



SEPTEMBER 2023

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MAFEO will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary later this year. Make sure you keep the following day free to attend the AGM and Anniversary Conference.

Sunday 26th November 2023
The event will be held in Shirley, Solihull.

Birchfield Harriers Return to Alexander Stadium

By Chris Blyth, VC Promotions, Birchfield Harriers

In March 2017, the South African City of Durban was stripped of the right to host the Commonwealth Games. So therefore, it was decided that the multi-sport event would come to England.



Both Birmingham and Liverpool put in bids to host, and in December 2017 it was confirmed that Birmingham would be the host city. Alexander Stadium, the home of Birchfield Harriers would be the home of the Commonwealth Games athletics, along with the opening and closing ceremonies. This seemed

truly great news for the City of Birmingham and Birchfield Harriers the club.

The Alexander Stadium built in 1976 and still a major sporting venue was starting to look very tired, and a bit rough around the edges. Could it really host a major athletics competition, would it be ready in just 5 years. Only time would tell.

Some great images of what the new Alexander Stadium would look like started to appear in the press, and excitement started to build around the club. Then on June 21st 2019, Birmingham released the final plans for the new stadium, which were finally approved in January 2020.

Demolition of the old Nelson and Knowles stands started almost immediately. Birchfield Harriers' club room was relocated to the fairly modern in comparison, East Stand. The promise by Birmingham City Council and the constructors to allow the club to continue using the track during the early stages of construction also meant the club could continue to operate normally. Then Covid hit the UK, and everything went into lock down, training nights stopped, and construction of the new stadium was halted. Then after what seemed forever things started to improve, building recommenced on the stadium with restrictions for the workers on what could be done. However,

everything was now running behind and for them (constructors) to hit deadlines, it was decided the club would have to move out. Devastating news for the club. Birchfield Harriers eventually moved to Wyndley the home of Royal Sutton Coldfield for training nights, the Birchfield Committee continued with online meetings.



The club continued to operate as normally as possible, hosting all league matches at the Pingles Stadium, Nuneaton. All our belongings were put into storage, and our trophies moved to the Think Tank Museum.

Then finally in April 2022 the new stadium was completed. A truly magnificent facility would this be Birchfield's new home. Not just yet.

Birchfield Harriers were asked by Birmingham City Council if they could organise a test event. This would be to check out the stadium before the Commonwealth Games and plans were started, we would organise our Young Athletes Open Meeting, so the first athletes to compete at the stadium would be youngsters. Then Birmingham City Council decided to offer this to the Armed Forces instead, and we moved our meeting to Nuneaton, a big disappointment.

Then at the end of July 2022 the games arrived in Birmingham, what a fantastic event for the city and the stadium. With a capacity for the games of nearly 40,000, this was a wonderful sight when full.

After the Games Birchfield had hoped to move back into the stadium, but first the contractors had to remove the temporary stands at each end of the stadium. Eventually we moved back to the stadium, but we were only allowed access to the outside warm up track for training, a step in the right direction.

In early 2023 Birchfield Harriers applied for and was granted a licence to put on their 'Young Athletes Meeting' for April 23rd, 2023. This would be the first time the club had used the main stadium since leaving in the early part of the construction. Entries were open and quickly sold, officials were asked to help, and the response was fantastic.



In total we had just over 60 officials, with most of them from the Midlands, a brilliant show of support. The meeting had a few teething problems, which were quickly overcome. But overall, the meeting was deemed a great success.

Birchfield Harriers were finally home, and club night the following Tuesday 25th April 2023, was back in the main stadium.

Since then, Birchfield have continued to train at the stadium, and have hosted all league matches for the leagues they belong to.

We look forward to 2024, and hopefully some great competition at a great stadium.

Alexander Stadium, home of Birchfield Harriers.

A Day in the Life of a Technical Operations Manager

At Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022

By Andy Hulse

Experienced official, Andy Hulse describes what happens behind the scenes running a Major International Event in order to ensure that it flows smoothly, and everybody has what they need, so that event looks perfect on television.

The day starts about 4 and a half hours after the end of the previous one, 4.45am, the alarm goes off, quick shave and shower, into my uniform and out of the house by 5:15am. Drive to a workers' car park approximately 1 mile from the stadium, gather everything together, today that includes 2 black hand painted take off indicator boards. Quick walk to the stadium then wait in line in at the security, ready to be scanned and checked before I can get into the site. Sign in at 6.00am, collect my lunch and evening meal tickets and then walk to the 'office', (a windowless room on the track level). Print out the daily check sheets then check every room we will be using on the Track level, the High-Performance Centre, where Technical Information Centre (TIC), Final Call and an Athlete's lounge are situated, then out to the warm up field, which is lovely and quiet, no teams there to fight over who gets the last remaining few tents. Finally, a walk up to the throws warm up area. All the forms checked, ticked and signed then have to be 'posted' into the Control Room. 7:00am, time for a quick coffee and check my emails to see if the schedule has been updated at all overnight, nothing this morning so great. Quick chat with the other members of the team, (there are 3 of us supposedly running everything from volunteers to making sure broadcast aren't trying to encroach on to the field yet again.

