 28th – October 6th and that is clearly having an impact on how coaches and runners are planning their seasons.

"We have been out talking to coaches and asking what events do they want us to put on and when," said BMC chairman Tim Brennan.

"The message we got back is that coaches wanted us to start the season a bit later than normal as the deadline for qualification for the World Championships in Doha is later than usual.

"So rather than going for fast times at the very start of the season in May many athletes will be looking to run fast in August so the Trafford meeting could become very important.

"But at the same time we will try to keep the under 20 and under 23 athletes happy as they need to run fast early season so there could be a different narrative to this season."

The European Championships for U23s and U20s both take place in Sweden from July 11-14th and July 18th-21st respectively so there will be plenty of runners seeking qualifying marks for those two events, not to mention major domestic fixtures.

Brennan also revealed that the club has finalized a funding deal with UK Athletics to provide extra support for the meeting at Watford on Saturday June 29th.

"The approach came from the endurance people at UKA and will help us build upon the fact that Watford always attracts very good athletes and always features some stand-out performances every year.

"With UKA's support we hope we can

deliver more of the same this summer and make the meeting ever better than ever."

Brennan also confirmed that the BMC will continue to reward top domestic performances with the Best of British incentive scheme which will offer the same prize structure as in previous years.

"We are continuing to invest in that despite not having a headline sponsor to support it," said Brennan.

"We feel it is important to keep it going as it supports British runners and supports aggressive racing."

The BMC is also spreading its wings on the representative front, first with a new link-up with Birmingham University which will see the BMC field relay teams at their August 3rd meeting.

"We have also been asked to nominate runners to represent the BMC at meetings in Belfast and Dublin and we will be selecting people on the basis of performance and commitment shown to the spirit of BMC both at Grand Prix events and the Gold Standard meetings," added Brennan.

Jenny Nesbitt wins the Eltham 3k in 9:11



Kristian Jones 13:45 PB in the Loughborough GP





# The Myth of Triple Extension

**By Tim Egerton**

The qualities of a sprinter are all too apparent in the modern world of middle distance running. Sub 50-second opening laps are commonplace in Diamond League 800m races. World class closing speed in the 1500m can be at a similar level, with Matt Centrowitz covering the final 400m of the Rio Olympic 1500m final in 50.5 seconds. With that in mind, when it comes to Strength and Conditioning training for middle distance runners, it would be apposite to train some of the qualities required for high level sprinting.

Of course, this is not a new notion. Older members of the BMC will be familiar with Frank Horwill instilling the virtues of sprint training all year round. However, there are certain differences between the sprint events and middle distance events that must be taken into account. The most important of these is an absence of an acceleration phase in the middle and long distances.

In stark contrast, the acceleration phase makes up a significant proportion of the 100m and 200m sprint events. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a great deal of scrutiny has been given to the acceleration

phase by sprint coaches and researchers. Above anything else, this analysis of the acceleration phase of sprinting has revealed the need to train strength and power in the triple extension movement pattern.

Triple extension refers to the complete, coordinated and forceful extension of the hip, knee and ankle joints in activities such as sprinting and jumping. When a sprinter drives out of the blocks and in the early phases of acceleration we can easily observe this triple extension. As a result, developing forceful triple extension by using power exercises such as the Olympic lifts and jump squats has come to be regarded as the holy grail of training for athletic performance.

However, the acceleration phase of sprinting and the maximum speed phase of sprinting are mechanically very different. Importantly, we do not observe triple extension in high-level sprinters during the maximum speed phase of sprinting. This is largely down to the importance of short ground contact times with respect

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*Shelayna Oskan Clarke heads for glorious 800m gold in Glasgow 2019*



to achieving high maximal sprint speeds. Middle distance runners do tend to have slightly longer ground contact times than sprinters, which does mean they tend to get closer to achieving full triple extension during ground contact, even when sprinting all out. However, even then, the research indicates that muscle activity in the leg extensor muscles shuts down during the period of ground contact where the lower limb comes close to achieving full triple extension. The Gastrocnemius is active at initial foot contact and up until mid-support, but shuts down soon after plantar flexion begins. With the quadriceps, again, once mid support is reached, muscle activity goes silent.

Muscular power at the hip joint still seems to be an important factor in achieving high maximal running velocities. As such, traditional power training methods such as the Olympic Lifts and their derivatives do certainly have their place in the Strength and Conditioning programme of the aspiring world-class middle distance runner. However, we need to think about developing other qualities around the knee and ankle joints. Given the importance of the early part of the stance phase, and the fact that the quadriceps and calf muscles are working eccentrically during this part of ground contact, we should be placing a significant focus on the development of eccentric strength.

An idea for developing eccentric strength about the knee joint is to perform the leg press exercise with just one leg on the way down and with two legs on the way back up. Since we are much stronger during the



Ahmed Farah takes the 800m at the Trafford GP

DAVID LOWES

eccentric (lowering) portion, this ensures that we are achieving sufficient eccentric overload. A better option, but to be reserved for athletes that are performing their strength and conditioning sessions under expert coaching supervision, is to perform the barbell squat exercise with a supramaximal load, but with assistance from a partner during the concentric (upward) phase. A supramaximal load is a weight slightly heavier than what an athlete is capable of lifting. This is the reason for having a partner provide assistance during the upward portion of the exercise.

However, because we are stronger during the eccentric portion of an exercise, the partner provides no such assistance during the lowering part of the exercise, and the athlete is left to control the weight down on his or her own. This provides the eccentric overload that we are looking for.

When it comes to strength and conditioning work about the ankle joint, eccentric strength development is again important. However, we should also be looking to mimic the way in which the ankle joint operates during high speed running. With this in mind, it is important to note that the range of motion about the ankle joint during ground contact significantly decreases with increasing running speeds. In other words, the ankle does not actually move much when running at high speeds, but instead displays a quality known as joint stiffness. A simple way in which we can develop this ankle joint stiffness is to incorporate skipping with a rope into strength and conditioning programmes. This basic activity develops the necessary qualities about the ankle joint required for high level running and 5 minutes of skipping as a warm up activity before intense strength training activities should prove more than sufficient.

