



## **September 2025**

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## **Save the Day!**

MAFEO will be hosting its AGM and the MCAA conference on

**Sunday 16th November 2025**  
**The event will be held at Light Hall School in**  
**Shirley, Solihull.**



## **Remembering John Pickles**

John Pickles was a long-standing member of MAFEO, and a Midlands Technical Official, based in Cheltenham. He passed away on 22 June 2025.

John began officiating in the late 1970s and continued up until last year where he worked at the Midland Championships. Over the later years, John developed a heart condition, which for some individuals would have meant the end of their career. This was not the case for John. He bought a motability scooter and simply carried on.

John loved working at all levels of athletics. Whether it was a primary school sports day or an international televised event, John made the athletes feel relaxed and focused and he always said, "have a good race", to all athletes on the start line.

In 2012 John was appointed as Chief Starters Assistant at the London Olympic Games. He was instrumental in making the event a great success and there were lots of TV shots of John's smiling face in the background.

John was a really outgoing and fun loving official, who loved a good practical joke. He was also supportive, encouraging and extremely knowledgeable in whatever role he was talking on.

His funeral took place on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July at Cheltenham Crematorium. It was a very well attended event, which illustrated John's immense popularity and lovable character.

## **ATHLETICS TRIVIA QUIZ**

1. In the men's decathlon, what is the exact height (in metres) of the hurdles used during the 110m hurdles event?
2. Which track and field event was first introduced for women at the Olympic Games in 1928, then banned due to concerns about athlete exhaustion, and not reinstated for women until 1960?
3. Who was the first athlete to break the 9-second barrier (with wind assistance) in the men's 100m dash, and what was the wind reading?
4. What is the precise implement weight for the javelin used in the men's competition, and what is its minimum legal length?
5. In the women's heptathlon, which event uses the highest hurdle height, and what is that height?
6. What is the world record (as of 2025) in the men's triple jump, and who holds it?
7. Name the only field event in which competitors are allowed to wear gloves and explain why.
8. Which relay event in international competitions requires each team to hand over a baton exactly three times, and what is the maximum baton length allowed?
9. In the steeplechase, how many water jumps must competitors clear in the Olympic 3000m event?
10. Who is the only athlete to have set world records in both the 400m and 800m events, and in which decades did these achievements occur?

## **MAFEO Officials at Black Country Hammerfest.**



**Several MAFEO officials were in attendance at the hammer throwing event in Telford, which proved to be an athletics competition with a difference.**

The first Hammerfest of 2025 kicked off on a sunny April 5 and was bursting with community spirit and excitement as rock music echoed across the field of Oakengates Leisure Centre.

Aimed at instilling engagement and passion within young throwers by creating a fun and relaxed environment, the competition saw participants traveling across the country to compete.

A close-knit team of experienced MAFEO officials were essential to the smooth sailing of the specialist event, covering all bases from start to finish.

Level 4 official Fiona Hancock said: "We have a nice nucleus of officials for this event now because of the atmosphere and comradery."

From measuring distances and dictating no throws to the seamless running and timing of the event, officials were scattered across the field with an unstoppable attitude.

Hammerfest takes place three times a year, with throwers being split into groups A and B based on their ability and given twelve throws within competitions throughout the day.

Competitors rack up points by throwing personal bests and an overall winner is announced at the end of the final Hammerfest of the year.

Founder Matthew Sutton created Hammerfest as a combination of his childhood coach's fun, competitive projects and hammer throw competitions he attended in Germany that had a party atmosphere which made training more fun - adding to his motivation.

Sutton said: "I want the athletes to take away great memories, improve their ability to compete and provide a reason to stay and excel in our sport."

Black Country Hammerfest uses a fun and relaxed environment to take pressure off the athletes and provides them with eight more throws than other competitions usually allow, giving them the opportunity to take risks without worrying about no throws - the perfect equation for throwing a personal best.

The events focus on getting more young people into the sport when representation in media and many athletics events is not up to scratch.

The excitement reminds athletes that competing can be fun and fosters their talent in an enjoyable way at grassroots level.

These competitions are extremely important to the sport and could not take place without the volunteer officials that spend those Saturdays meticulously recording the athletes' performances.

A real community spirit amongst the officials, event planners, and athletes makes the day what it is.

Level 3 official John Hotchkiss said: "Because it's only hammer we can just focus on that, there's a lovely atmosphere."

