



Oxfordshire Cross Country League

ESTABLISHED 1987

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Equal Gender Race Distances Working Party Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 17th July 2019

Time: 19:30hrs

Venue: The Turnpike, Yarnton

Present:

League Officer:

Dene Stringfellow (*League Manager*)

Working Party Members:

Alchester RC: Richard Gould

Banbury Harriers AC: Ros Kelling

Bicester AC: Emma Gould

Bicester TC: Lucy Davidson

Didcot Runners: Robert Dalglish, Sarah Rogers

White Horse Harriers AC: Simon Leech

Witney RR: Dan Wymer

1) Apologies

The following apologies were recorded:

Alchester RC: Sarah Rendell

Headington RR: Madeleine Ding

2) Opening Comments

Dene welcomed and thanked the volunteers for attending the meeting and opened with the following statements:

- No agenda was set to allow the working party the freedom to operate as it sees fit.
- It was suggested that a leader of the working party should be nominated.
- No venue has yet been confirmed for the working party presentation meeting scheduled for 4th or 11th September 2019. The following venues have all been confirmed as unavailable:
 - Exeter Hall, Kidlington
 - Oxrad Centre, Oxford
 - Stratfield Brake Sports Centre, Kidlington
- The following working party members have offered to try to find an alternative venue for the September meeting – number of attendees: 20-30.
 - Emma Gould – *location: Bicester.*
 - Ros Kelling – *location: Banbury.*
 - Simon Leech – *location: Wantage/Grove.*
- Madeleine Ding (*Headington RR*) who sent her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting submitted the following report of her investigation into the 'time on feet' argument:
 - "Men and women do not run for the same amount of time. In 2018-2019 Oxon Cross Country season the men run longer at every race. I compared the first runners in both men and women categories, the last runners and the average. If women were to run for the same amount of time as the men currently run they would have to run approximately 5 minutes more than they currently run. Or the men run for 5 minutes less.
The total time run by both men and women varies between each race because each course is different."
 - **Appendix A** contains Madeleine's supporting research.
- Ros Kelling (*Banbury Harriers AC*) reported that an equal gender race distances proposal had been rejected at the recent AGM of the Hampshire Cross Country League. No further details or minutes of the meeting have been able to be found. Lucy Davidson (*Bicester TC*) confirmed she had also not been able to find any further information on the decision taken at that AGM.

3) Summary of Meeting Discussions

The following points and questions were raised in the course of the ensuing discussions:

- The maximum race distances as determined by various governing bodies:
 - **IAAF** – *Men & Women: 10km, U20 Men: 8km, U20 Women: 6km*
 - *U18 Boys: 6km, U18 Girls: 4km*
 - **UKA** – *Seniors: unlimited, U20: 10km, U17: 6.5km, U15: 5km, U13: 3.5km*

- The aim of the meeting to leave with a maximum of 3 alternative options plus no change for further investigation and subsequent presentation at the September meeting.
- Regardless of the Equal Gender Race Distances Proposal the U9, U11 and U13 races will remain as now.
- Could the U15 boys and girls run together and U17 boys and girls run together?
 - The participant averages for last season were stated as follows:
 - Average number of girls per race: 35.
 - Average number of boys per race: 45.
 - Combined U15 boys and girls average: 50.
 - Combined U17 boys and girls average: 30.

4) Working Party Actions Summary Review

A review of the outstanding working party actions summary was led by Emma Gould (Bicester AC) as follows:

- **Other Events/Leagues**
 - Contact other cross country leagues that have already implemented equal gender race distances – ***Done, many have limited junior races; no league formats the same***
 - Check the outcome of the Hampshire League AGM – ***Done: EGRD proposal rejected.***
 - At senior competition level male and female athletes already run equal race distances.
 - World XC Championships – ***Done, recommended maximum distances confirmed***
 - Scottish National XC Championships – ***Done, recommended maximum UKA distances confirmed***
 - Inter-Counties XC Championships – ***Done, no maximum distances have been able to confirmed***
- **General Considerations**
 - Harmful to female athletes to reinforce gender inequality – ***Accepted, albeit it was felt athletes tend to assess courses by number of laps rather than actual distance***
 - Most races are gender equal – ***Accepted***
 - U9/U11/U13 race distances are the same for boys and girls – ***Agreed***
 - Impact on younger age groups – ***Done, no impact on U9, U11 and U13 categories; impact on U15 and U17 categories ongoing review***
 - Female athletes being “dragged” along by male athletes – ***Done, potential issue with female athletes not being able to gauge gender position in race or see female athlete ahead; alternatively boys in race could provide incentive to improve performance***
 - Longer race distances may discourage athletes – ***Done, may equally encourage athletes***