**Tim Egerton is a former middle distance runner with PB's of 1.50 for 800m and 3.45 for 1500m. He has an MSc in Strength and Conditioning and runs a personal training and sports massage business in York.**  
[www.foxwoodpersonaltraining.co.uk](http://www.foxwoodpersonaltraining.co.uk)



Sub 1.47 man Zak Curran breaks the tape at the 2018 Watford GP

DAVID LOWES



# The House That Is Endurance:

## Why it Needs Ongoing Support at Every Level

Endurance		1500m	Speed	
Conditioning + Bio -mechanics (Drills etc)	3k/ 5k	SPECIFIC ^         v GENERAL	800	Conditioning + Bio -mechanics (Drills etc)
	10k		400	
	General Endurance		Sprinting	
Conditioning + Bio-mechanics (Drills etc)				

**By Charles McConnell.**  
 We can liken preparing for an event as like building a house. Above we have the house of the 1500m, which lies at the top and in the middle: it is built on the work supporting it on two sides and it is supported from below and at the sides by the essentials of strength and conditioning

work plus a correct biomechanical running action. To either side are the supporting events and training efforts. The 1500m can be viewed as being in the middle of a pattern of training paces- like the 5-pace schedule of Horwill or Norman Poole’s multi pace system.  
 To the left is ‘Endurance’- i.e. those

events run at a pace slower than the 1500m which will help develop ‘strength’ (endurance) necessary for your event. To the right is ‘Speed’- i.e. those events run at a pace faster than the 1500m which will help develop your ability to coast/ float necessary for your event.  
 This means having a ‘speed reserve’ of



Max Burgin’s stunning 1:47 two lap return at Sport City lit up the 2018 event



Euro Indoor  
finalist Mari Smith  
post – race



MARK SHEARMAN

something extra available which can be called on at the finish- assuming you have the necessary endurance to be in a position to use it! Thus, two athletes want to run 1.50 for 800m. Athlete A has a 400m PB of 48secs, whilst Athlete B has a 400m PB of 50secs. Athlete A has a speed reserve of 7secs for equal laps of 55secs and thus has a greater potential for faster times in the future but also has more potential to finish fast now -provided both athletes have equal endurance.

As you can see, training is more specific the closer it gets to 1500m pace. What you as athlete and coach have to work out is how much specific training is needed throughout the year and especially how much needs to be done prior to a peak for a big championship. When Peter Elliott was racing 1:44 for an 800m, he determined that the fastest he needed to be comfortable at was around 24 seconds for a 200m - the likely pace of the first 200m of the race as the rest of the race was run slower than that. A 1500m athlete may need to be comfortable running 50 - 52 seconds for the last 400m of a slow championship race. If you are in touch with speed all year round, then it does not take much to top it up.

Remember that SPEED IS 60 METRES MAXIMUM. You can only sustain maximum speed for c30 metres. If you want to improve your basic speed, then train over 50 - 60metres with a 20 - 30 metres build up and 30 metres flat out. Beyond 60 metres it is endurance. To continue improving you will find that running is a very technical

event. Some people say that cannot be true as it is something that people do naturally. Humans are made to run- they stand on two legs and that is how they survived ages ago by hunting food or escaping foes. Today we run and compete and to do so cover great distances in training. Running is highly technical as very minor problems are magnified over the thousands of landings that athletes take every year and for some it results in insurmountable injuries and breakdowns.

Why is the house surrounded by 'Conditioning + Biomechanical (Drills etc)?

Statistics on running can be overwhelming if not frightening. In certain sports, say swimming, cycling and rowing, people can routinely train 4 or more hours a day. However, in each of these, the body is supported and therefore the impact on your body is much reduced. Even if you run 140 miles a week at 9 miles an hour, you will only be spending 15.5 hours on running, and this is only for certain periods of the year (and hopefully on soft surfaces and not on the road). You may be training 4 hours a day on average, but the rest of that time is spent on stretching, recovery work and conditioning the body to withstand what it is being subjected to.

Each time you land when running, your body must absorb three times body weight. The forces when sprinting is more than double this- for triple jump it can be TWELVE times bodyweight! When you work out the total loads over a 10-mile training run, a training week of 50k or 30 miles or a

training year of 3000 miles the figures are astronomical! 50k involves running at c185 to 210 contacts/min (each stride covers say 1.25 metres), which equals c740 to 840 steps per kilometre - or 400 for each leg (@ 4 mins per k).

This is somewhere between 35,000 and 45,000 contacts per week in total, but again c 20,000 for each leg! For an athlete who weighs 50kg and therefore produces 150kg/ contact, -in round figures it means- 150kg x 400 contacts x 50k which equals 3 MILLION kg / week of loading per leg. For an athlete of 66.66 kg running 200 kilometres (125 miles) a week the figures are 200 x 400 x 200, which equals 16 MILLION kg/ week per leg. The loading is both eccentric and concentric. Therefore, conditioning is so vital to endurance runners. If your body is not strong enough to cope with this loading, it will always be breaking down and you will never reach your potential.

Thinking of the athlete as a series of links in a chain, a body is only as good as its weakest link. There is nothing wrong with all athletes- young and old, male and female being strong and well-conditioned. The best athletes are often those who simply do not have many unplanned breaks and thus their consistent training beats those who can have exceptional spells of training but are always having time off due to injury. Well-conditioned athletes will be better able to defend their running space when athletes are jostling for the best spot in a crowded field, rather than be squeezed out by being leaned on a stronger competitor.



If you are lucky, you may not need to work on getting stronger -perhaps you are a Steve Ovett or Steve Cram, but if you were that 8 stone runner, that Seb Coe was when he went to Loughborough you needed some work. In undertaking circuits and strength training, Coe moved downwards from the 3k at the English Schools to make his initial mark internationally over 800m. Circuit training revolves around the four areas of legs, arms, core and cardio. Simply choose two exercises from each of the groups and work round each in turn.

Thus, single leg squats, triceps press, front plank, 100 up running, Bulgarian split squats, press ups, sit ups and squat thrusts are performed for 2 or 3 sets of 20 seconds for each exercise with equal recovery as a starting point. The question of how long to work and what recovery is up to you. Two or three sets of 50 seconds with 10 recovery and it is a very difficult strength endurance session - your form may go, and you may have to take mini breaks to work for 50 seconds. Three sets of 30 seconds with 30 rest is difficult but achievable and is a good test of power.

Once athletes are used to the demands of 3 sets, then you can alternate weeks of circuits with stage training. Stage training is a progression from circuits- initially it can be much harder- where you repeat the exercise three times and then move onto the next exercise. Thus, it is 3 x front plank followed by 3 x 100 up running then 3 x B S Squats etc. If you are weak in any area, especially arms, then this will be found out during early stages of stage training.

