



Chairman's Report – Season 2017/2018

Another season of Athletics has come to an end and again and as usual I ponder what to do after mid-March when things slow down! Additionally, this was my last season as Chairman, so this will afford me even more time to step on Michelle's toes at home, something that may not be very welcome - Pilates and/or Uber driving may be a solution.

The season calendar was shortened by a fortnight due to scheduling with the upcoming Commonwealth Games, this has flowed through to the grass roots. Despite this, we managed to organize 16 'local' competitions and trials as well as the State Events.

Two highlights on the competition side for me were the inaugural Nitro Series with the Ridgewood, Hamersley and UWA Combined Centres in November as well as the first Zones Championships at our oval just recently. Both were a great success and from the feedback received, they will stay in the program.

We deliberately tried to change the program from the usual and sometimes tedious Program A and B and place in a few different events and days. The morning of the Nitro with the JLAC Pentathlon and the JLAC Chase for the younger athletes were such events and brought some variety.

Whilst a lot of time and effort goes into organising competitions, you also know that it is really the parents that ensure it all runs efficiently and effectively. Needing over 100 people every Saturday, I know of no sport that requires the same involvement by parents. All but very few people have grasped that concept and realise that no amount of money paid will make up for this. We can simply not run without parent help. Having implemented the coordinator / parent helper concept for every age group a few years ago, it lets parents move around with their athletes and spend valuable time with them and their friends.

Our trainings were of high quality again and I wish to thank our age group coaches as well as the event coaches for the time they spend coaching our athletes. The variety of training was further enhanced with the water running sessions that John introduced. They were well attended with often over 20 athletes and the athletes were able to practice their running techniques and stamina in a no impact environment. Additionally, it fostered the social side by athletes spending time together in the pool in the recovery time.

Another progressive step this season was to employ an Executive Officer. We received a bunch of applications from people who were of high quality and eventually the Board made the decision to employ Sue Jolliffe. Sue has taken on the role with great enthusiasm and diligence. I wish to thank her for her efforts in alleviating the workload from the Board members.

Little Athletics traditionally has a terrible attrition rate and on average 45% of athletes do not return from one year to the next. The sport has not grown significantly in numbers over the years, which in real terms means, we have moved backwards when comparing to other sports. Post the Beijing 2008 Olympics there were approximately 6,500 registered athletes in the Perth Metro area, this is about the same as now. Ideas on how to make the sport more attractive for participants and parents are being explored and hopefully rolled out in the not too distant future.



What will the future bring for our Centre? I think we operate a very good program and it will be a matter of retaining what has been set up over the past five years or so. The Board will remain and it is only the Chairman role that needs to be filled. Despite the efforts of finding a new person have been fruitless so far, I am confident that someone will step up. This will be an opportunity for someone to step in, divide up and delegate the operational activities, something that I admit not having been good at.

It seems to be a year of change with our surrounding Centres also having a Chairperson that is stepping down, I wish to acknowledge my colleagues Carol Hale (Kingsway), Dean Smith (Ridgewood), Steve McCabe (Swan Valley) and Chris Stansbury (Hamersley) who all finish their role with the respective Centres after several years at the helm of the organisation.

Joondalup is now the 5th biggest Centre in the State with 408 registered athletes, this compares to ten years ago where we were not even in the top 10 Centres by athlete numbers. I credit this to the variety in programs we offer, our great coaching as well as the willingness of our parents to step in and help ensure a smooth program on a Saturday morning.

My gratitude goes out to the other members of the Board who spend many hours organising the affairs of the Centre. It would not work without some people stepping up and taking on these roles.

Most of all I thank Michelle for her patience and constant encouragement, this has made it easy for me to do all the tasks and often go beyond what I was required to do. My passion has been endless and I will remain in the sport and continue to help.

To my girls, Martina, Lauren and Claire, I am immensely proud what you have achieved in the sport. Martina broke three Centre records this season (although one did not count as it was not verified on two occasions) and will represent WA at the upcoming Junior National Athletics Championships in Sydney.

Lauren has continued her love of javelin and stepped up every time it mattered and is a willing participant and recipient of Janno's coaching.

Claire enjoys the social side of the sport, but her passion is with Netball, where she is a very handy defender.

They have all understood that my other activities at the Centre mean that I am not there to watch them compete and have taken it in their stride.

This leaves me with wishing all athletes a successful finish to the season and look forward to see you all at our AGM and wind-up at 10am on the 10th of March 2018.

Philippe Bossert, Chairman Joondalup Athletics Centre