7:30am the Tech Team arrive, so the noise level goes up by 400%, 'Andy, where are the.....? or have you seen the?', or who has moved those take off boards?

8:00am Athletes, Officials and Team managers arrive, and TIC begins to resemble a January Sale, with so many questions, requests, demands, so I leave them to it. However, 5 minutes later my phone rings and TIC inform me that there are 2 Kenyan Athletes who either do not have a Bib or their name has been printed incorrectly, this results in me having to print these and then get them up to TIC, this will be the first of what will probably be 40 trips for missing, lost, or forgotten bibs, usually needed 5 minutes ago as the athlete is now due in the call-room.

Back down to the Tech room or the Office just in time for the Athlete support desk at the main Athlete village to ring me to ask why Country XXXXX can't see their athlete on the start lists for tomorrow! More often than not because the Team Manager hasn't brought the declaration forms to the stadium or forgotten to hand them in.

Time to check in with the TD, (Technical Delegate), and the Competition Director to make sure they are happy and that the DCAS – (Daily Competition Activity Schedule), is correct and the call room schedule that has been distributed is the latest one.

Finally, competition starts, implements have to be brought down from TIC to be checked, the TM (Technical Manager) and Clerks are all looking busy and trying to be inconspicuous as they roam around the track making sure all is well.

Today's visitors are some of the 'High Ups' from the Organizing Committee (OC), who usually don't actually know just what goes on behind the scenes but are happy if it all looks good and the food in the 'Games Family room' is up to their expected standard.

13:30, time for a quick bite to eat, check emails, usually at least 25 since I looked at 7.15. Answer the urgent ones, deny all knowledge of the ones where we made a decision locally that somebody higher up the food chain doesn't like or just say that that's what Jane (the TD) decided.

15:00, The next round of arrivals means more rushing backwards and forwards to TIC, the Call room, the Warm area to answer questions, explain to Team Managers that 'Yes it is your responsibility to get all the declaration forms into TIC by 9.00am on the day BEFORE those events take place', get all sorts shouted at me usually by the Athletes and Team Managers from the Home Countries, all of whom I have worked with or officiated for over the years and explain to some rather dazed looking volunteers where the ice and towels are kept.

17:00 Competition about to restart so of course more Bibs need printing and the call Room Schedule on the Video screen on the warm-up track is 5 minutes different for some events than the one we are now using, (thanks to Gareth Turnbull who did my job for the Marathon, who had the gift of the gab and could always calm down the worries/over excited people as well as managing to get the necessary changes made).

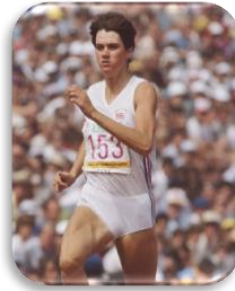
22:50 Competition over for the day, everybody except the night staff for the OC have left and after a quick debrief within our team it will be time to leave for home.

23:00 my phone rings, the helpdesk at the athlete village has the Kenyan Team manager and 2 of his athletes panicking because they have just realised that they ticked the wrong box on the declaration sheet for the T54 men's 100m so can they get these athletes into the race the next day. I happen to know that the heats for this event had been cancelled a few hours earlier as there were only enough confirmed athletes for a straight final. This means the competition schedule was changed as was the DCAS, so Broadcast would not be expecting this! Leave it with me and I will see what I can do. After 10 minutes of frantic phone calls, I manage to locate the TD who was just finishing her evening meal at the ITO's (International Technical Officials) Hotel, I explained the situation to her and asked if we could get the heats back in the schedule? She told me that if I could get Longines and Broadcast to agree then yes. Fortunately, I had built up a good relationship with both of these and just managed to catch 2 people from each before they packed up for the night and got their agreement. Two phone calls later the TD was happy and so were the Kenyan team.

11:45 Leave the stadium, walk to my car, drive home, in bed by 12:45 ready for it all to start again in just over 4 hours.....

ATHLETICS TRIVIA QUIZ

1. In what year did Denise Lewis win her first gold medal in the Heptathlon at the Commonwealth Games?
2. In which city in the Midlands would you find Northwood Stadium?
3. Who is this Olympian? She held the UK records for 100, 200m and 400m for over 20 years.



4. As of July 2023, who hold the men's long jump world record and what is the distance?
5. Para athlete Kare Adenegan competes for which Midlands athletics club?
6. As of July 2023, which country holds the European Record for the Women's 4 X 100m Relay?
7. In the Men's High at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which two athletes share the gold medal?
8. Zharnel Hughes set a new 200m British Record in London Diamond League in 2023. What was his time?
9. In which city would you find this Olympic Stadium?



