

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE for 2008/9

At the Annual General Meeting on the 16th November '08 the result of the election for the new committee was announced.

After circulating all 310 members with an opportunity to nominate members for the committee 9 slips were returned most of them nominating the existing committee with two new names appearing, Pete Afford and Cathy Briggs both Level 5. It was disappointing that more of the less experienced officials were not nominated so that our committee included a wider spread of officiating experience.

All members had the opportunity to vote and 54 slips were returned (two spoilt) and the votes recorded using a reverse points system as not everyone uses the six votes allowed.

The Result was that Margaret Afford-Chairman, Andrew Hulse-Vice Chairman, Kate Michell-Secretary, Cedric Michell-Assistant Secretary were returned unopposed.

Noel McKakly was the only person nominated to take the place of the retiring Treasurer so that was accepted.

The committee members are Pete Afford, Maureen Bullen, Alison Jordan, Sheila O'Keefe, Stuart Paul and Nick Reade. We have co-opted Janice Pryce and Dennis Mews.

Life Membership was granted to

Barbara Rogers and Alan Lindop.

Kate Michell

Sorry Cedric But this NOT for You....

Would you be happy to receive Newsletters and other paperwork via email, if so does the Secretary have the correct email address? Email her to confirm you are happy to do so.



Edited by Andrew Hulse - all contributions gratefully received

M A F E O Newsletter



December '08

ENCLOSURES

1. Revised Constitution,
2. Membership Card for 2009 for the payments that the Secretary has received. (You still have the rest of December to take advantage of the reduced rate of £7.00.)



Our Thanks and Best Wishes go to Marianne Lingen



The Association was formed by a group of Field Officials in 1983 Marianne was one of them. She took on the role of Treasurer when the first committee was elected and has held that post until the recent Annual General Meeting. She decided to stand down as she was having health problems and the years were catching up with her.

Her contribution to the work of the Association has been highly valued and has gradually built up a healthy bank balance due to her good housekeeping. She retired from active officiating when she was 80 and has continued to be involved with the sport in the intervening years. We hope that she will continue to do so and that she will attend committee meetings when she feels able.

At the AGM it was agreed that we send her some flowers. They arrived safely and she phoned the Secretary to thank us for the enormous bouquet she received.

Kate Michel

Dealing with Abuse.

As officials we all suffer from time to time from abuse. Most of it is friendly fire from our colleagues who are quick to point out when we make the slightest mistake. This is generally a positive influence as it keeps you on your toes and usually ensures a high standard of officiating.

Unfortunately we do receive varying degrees of abuse from athletes, coaches, parents and occasionally TV commentators. I raised the issue at a MAFEO meeting about what we as an association should do about the problem. The conclusion was I should attempt to write some guidance which could then form the basis for discussion about how we as officials should respond to criticism both constructive and abusive.

So here goes.

There are clear rules for protests and appeals (Rules 23&106 UK, 146 IAAF) these may be supplemented by extra procedures and protocol for championship events. These are not the problem, the problem comes when officials are criticised when they are doing their job.

We are all aware of some instances where an official does make a mistake and there are a few officials who need constant support and training to ensure they do things properly; but on the whole we do a very good job. The new level 3 courses are not popular with some, but it does give a limited opportunity to update our skills. MAFEO as a body tries to ensure that the standard of officiating is high and consistent.

Sometimes in the heat of the moment athletes, parents and coaches make “off the cuff” remarks. Some can be quite rude and abusive. We all learn to either ignore or challenge the remarks.

Guideline One: An official who is challenged should respond in a calm “professional” manner. Sometimes no response is appropriate if the complainant is aggressive or out of control. It is at this point it may be more appropriate for another official in the team to attempt to communicate with the offender. The chief or referee is they are in the area. A senior official or meeting manager if the chief or referee is the target of the abuse.

At this stage we should be trying to ensure that the event we are officiating at can continue without further disruption. This should be made clear to the complainant.

Guideline Two: Once the situation is under control officials should inform the complainant of the correct procedure to make a protest. If the initial complaint was made in an abusive manner they should be told that any further abuse will result in the protest not being accepted, and the prior abusive remarks or actions will have been noted.

Guideline Three: Support should be given to any fellow official who is the victim of abuse. Reassurance, a cup of tea, or reallocation of duty if this is appropriate. This is part of team leader’s role, but don’t forget team leaders might also need the support.

We are fortunate in Athletics we do not have too many complaints. We are not a confrontational sport; there is not much physical contact during events apart from perhaps middle distance running. In my experience most complaints are dealt with in a civilised manner, when everyone calms down and talks through the incident things are usually sorted out.

There are however times when things go too far. Common perception is this is happening more frequently in today’s society where challenging authority is more prevalent. This was the reason I raised the issue. There have been cases this year where the abuse in my opinion crossed the line. It became an attack on the official’s integrity. Remarks were very personal and aggressive.

Guideline Four: When we witness an abusive attack on ourselves or another official we need to take some action. This is where a meeting manager has to take the lead. Communication should be made with the “abuser” to inform them that their actions were inappropriate and any repeat will result in them being asked to leave the stadium. If they have a problem with that they should take it up with the appropriate governing body. If the meeting manager (having done a risk assessment) feels that challenging the offender would not be a safe option then it may be possible to approach someone from the offender’s club who could make the approach.

Guideline Five: If you think an incident is serious – report it. Put it in your reports. Record the details. We need to know if there are undesirable individuals who are doing this on a regular basis.

I hope these notes are useful. MAFEO is an association of officials we need to look out for ourselves and our colleagues. **Don’t stand for abuse.**

Stuart Paul

01 November 2008

Thanks Stuart for your advice . Ed