However, as it is simply an exercise in overload, you will soon adapt but it will never be an easy session as you are always pushing yourself. The use of free weights then can follow if wanted and necessary and you have the time. An area of 2 metres by 1.5 metres is enough to do nearly all exercises. Add a chair and calf raises, step ups and crunches can be added whilst a room 10 metres long allows lunges to be performed. Previously we had the use of a hall where a badminton court was marked out. The 13.4 metres or 44 feet length became the target to be covered in as few hops as possible - 6 or fewer. Hopping is a great exercise to develop leg strength and power and it is an easy way to determine which athletes are better suited to the 800m and 1500m events.

As well as conditioning work, athletes may find that it is necessary to do what may be called as remedial or injury prevention work. This may be as simple as doing clams or reverse clams with(out) a resistance bands or/ and hurdle walks over followed



Chris O'Hare en-route to Euro Silver

by leg swings as part of your warm up. If we are aware that an athlete's knee collapses inward on landing, then we can start to remedy that. Research shows that increased hip strength prevents injuries in runners.

Research also shows that decreased levels of strength in hip abduction and external rotators significantly increases the likelihood of injuries in runners. The quads are good at dissipating the vertical impact forces as the foot lands. Glutes and hamstrings help create forward propulsion. If we can improve the power from glutes and hamstrings, then runners will be faster. There are several simple tests, using a chair which show how strong you are in certain areas, e.g. single leg calf raises, or hamstrings raises. Using a massage table, you can see if you need to work on your internal hip rotators (TFL) and whether you are tight when glutes and the

hamstring insertion meets.

However, nothing beats a proper screening assessment (A Runner's MOT) which can identify problems with weak glutes, tight ITB, over active TFL etc. All these plus other problems can easily be treated, but surely you want to avoid getting injured and not being able to run, in the first place. In the long run, consistency is what brings progress and success. Not being injured for 1, 2, 3 years and training consistently for 50 to 80 miles per week is far better than stringing together a marvellous spell of 120 miles per week but then having 4 months being injured from May to August. Athletes and coaches should google the 56 slide show by Mark Buckingham and Alison Rose titled 'Injury Prevention'. That and a runner's MOT screening will be time and money well spent for any ambitious athlete.





Rory Leonard – 37th U20 men

MARK SHEARMAN



Matt Willis 25th U20 men and 1st Brit

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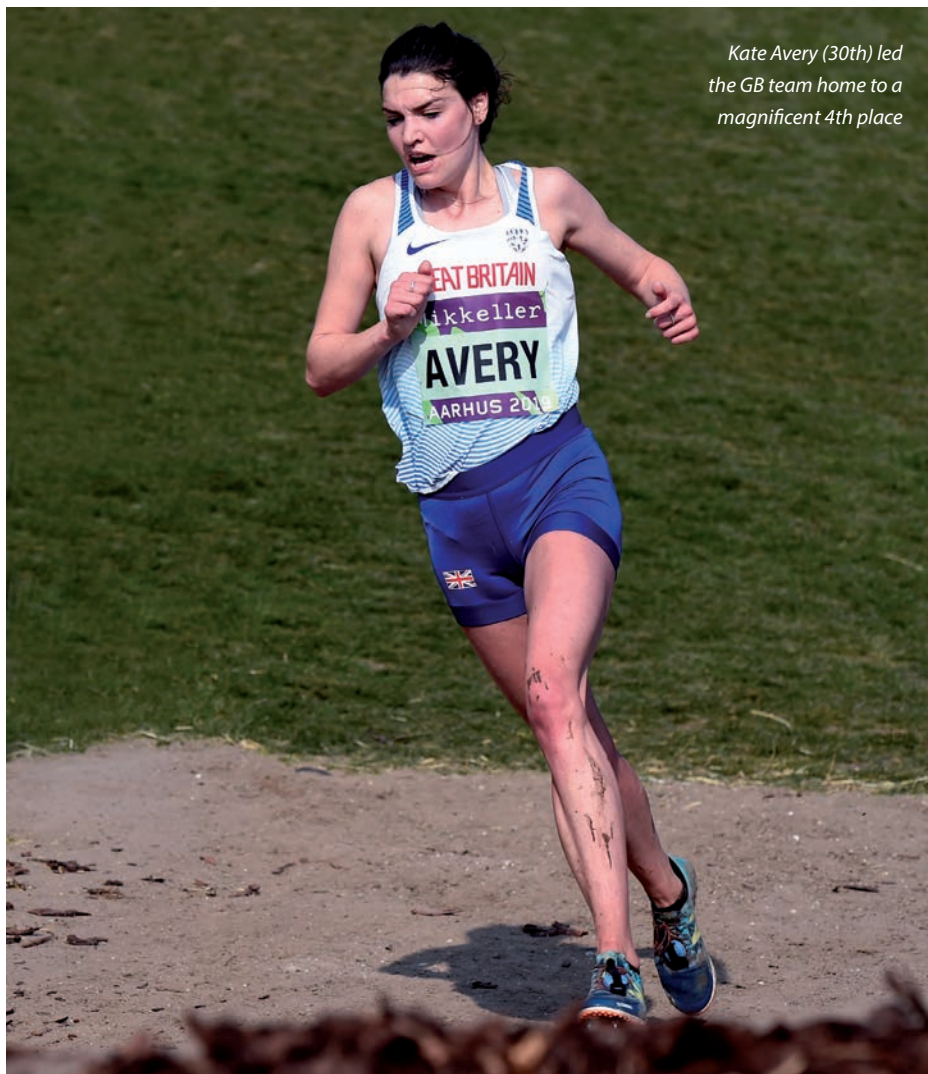
Amelia Samuels – 35th (U20) and 2nd Brit home

MARK SHEARMAN



Grace Brock 25th - 1st Brit in the U20 race

MARK SHEARMAN



Kate Avery (30th) led the GB team home to a magnificent 4th place

MARK SHEARMAN



# Mary Stewart

**Mary Stewart is Friends Re-United with coach Geoff James as Matt Long earwigs their catch up.**

## **Autumn 2018: Northern France**

A man in his 70s and a 62 year old woman are taking a stroll down memory lane. They are reminiscing about their younger days and the famous Birchfield Harriers club whose joining more than half a century before, inevitably made their paths cross. They are chatting about how life has moved on for both. Both are married and have grown up children. The woman is keen to talk about her husband David and is rightly proud of the achievements of her three children- one of whom, Adam Cotton, was a European Junior Champion over 1500m in 2011. From a distance they could be any senior citizens as they fondly recall 'the good old days'. If their desire for nostalgia is commonplace for those in their twilight years, the detail of their vivid memories is most certainly not – for this duo from our second city of Birmingham took the middle distance world by storm some four decades or so ago in late 1970s. The 62 year old is former athlete Mary Stewart and the man walking alongside her is her coach Geoff James, who is celebrating 65 years in our sport this year. Let's listen in to their catch up....