10. How high are the barriers in the Women's steeplechase?

Teaching the Officials of the Future



On Thursday 8th June as part of their Sports Studies course, 20 students from Sandwell College and Cadbury College participated in an Assistant Officials Taster course.

The course was organised by England Athletics course tutors, Yasmine Al Daftary and Kenny Ebanks, in conjunction with Michelle Thomas from Sandwell College. The course was supported in the delivery by Stuart Paul, Andy Hulse and Karen Davies.

The students were divided into two groups and did half a day on starting/starters assistant, timekeeping, and track judging, and spent the other half on three field events (long jump, high jump and shot put.)

Held at Alexander Stadium, it was a very practical day with the student's gaining hands on experience with all the equipment and implements used to officiate. This included using the electronic starting system, using a stopwatch correctly, to time a race, recording placings in a track event, raking the pits and adjusting the heights in a high jump competition.

The students really enjoyed their day, and one student described it as "sick" on their feedback form. All of the students returned to the track two weeks later to help out with the ISA National Championships in various officiating roles. In addition to this, eight of the students also went on to help officiate at other events held at the stadium including, Masters, Open, and League competitions.

Half of the students on the course also said that they enjoyed officiating so much that they intended to go on a Level 1 officiating course in at least one discipline that they had learnt about so that they become a fully qualified official.

Your MAFEO Committee Members 2022 – 2023

Chairman - Kenny Ebanks (Chairman@mafeo.net)

Vice-Chairman - Fiona Hancock

Hon. Secretary - Derek Prince (HonSecretary@mafeo.net)

Membership Secretary - Maureen Bullen

Hon. Treasurer - Yasmine Al-Daftary (HonTreasurer@mafeo.net)

Margaret Afford, Stuart Paul, Andrew Hulse, Stewart Barnes, Maggie Murphy, Noel McKakly, Jack Lambert, Derek Redfern, Barry Parker, Chris Blyth

Committee Meeting Dates 2023

Wednesday 27th September

Proposed AGM: Sunday 26th November.

If you have any issues you wish to be raised at a committee meeting, please let us know.

ATHLETICS TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 1994, Victoria
2. Stoke
3. Kathy Cook (Smallwood)
4. Mike Powell, 8.95m
5. Coventry Godiva
6. East Germany
7. Gianmarco Tamberi & Mutaz Essa Barshim
8. 19.73 Seconds
9. Beijing
10. 76.2cm

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE CARDS AT THE START MEAN?

Green Card



Shown to athletes where nobody is at fault or there may be a technical problem.

Yellow/Black Card



Warning to athletes in U15 age group and below for a false start. It's also used for U17 athletes in schools' events and all Masters events. It's also shown to U17 and above in Combined Events where there is a false start. It is then shown to the whole field. This card is also shown to U17 and above athletes in an open meeting where there is a mix of age groups in attendance.

Red/Black Card



Shown to U17 and above for a false start, or any athlete after they have had a yellow/black warning.

Yellow Card

(Issued by a Start Referee or by a Starters Assistant on their behalf))



These are given for reasons including raising hand without a valid reason, not responding to start commands quickly or twitching/moving in the blocks.

Red Card

(Issued by a Start Referee)

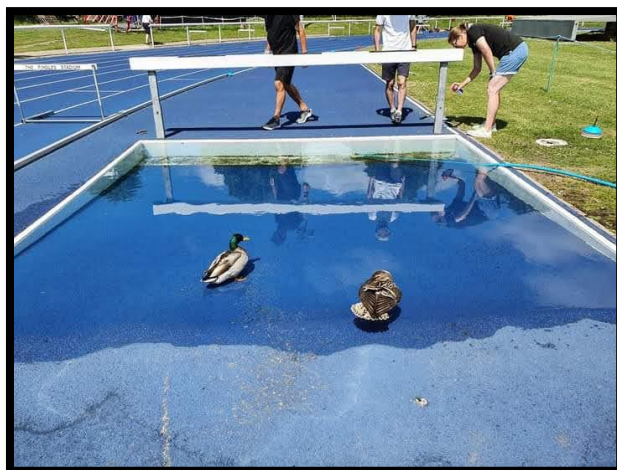


This is given after a second yellow card and the athlete is disqualified. The athlete could have received their first yellow card from another Referee such as the Track, Field or Call Room.

AND FINALLY...

Caption Competition

A prize of a bottle of wine will be awarded for the best suggestion (this will be given at the Conference).





MAFEO STOCK PRICE LIST

MAFEO clipboard	£5
Landscape weather writer by Paperdry	£20
Portrait weather writer by Weatherwriter	£30
Large (A4) band	£2.50
Small (A5) band	£2.50
Pens	£1.80
Pen Refills	£1.20
Rule books	£5.50
MAFEO Mug	£4.50

Should you wish to order please email:

mafeopayments@gmail.com

NEXT NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2023

If you have any suggestions for articles or information you wish to share with other MAFEO members in the next newsletter, either pass it on in person to a member of the committee or email it to

Chairman@mafeo.net.