With music, Jamaican food, and welly wanging, participants were invited on a fun day out to relax and enjoy themselves, helping them look forward to competing.

It really is an event like no other.

It's not all fun and games though, level 3 official John Murray assures that while it's a relaxing day, the officiating is certainly top notch and taken seriously, although getting to know the competitors over different events does let them take the pressure off and "lighten the load."

The officials at Hammerfest know the event well and are very familiar with the sport, which helps them connect with the athletes and enjoy being a spectator as well as an official - made apparent by their sincere delight and hard work throughout the day.

Report by Marnie McEntee

# Ray Boden Retires



After a lifetime of officiating athletics, Ray Boden has decided to hang up his clipboard and retire from officiating. The starter and starters assistant, having just had his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, has called time on officiating career. For decades, Ray has been a cornerstone of Midlands athletics — so long, in fact, that we can't pinpoint the very year he first officiated.



Over the years, Ray's smiling face has featured at countless events across the Midlands and beyond. None more so than the National Preparatory Schools Athletics Championships, where he's been a familiar presence for an incredible 34 years.

From that very first championship in 1991, Ray has taken on a variety of roles from starting to call room, never missing a year — even in 2021 and 2022, when the event temporarily moved from Alexander Stadium to Nuneaton.

Known far and wide as “the gentleman of officiating,” Ray's kindness, encouragement, and wise words have inspired many up-and-coming Midlands officials to grow and thrive.

This year, Ray announced his retirement from officiating. His absence will be felt deeply, but his legacy — of dedication, warmth, and quiet professionalism — will remain at the heart of every event he touched.



Ray receiving a framed programme from his last National Prep Schools Championships from the organising committee.

Pictured above (left to right), David Aldred, Ray Boden, Margaret Werrett, Richard Brierley, Ian Ritchie (who are the officers of NPSA)

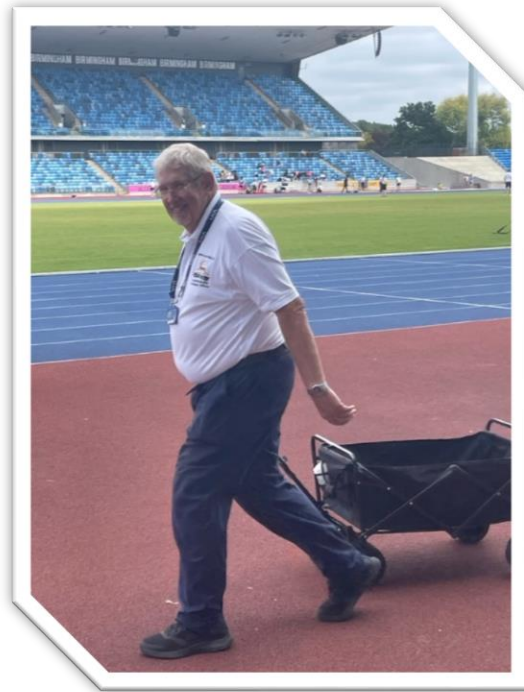
## **MEET THE MAFEO OFFICIALS**

**Name:** Andrew (Andy) Hulse

**Officiating Qualifications:** Field Judge L4; Photo Finish Judge L1

**Roles:** MAFEO committee member roles include Chairman, Newsletter Editor, Website creator  
MCAA Hon. Secretary 2013-2019 & Life member  
Technical Operations Manager Athletics – Commonwealth Games 2022  
ESAA General Committee Member for Worcestershire  
ESAA Track & Field Championship Coordinator

**Hometown or City:** Stourbridge



### **1. How did you get involved in Officiating?**

My youngest daughter became an athlete after injury stopped her gymnastics career, and I was approached by a certain senior Starters Assistant who suggested I might like to take part in an official's course. The rest, just over 20 years is as they say history!

**2. Where are you in your officiating journey?**

I am at the latter stages of my officiating journey, the mind is still very willing, but the body is gradually wearing out. I am now trying to pass on the knowledge and experience I have, to as many other officials as I can whilst still actively pursuing new experiences myself/ I now spend a lot of my time trying to improve the use of technology in the sport and ensuring this is available to all levels of competition.

**3. What is your favourite moment as an official?**

One of my 'highlights' was being part of the Technical Team at the 2012 Olympics, something that I will never forget. More recently it is seeing newer officials growing more confident and achieving ever greater heights.