**Geoff James: Following just missing out on qualifying for the 1500 final at the Montreal Olympics in 1976, how did you adjust to this disappointment?**

**Mary Stewart:** I was extremely disappointed at the time as it was the first set back I had experienced on that scale. However once the rest of the season was ended it too was finished and I would start planning for the next year reflecting on and using the knowledge gained that year. This was a normal process for me. Looking back now somewhat older and hopefully wiser I realise that at just 20 I was relatively young but I never have taken age into account just experience – as I had been competing as a senior international from 16 years of age. I had only run 4.06. 4 for the first time a little earlier in the year. I feel that lack of race experience at that pace was my issue.

**Geoff: You had a very good 1977 season- why was that, and did anything change for you in your raining or mind set ?**



*Mary Stewart at Crystal Palace in 1975*

**Mary:** At the end of every year I would take a month away from running. This gave myself and you as my coach time to go over the past year and look to possible goals for the coming year. We would then sit down just as I was starting to train again and discuss the

next year and our expectations. It was your idea for me to try and run a world indoor record. I was confident about trying to win the European indoors but must admit times did not feature much in my mind other than as a means to an end which was to win



aces. When we discussed the required split times it became to me a viable possibility.

**Geoff: When you achieved your indoor World record was this a surprise or did you feel that this was a realistic prospect at the time?**

**Mary:** The world indoor record was not a surprise- the only surprise was that we had never discussed where or when we would go for it. I had hit some of the splits in previous races but not got it all quite right. I actually ran it in a match against West Germany in Dortmund with only 4 athletes. I knew the splits to aim at and Dennis Watts was calling them for me. He was unaware what I was aiming at. I remember the race very clearly as I actually just ran against the clock Dennis was getting more and more excited as the laps progressed and he was the only other person that realised what was happening. At the end I walked back along the track to Arthur Gold asked him my time as he always had a watch. He told me and I remember saying "that's a new record then" and turning to look across at Dennis who was jumping up and down. I must admit the race just flowed and I always knew I could have run harder. It was an easy and enjoyable race.

**Geoff: Your Indoor European Gold in Spain must have felt great and do you remember that you feel Seb Coe and Janet Colebrook also won Gold on that special day?**

**Mary:** The European gold was great. It was the icing on the cake. I had to run quick that day as 2 girls from an Eastern block country decided to work together to make the race fast. It suited me as I knew they had not run faster than me as the world record was only a few weeks before. I let the girls lead and then ran with about 300 to go. It was the second fastest time in the world at the time so to have the 2 fastest times felt good. I knew that Jane and Sebs races were at the same time as mine and we were aware of each other so for us to win 3 in a row was great. We really were on a roll that day.

**Geoff: Fast forward to the Edmonton Commonwealth Games 1978 How did preparation go?**

**Mary:** I had shortened my working hours (at BT) as I was struggling to work full time and fit in the required training of generally running 3 times per day with track sessions and weight sessions. So the short hours we agreed on were a great help. I also went to St Moritz in the spring to train at altitude for a month. Training went extremely well throughout the year and I was confident

*Mary pictured competing in 1975*



MARK SHEARMAN

in my ability to succeed at both the Commonwealth Games and run well at the European championships.

**Geoff: What are your memories of that Commonwealth 1500m final and the fact that your Games record stood for the best part of two decades?**

**Mary:** A reasonable pace was set so I just watched and followed. Christine Benning moved with about 300 to go and began to wind it up. I was going to do exactly the same but a little quicker and as no one else was going with us I was happy to follow until I needed to move. I realised that Christine was running very hard but I felt comfortable

so decided to wait. I moved with just about 100m to go. My first reaction was relief as we had planned and worked so hard for this! It may seem strange but I was very happy that everything had come together at the right time. The time I ran was a surprise I did not feel I had run that fast. The fact it stood for such a long time is amazing especially as the world record had reduced so much in the mean time I can never forget Dave Moorcroft his 1500m straight after me which made it a special day for the team.

**Geoff: What about your retirement from our sport a couple of years later?**

**Mary:** I stopped running in 1980 much to



everyone's surprise as there were no injury issues and I knew I was extremely fit as I was preparing for the Moscow Olympics. However I no longer loved 'just running'. I knew that it would not be the best I could do and for me that was not good enough. I did run mostly on the roads again later (54.55 for 10 miles) and still love 'just to run' although now it is rather slow!

...So we have earwigged on a remarkable re-acquaintance of a solid sporting partnership who remain firm friends four decades on. Let's leave them be to share their private memories from 12th August 1978 in Edmonton. They are back in that Games Village in Edmonton- Daley Thompson is at the warm up track practising his high jump; Don Quarry is adjusting his starting blocks and Brendan Foster is cooling down after an interval session. Mary laughs as Coach Geoff is recalling dropping the stop watch which he still uses at Alexander stadium to this very day right in front of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Queen no less, who acknowledge him before breezing past to take their VIP seats in the stadium. Geoff feels a lump in his throat as Mary reminds him that after shaking the hands of Christine Benning in silver and Canadian Penny Werthner who crosses the line in third, before she jogs round the track waving to the crowd to the 300m point to embrace the man who has guided her from fledgling talent to senior star.



*Mary competes for her beloved Birchfield Harriers in 1979*

MARK SHEARMAN

## IAAF WORLD CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS AARHUS 2019



*World Cross Junior Women Beatrice Chebet takes the title in a thrilling finish*

MARK SHEARMAN



# British Men's Marathon Standards

## Brendon Byrne analyses the standards of the last 50 years.

There is no doubt that distance running is flourishing in the UK. A visit to a local road race showed that there were hundreds of runners in the 10k event. It was preceded by a race for young athletes and there was also a wheel chair race. This is excellent as part of a programme of increasing public health and reducing obesity. Park runs are also flourishing with an ever increasing number of events and participants.