- Shorter race distances may also put athletes off – ***Done, may equally encourage athletes***
- Should any change apply to all age groups? – ***Ongoing review***
- Should participants be polled? – ***Deferred***
- **U15 & U17 Athlete Specific**
 - U15/U17 combined fixture – ***big increase in race distance for U17 athletes graduating to senior ranks – Ongoing review***
 - Can the U15 and U17 boys and girls races be combined – ***i.e. combined U15 boys and girls race and combined U17 boys and girls race? – Ongoing review***
- **Senior & Veteran Athlete Specific**
 - Long and short race distance option for all senior and veteran athletes – ***Discarded, see next section***
 - The potential impact on older female athletes of longer races means should there be the option to run a shorter race distance – ***an option that some veteran male athletes might also welcome – Discarded, see next section***
- **Changing Race/Competition Formats**
 - Splitting age categories – teams issue, some clubs would struggle to raise scoring teams – ***Ongoing review***
 - Combined age groups – could mixed teams be an option? – ***Ongoing review***
 - Mixed gender races – What impact would this have on the arrangements for officials and volunteers at fixtures and the finish area organisation for the host club(s)? – ***Ongoing review***
 - Impact on finish line celebration for female athletes in combined age/gender races – ***Ongoing review***
- **Fixture Organisation**
 - Were the current race distances set based upon “Time on feet”? ***Madeleine Ding – Done, report provided***
 - What are the upper race distances for each age category? ***Ros Kelling – Done, report provided***
 - What are the Inter-County race distances – ***bearing in mind likely future tie-in for County Championships distances? Emma Gould – Done, no definitive information available***
 - What impact would there be on the day of the fixture for the race day schedule? – ***Ongoing review***
 - Can each fixture determine the race distances? – ***Note: DS pointed out that host clubs already effectively determine the race distances due to the limitations and restrictions of the venues – Ongoing review***
- **Trial Fixture Options**
 - Round 3 combined fixture – ***possibility of using the fixture as a test fixture – Deferred***
 - Feasibility of trial at combined Round 3 /Oxon XC Championships fixture using Inter-County Championship distances – ***Deferred***

- If there are 3 alternative voting options and they would all require trialling, how should that be dealt with? – **Deferred**
- What alternatives are there? – **Deferred**

5) Potential Equal Gender Race Distances Proposal Options

In the course of the discussions of the meeting the following potential options, *alongside the option to reject the proposal*, were arrived at and are to be progressed:

- Run U15 boys and girls together, and U17 boys and girls together.
 - U15's race distance: 3km – 5km
 - U17's race distance: 5km – 6.5km
 - U15/U17 race parameters – **Ongoing review**
- Equal distance – host club decides the actual distance run within following distance parameters:
 - Seniors: 7 – 9km.
- Equal Distance – all seniors run approx. 8km

The following potential option was discarded for the reasons stated immediately below:

- 2 senior races – 5km or 10km
 - Concern that courses wouldn't cope with the number of race participants which would be unknown.
 - Fixture organisation logistics issue as the number of race participants between the 2 races would be unknown.
 - The implications for team competition.

6) Considerations for Next Meeting

At the suggestion of Dan Wymer (*Witney RR*) the following considerations are to be prepared for and reviewed at the next meeting:

- Team structures and competition
- Race timetable
- Stepping up of distance through age groups
- Volunteer requirements
- Course set up
- Participation

7) Close

The meeting was closed at 21:45hrs.

8) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 31st July 2019 starting at 19:30hrs. The venue will again be The Turnpike, Yarnton. The same tables towards the back of the pub have been booked.

Dene Stringfellow
League Manager

18 July 2019

race	first runner	last runner	avg runner
men 1	29.56	68	39.7229552
men 2	33.3	69.18	44.4488489
men 3	30.36	82.28	41.0961801
men 4	31.47	70.29	41.2517959
men 5	36.53	86.48	50.57112

race	first runner	last runner	avg runner	avg difference
women 1	24.32	49.54	33.5965534	6.126401826
women 2	28.18	57.2	40.2313095	4.217539397
women 3	25.58	53.33	36.5830357	4.51314441
women 4	25.58	47.14	33.9755944	7.276201513
women 5	34.32	73.39	49.6458	0.92532