**4. What do you love most about officiating?**

Working with others, nothing more satisfying than being part of a team and seeing an event through to a successful conclusion. The friendly banter between officials helps me get through some difficult situations.

**5. Do you have a favourite event or venue that you really enjoy (or have enjoyed) officiating at?**

Many officials seem to think that I actually live at the Alexander Stadium, and even some of the staff there seem to be of this opinion. I don't actually live there but some weeks I seem to spend more time there than I actually spend at home. I love long throws, the interaction between the athletes is always fascinating, all the field events hold different challenges which make life as a field official so interesting

**6. What are your ambitions in officiating?**

I suppose my ambitions nowadays are to continue to work with all levels of Officials and athletes and to be able to provide the best competitions for them to take part in. I would love to be a part of the European Championships in Birmingham next year.

**7. When not officiating or being involved in athletics, what do you like to do?**

I like reading, fishing, gardening, listening to music, watching almost any sport, working on my computer, (no surprise there to anyone who knows me), messing around in my garage trying to both fix and build things

**8. What type of sandwich and crisps do you choose for your packed lunch, when officiating?**

I go with whatever is available, I do prefer Cheese and Onion crisps, but I also like Prawn Cocktail which means I often get a second pack at the end!

**9. What would you tell others about becoming an official?**

If you don't know how or what to do in a situation, always ask, most of us have made mistakes, and others are only too happy to help you. ENJOY your officiating, but beware once people realise you do enjoy it, they will always find you another event and another and.....

**10. Do you have anyone who you would like to thank who has supported you in your officiating journey?**

There are a lot of people who have helped me, Maureen Bullen, Kate and Cedric Michel in the early days, others such as Chris Cohen, Malcolm Rogers and Keith Davis who nurtured and put up with me as part of their Technical Teams in far too many major competitions to mention.

**Your MAFEO Committee Members 2024 – 2025**

Hon. Life President – Maureen Bullen

Chairman – Fiona Hancock (Chairman@mafeo.net)

Vice-Chairman – Kenny Ebanks

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

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

Margaret Afford, Stuart Paul, Andrew Hulse, Maggie Murphy, Noel McKakly, Derek Redfern, Chris Blyth, Mark Marshall, Cathy Briggs, Kate Hotchkiss, Freya Webb

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

## **Message from our Treasurer**

Dear Members

Our next 2-year membership period is soon to begin. The google form will open on **15/9/25** and any membership paid from this date will run until December 2027. If you renew your membership before 31/12/2025 the price will be just £15.

New members, please complete the same form, but the 2-year fee will be £20 which will include the new members' pack.

If you need to pay by cheque, please send it to

Yasmine Al-Daftary

30 The Ridgeway

Astwood Bank

B96 6LT

If you cannot complete the google form, please email [mafeopayments@gmail.com](mailto:mafeopayments@gmail.com)

## **ATHLETICS TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. 1.067 metres (42 inches)
2. 800 metres
3. Obadele Thompson (8.79 seconds, +5.0 m/s wind, El Paso, 1996)
4. 800 grams; 2.6 metres (minimum)
5. 100m hurdles; 0.84 metres (33 inches)
6. 18.29 metres, Jonathan Edwards (1995)
7. Hammer throw; gloves protect the hands from friction and injury due to the wire handle.
8. 4x100 metres relay; 30 centimetres
9. 7 water jumps
10. Alberto Juantorena; 1970s

# Officiating Opportunities in Wales



Due to the current situation in the Midlands, where there is a lack of regular access to an indoor athletics arena, developing officials from the Midlands area are at disadvantage to other regions. To rectify this situation, the committee of MAFEO have been in negotiations with England Athletics and Welsh Athletics to provide a positive solution and give officials within the Midlands the chance to gain experience of working at an Indoor Athletics competition.

The outcome of these negotiations has been as follows.

Welsh athletics has permitted MAFEO a limited number of officiating roles within their Indoor Athletics winter programme. In order to prevent any financial barriers to gain experience, England Athletics and MAFEO have agreed to heavily subsidise these officiating positions (in terms of travel and accommodation in Wales).

If you are a developing official and are interested in the officiating opportunities at the Wales indoor meetings, please complete the google form via the link below, or contact Yasmine Al Daftary at mafeopayments@gmail.com before 21st September 2025.

<https://forms.gle/v5TigA4rqWiDi3526>

# MAFEO



## 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](mailto:mafeopayments@gmail.com)

### NEXT NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2025

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](mailto:Chairman@mafeo.net).