An interesting question arises is this, has this led to an increase in standards at the top end of British marathon running? Surely a greater number of participants will lead to an increase in standards at the top end. After all there are up to 40,000 participants in the London Marathon as an example. There of course a number of events too. The answer it would seem is no. Table 1 shows the top 15 of Britain's fastest marathon runners of all time. Only three of those times have been achieved this century. Mo Farah's British and European record win in Chicago is not indicative of a general increase in standards. Times are not everything of course sometimes finishing positions are important too. Paul Evans is Britain's 5th fastest runner ever and he has pointed out that before this year he was the last British marathon runner to finish on the podium at a big city marathon or in a major championship. That was back in 1996. Incidentally, the last British winner of the London Marathon was Eamonn Martin in 1993 and his time then was 2:10:50

Another way of viewing the situation is to look at the times of the 50th ranked runners over a long period of time, see Table 2. The peak year for standards was 1982 when the 50th best was 2:19:16. In 2017 there was an improvement over previous years this century to 2:26:41 for 50th fastest. Incidentally the 50th fastest for 2018 is 2:29:28. The table clearly indicates that an increase in participation has not led to an increase in standards. In fact 50th fastest runner was quicker in 1972.

An analysis of the results of the top half marathon and marathon races in the world shows that the majority have been won by

East African runners.

This isn't an attempt to belittle the current performances of British athletes but a statement of where we are. What of the future? Are world standards so far out of sight that they aren't worth bothering with? Curiously although there has been a huge increase in sports science and knowledge in the last forty years or so there hasn't been a corresponding increase in men's marathon standards in the UK.

Sponsorship could make a difference as the demands of training are huge. It hardly seems possible for athletes to run a hundred miles a week and still hold down a full time job, although some did in the past. Lottery funding, for example, has made a difference to the standards of sprinting in the UK and medals at major events are expected.

Further advances could be made in mentoring. That is making use of the experience and knowledge of successful



*Jon Brown 4th in the Sydney (2000) and Athens (2004) Olympic Marathons*

MARK SHEARMAN



athletes from earlier years. Neville Taylor for example is one coach who has been promoting this. Use could also be made of training camps and groups of high calibre athletes training together.

The success of the Highgate 10,000 metre races and BMC distance events in recent years has done much to popularize and glamorize that event and to raise standards. Another suggestion is that there needs to

be more road races of 10 miles, 15 miles and 20 miles to act as a pathway to high calibre marathon running. Speed is needed too. Eliud Kipchoge who broke the marathon world record in Chicago with a fabulous 2:01.39 has a best 5,000m time of 13mins 46.53. Don't forget that Mo Farah is also the British 1500m record holder as well. Doubtless there are many other issues that are applicable here too.

#### POST SCRIPT

A few of the notable performances by British marathon runners are indicated here. These include Ron Hill's Commonwealth Games win in 1970. Ian Thompson still holds the record in that event going back to 1974. Charlie Spedding won Olympic bronze in 1984. A special mention must be made to Jon Brown who finished 4th in the Olympic Marathon in Sydney in 2000 and Athens in 2004. This year Robbie Simpson finished 3rd on the Commonwealth Games in Australia. By an odd coincidence Paul Evans winning time in Chicago in 1996 of 2:08:52 is listed as the 500th fastest marathon ever at the end of 2017.

During Eliud Kipchoge's marathon world record his fastest 5km split was 14mins 16 secs and his slowest was 14 mins 37 secs.

#### References:

Power of 10  
IAAF Annual 2018  
British Athletics Annuals – various  
Top 50 performers supplied by Tom O'Reilly.



Charlie Spedding wins the 1985 London Marathon

Table 1

Britain's fastest men marathon runners

1	2:05:11	Mo Farah,	Chicago	7.10.18
2	2:07:13	Steve Jones,	Chicago	20.10.85
3	2:08.33	Charlie Spedding	London	21.4.85
4	2:08.36	Richard Nerurkar	London	13.4.97
5	2:08:52	Paul Evans	Chicago	20.10.96
6	2:09:08	Geoff Smith	New York	23.10.83
7	2:09:12	Ian Thompson	Christchurch New Zealand	31.1.74
8	2:09:16	Allister Hutton	London	21.4.85
9	2:09:17	Mark Steinlie	London	14.04.02
10	2:09:24	Hugh Jones	London	9.5.82
11	2:09:28	Ron Hill	Edinburgh	23.7.70
12	2:09:28	John Graham	Rotterdam	23.5.81
13	2:09:31	John Brown	London	17.4.05
14	2:09.43	Mike Gratton	London	17.4.83
15	2:09:49	Dewi Griffiths	Frankfurt	29.10.17

Table 2

Britain's 50th fastest male marathon runners

1967	2:30:44
1972	2:24:50
1977	2:24:18
1982	2:19:16
1987	2:20:10
1992	2:23:36
1997	2:26:30
2002	2:30:03
2007	2:33:30
2012	2:29:33
2017	2:26:41





MARK SHEARMAN

*British Record Holder Mo Farah's  
move to the marathon to inspire  
others to take up the distance*



# Mind games win

**Being in top physical shape isn't always enough to produce the desired results writes David Lowes**

**A**ll the hours spent working hard in training can be wasted if your mind isn't ready for any eventuality and you aren't prepared for the unexpected. Athletes therefore, owe it to themselves and their coaches, to run as well as they possibly can by being in the right frame of mind when it matters most.

Underachieving is not only frustrating it can be an injustice to the athlete and coach especially if the all-important sessions have been good. Full utilisation of every training run is therefore essential so that maximum potential is realised and progression is made and that includes recovery runs too.

Many athletes claim that they are 'flying' in training, yet when it comes to race day their responses can be very negative: with any excuse from aches, tired, not fit, don't feel good being just some of the negative exclamations. Attitudes and mind-sets need to change to a positive mantra if success is to be achieved.

Providing training has gone well, the lead-in time to a competition is absolutely vital. This can be a whole week (or more),

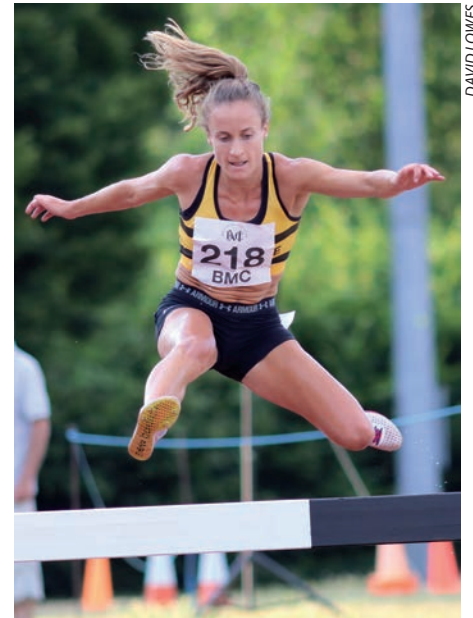
a day, an hour and obviously the minutes before the start. Elite athletes may even start preparing mentally in some form or another 1-4 years in advance!

Athletes generally have a routine before a competition and this can take many forms, starting with getting out of bed, getting to the venue, at the venue, the warm-up and the crucial minutes just before starter's orders. Every athlete will use their time in these phases differently. All athletes have negative thoughts to some degree and it is how these are dealt with and negated that dictates how good a performance will be.

## WHAT IF?

Suppose you get to a race and you've targeted a PB and it's blowing a gale or it's extremely hot? What will be your thoughts? You'll need a strong and positive Self-Talk, "I won't run as fast today, but those conditions will affect me less than my rivals because I'm better than them!" What happens if you've planned your tactics against the opposition and a highly ranked competitor enters unexpectedly? Nothing! You stay calm and positive and run the race to the best of your abilities.

Learn from every race and develop a routine that will get you focused and avoid



DAVID LOWES

*Michelle Finn hurdles in the Eltham GP*

distractions. It could be warming-up alone, music, drills, stretches etc. Do what it takes, you train to race and letting distractions affect your performance is a sin.

## EMOTIONS

Sport is controlled by emotions and it is how you control these that dictate how well you will perform. The S.E.E. Model illustrates this very clearly (Suppress, Express, Exit). When unwanted emotions occur there are three common responses. First all of you **Suppress** the feeling and try to push it away, you may do things to dull the emotion. Secondly you **Express** it. This is usually an emotional outburst, anger, aggression, unpleasantness, tantrums, wild criticism and tears. 'Letting off steam' may be justified (for the individual) but almost always ends in problems and poor performance. If you **Exit** the emotion you can avoid the negative feeling by leaving the situation and not returning.

The coach has a huge role to play in convincing an athlete that they can achieve a difficult goal by using their 'people skills' to the full and this can include some kidology. If the athlete trusts the coach fully then there is no reason why the task can't at least be partially achieved, and once it is done then future tasks can be attempted with confidence and vigour. If the coach were to say: "I want you to run at 1500m world record pace" I'm sure panic and words of ridicule from the athlete would be forthcoming. However, the coach is looking for a response and the task will be divided into workloads of short units, such as 15x100m or 8x200m with manageable recoveries.

Getting yourself into the 'zone' before a competition is essential so that as the clock ticks by toward the start time you

*Jess Judd taking on pacing duties at Watford*



DAVID LOWES



become more focussed and less distracted and the only thing that matters is you - the competitors and conditions are irrelevant!

Some athletes actually do this in reverse and although focussed when they leave home, by race time they become unfocussed. Some of the reasons are that their routine gets interrupted by minor things such as a lace snaps or they can't find their race number or getting involved in meaningless conversations with other athletes and the warm-up benefits are lost and concentration levels drop to near zero.

Detachment is one of the most important techniques in sports psychology. It is a technique of distancing yourself from your feelings, competitors, inner and outer

barriers. If you waste time concentrating on unwanted, trivial matters then the race is already lost. By detaching yourself from your competitors on the warm-up track (where many races are won and lost) you will put yourself in the right frame of mind for the competition.

No-one can prevent poor performances from time-to-time, but you can ensure that these will be the exception if you have the ability to put past failures and disappointments out of your mind as quickly as possible. You must be optimistic all of the time - optimistic people are successful people and nearly always reach their goals. Pessimistic people tend to achieve very little.

## WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

- Distractions [internal/external]
- Fear [opposition, event, distance]
- Worry [lack of confidence]
- Inappropriate thoughts [doubts]
- Poor warm-up [lack of motivation]
- Lack of confidence [due to fitness]
- Lack of sleep [worry and panic]
- Loss of concentration [unfocussed]
- Imponderables [things that aren't expected]

## GETTING IT RIGHT ON RACE DAY

- Allow plenty of time before competition [organization]
- Familiarise yourself with venue and opposition [preparation]
- Have a back-up [physical & mental]
- Eat (fuel) and drink (hydrate)
- Focus and avoid distractions [concentration]
- Be positive [focused and optimistic]
- Have a technique for getting back in the zone [stress relief and confidence boosting]

## BE POSITIVE

- Always be positive [confident]
- Be happy and contented [relaxed]
- Control yourself [you can't control others]
- Visualization [imagine the perfect race in training]
- Avoid stress it wastes energy [think only of positives]
- Be more positive on race day than in training [be a racer not a trainer]
- Concentration (total focus) in a race [comes from good positive preparation]

Some athletes have differing views of climatic conditions, course content (hills, mud etc) and the nature of the competition (low key or major championship) can all affect athletes contrarily. Undue stress is wasted energy and this will drop along with concentration levels and the end result will always be sub-standard performances. It is absolutely vital therefore to control your emotional state and this must be practised regularly until you are in control of yourself - it takes time, but if any negative thought is turned into a positive thought at the click of your fingers, you can do anything you want!

There is much more to running well than just hard training and the gym work that goes with it. Use your mind wisely, without it you will never reach your goals. Only you can control the end result, so it makes sense to make that a good one or the best that it can be on race day.

MARK SHEARMAN

Sam Atkin reached the 3000m final in Glasgow with a 7:52 PB





# Diane Leather - A Farewell

**Peter L. Thompson adds to the obituary in the winter edition of BMC News, to reflect further on the life and share some rare memorabilia of our first female sub-5 minute miler.**

The funeral service for Diane (née Leather) Charles took place at the Trelawny Chapel, Penmount Crematorium on the outskirts of Truro, Cornwall on October 2nd, 2018. Family, friends and sporting greats came from near and close to far and wide, to celebrate the life of the 85 year-old, a true running pioneer and committed community provider.

The British Milers' Club was represented, as I attended on behalf of BMC Club President, Norman Poole and Club Chairman, Tim Brennan. The four Charles' offspring repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the BMC's presence and our long-term, previous recognition of their mother's achievements.

Birchfield Harriers, were represented



*The shoes that Diane ran the first mile by a woman under 5-minutes. Silvered by her husband, Peter Charles.*

by Beryl Randle, accompanied by Club Archivist, Ruth Lockley. Also, among the mourners were two-time Olympic champion, Daley Thompson and former karate world champion Geoff Thompson. But it was the immediate family that led the service and reception, controlling their grief to share heartfelt remembrances. In all, Diane is survived by three sons, Matthew, Hamish and Rufus, and daughter, Lindsey,

thirteen grandchildren and three brothers.

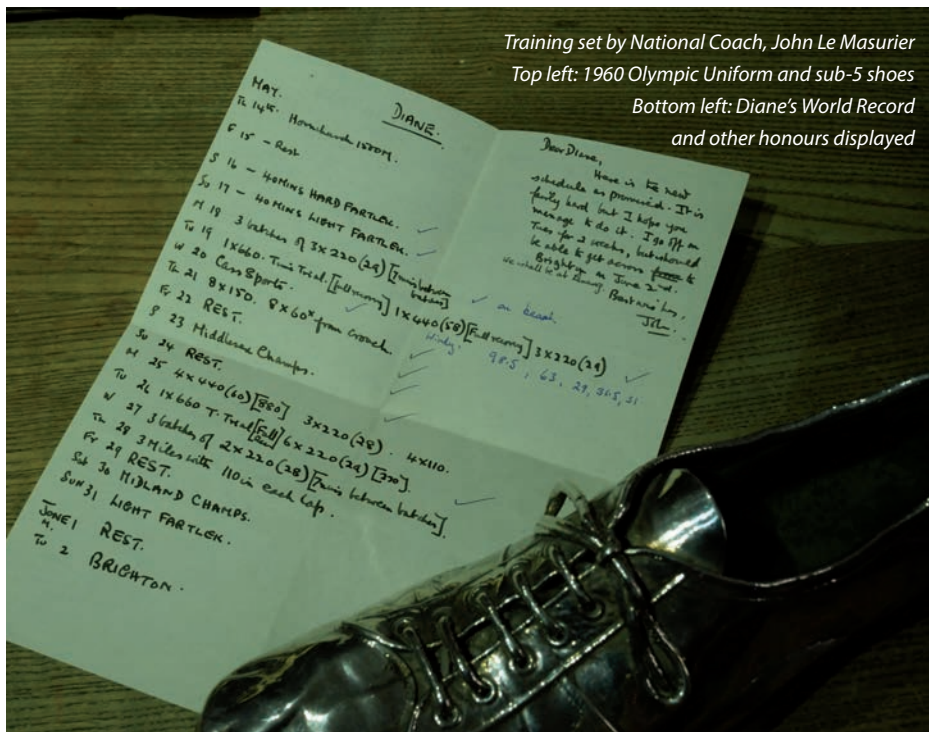
In the milieu of the post-funeral reception, I learned that Beryl Randle had been a Birchfield training partner of Diane and a member of a small group coached by Dorette Nelson Neal. Beryl recalled, "She (Nelson Neal) instilled confidence in you but she was the sort of person that didn't take any nonsense... You'd do as you were told! It worked beautifully." To the extent that, in 1954, Beryl twice bettered the mile race walk world record, lowering it to 7min 44.0sec in Birmingham and again in London to 7min 38.4sec.

I also learned from Daley that he and Geoff had wished to pay their final respects, since they had benefitted from the generosity of the Charles family for post-training meals and support in the late 1970s, before they achieved fame. As Daley's first coach, I had been unaware of this relationship with the Charles family, since I had left for graduate studies in the USA in



*Start of the Sub-5 minutes mile (rare photo).*





1976. As we had exited the funeral service, it had been a case of us seeing each other and, pleasantly surprised, saying simultaneously, "What are you doing here?"

Daughter Lyndsey described her mother as, "extremely intelligent, passionate, captivating and caring." But, her four children, when growing up, had never been aware of their mother's athletic achievements until Lyndsey had chanced upon her scrapbook.

She recalled, "I personally never knew anything about her running achievements and she was incredibly modest, I asked her about it and she just said it was nothing. She did a lot for athletics when we were growing up and we did running at school but she only supported, never pushed us."

The morning following the funeral I drove through a thick sea fret, down narrow and remote Cornish lanes, at the invitation of Matthew, Hamish, Rufus and Lindsey to meet at their parent's, Polgoda Farm, near Zelah. Here, we were joined by the Birchfield contingent of Beryl and Ruth and, enthralled, examined the extensive mementos of Diane Charles' running career from 1952 to 1960, that Matthew had unearthed. Detailed training logs promise great insight into, 'How you take 23 seconds off the world record for the mile, in two years; once they have been fully analysed...

as a second-year student on athletic scholarship at Fresno State University, California.

In January 2018, Ellie maintained family

traditions by running the mile, indoors, in 4:59.24, her first time under 5 minutes. She improved this to 4:54.97, again indoors, on January 25th 2019.



## EPILOGUE

The surname, Leather, still features in the Athletics results. Great niece, Ellie Leather, from Bristol, placed seventh in the 1500m finals of the English Schools Athletics Championships in 2015 and now competes



# BMC Book Reviews

## Athletics Movement Skills - Training for Sports Performance

**By: Clive Brewer**

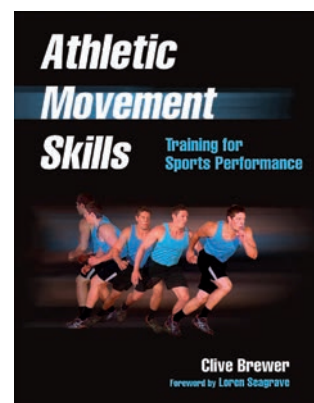
**Publisher: Human Kinetics**

The statement that "Athletics movement skills underpin performance in the majority of sports" sets the tone for this important 400 page book. It is relevant to middle distance running and encourages athletes to look at their strengths and weaknesses. It is interesting in this connection that the recent European indoor silver medallist Jamie Webb has his own strength and conditioning coach.

Brewer himself was at one time the S&C coach for Scottish athletics. Movement, skill development and mechanics are covered. There is, for example, a useful piece on power and posture muscles in the mid- section of the body as well as posture assessment. One of the early sections deals with motor development in childhood.

One of the most important sections relevant to middle distance deals with developing running speed. Comprehensive exercises are included with a clear explanation of how to accurately carry them out. Reasons for carrying out exercises are also included. Another section on functional strength is directly relevant to running too. Brewer's book has much material that applies in general terms to sport but a great deal applies to improving the running action. Plyometrics are also dealt with in some detail. If this sounds a bit technical don't let it put you off. There is much that is useful for the thoughtful coach.

This certainly isn't a read through book but it is a very useful reference text. There is an extensive series of references and index. This could well be an addition to the



excellent Strength and Conditioning for Endurance Running by Richard Blagrove that was reviewed in an earlier issue of the magazine. All of this will certainly help in producing a fitness profile of an athlete to help future development.

## The Happy Runner

**By: David and Megan Roche**

**Publisher: Human Kinetics**

This book initially aimed at the American market is really in two parts. The first part is summarised by the comment on the cover "Love the process, get faster, run longer". It is essentially commenting on the joys of running. The authors run a training group in the USA called SWAP which is an acronym for some work all play. They largely deal with marathoners and ultra-marathon athletes.

Having said that most of the second half of the book deals with VO2 max and vVo2max and how to improve them, especially the speed at which VO2 max can

be maintained. This applies importantly to improving running economy. This is appropriate when, after a number of years of running, VO2 max has reached a plateau. Much of the advice is practical and applicable to middle distance runners too. Having said that some of this is covered elsewhere. There is a reference to the influence of Arthur Lydiard and Daniels Running Formula by Jack Daniels. Structured running training is also covered without mentioning periodisation.

This is a readable book for runners and coaches but there isn't an index for the points covered.



## Bounce

**by: Matthew Syed**

**Publisher: Fourth Estate**

This book was written a while ago but it is definitely worth a mention. Syed is a table tennis player but don't let this put you off. He has done a considerable amount of research. His theme throughout the book is that it takes 10,000 hours of

practice to achieve full sporting success. Many examples of how this applies to sportsmen and women are given. Practice is important as well as talent. This is a point that BMC founder Frank Horwill has referred to in the past. It takes a number of years of training to achieve full middle distance success.





## GRAND PRIX AND OTHER ELITE RACES 2019

See [www.britishmilersclub.com](http://www.britishmilersclub.com) for Entries, Timetables, Seedings, Information and Results

DATE	VENUE	EVENTS	TIME	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS	STANDARD
<b>MAY</b>						
WED 15	Lee Valley	5000m Festival	TBC	Tim Brennan	timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com	Bannister Mile Series
SAT 25	Sportcity, Manchester	800 Men	4.30pm	Mike Deegan	07887 781913	Grand Prix
SAT 25	Sportcity, Manchester	1500 Men	4.30pm	Jon Wild	07947 157785	Grand Prix
SAT 25	Sportcity, Manchester	800/1500 Women	4.30pm	John Davies	07967 651131	Grand Prix
SAT 25	Sportcity, Manchester	5000/ 2000 S/C Men & Women	4.30pm	Dave Norman	07868 783818	Grand Prix
<b>JUNE</b>						
SAT 15	Loughborough	800, 1500, & 5000 (U20/U23 UK Trials)	5.30pm	George Gandy	g.gandy@live.com	Grand Prix
SAT 29	Watford	800, 1500, 5000, 3000, (UK U/20 Trials)	5.00pm	Nick Bentham	nickpbentham@hotmail.co.uk & rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Grand Prix
SAT 29	Watford	800, 1500, 5000, 3000, (UK U/20 Trials)	5.00pm	Rupert Waters	rupert.waters@tiscali.co.uk	Grand Prix
<b>JULY</b>						
SAT 20	Eltham	800, 1500, 5000	5.00pm	David Reader	davidreader@britishmilersclub.com	Grand Prix
<b>AUGUST</b>						
FRI 2	Birmingham University	Peter Coe & Frank Horwill Age Group Invitational Miles	7.00pm	David Lowes	07930 318651	Special
FRI 2	Birmingham University	4 x 800m & 4 x 1500m	7.00pm	Luke Gunn	07845 525750	Special
SAT 10	Trafford	800, 1500, 3000m S/C, 5000	5.00pm	Steve Green	stevegreen2011@live.co.uk	Grand Prix

### GRAND PRIX SERIES ENTRIES

Entry to Grand Prix races will be guaranteed for paid up BMC members entering at least 14 days in advance of the meeting provided they have achieved the following qualifying times.

	MEN	WOMEN
800m	01:55.0	02:15.0
1500m	03:55.0	04:40.0
3000m	8:30	10:00
5000m	14:50	16:45
3K Chase	9:15	10:45

Members who have not achieved the senior qualifying standard in the year of competition should enter 7 or more days in advance and will be able to run if space is available.

Non members should enter as much in advance as possible and will be able to run if space is available after all members and invited athletes have been catered for.

Final seeding and entry acceptance will be between 7 and 2 days before the competition date.

Entries should be made through the online entry system on our website. A fee of members £3 and non-members £15 must be paid online or entries will

be rejected. This fee will not be refunded to those who drop out. An additional £5 is payable on the day for stadium entry.

We reserve the right to vary entry criteria depending on demand.

### PRIZES

A first prize of £1,000 applies at each of the Grand Prix events over 800m, 1500m, Mile, 5000m, and 3000m Steeplechase. The prize money is determined by finishing position and time.

Best of British - A prize of £200 is available for the fastest British BMC finisher in each Grand Prix event (excluding EA Key Events) who does not win a higher sum in the time related prizes.

For full details of the prizes available see [www.britishmilersclub.com](http://www.britishmilersclub.com)

### PACEMAKERS

The BMC is looking for pacemakers for its race series. The BMC is able to pay fees for pacemakers.

Those interested should contact Tim Brennan at [timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com](mailto:timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com) or via the BMC website.

### OVERSEAS ATHLETES

The BMC welcomes overseas entries in its Grand Prix

races particularly those of an international standard.

Contact Tim Brennan at [timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com](mailto:timbrennan@britishmilersclub.com) or enter via the website.

### INTERNATIONAL RACE OPPORTUNITIES

The BMC is invited by other race promoters to send representatives to overseas opportunities. Selection for these races will be based on performance in BMC events.

### BANNISTER MILE SERIES

More details and prize structure are shown on page 25 of this magazine.

We expect from athletes that they will:-

- Enter the races by the deadlines set.
- Be truthful about their current form and fitness.
- Turn up for races that they have been invited to or entered.
- Inform the organiser in good time if for any reason they cannot compete and the reason why they can't compete.
- Run at the pace stated for their race and not attempt to slow a race.
- Be prepared to take the initiative if a pacemaker is running too slowly.



