

2016 Athletics Facts

ABAC Fact File 46

Power of 10 reduces top athlete performance targets ahead of the next funding cycle.

1. Background. Recent Fact Files have looked at the total numbers of participating athletes in track and field. While overall numbers have been falling there have been claims that elite top 100 numbers in each event have held up. ABAC asked Rob Whittingham if the perceived view was correct for the technical events covered by Fact File 45. What he found is truly astonishing. He compared numbers in 2015 with those of 2010

2. P10 numbers for U20's. The following table shows the number of male athletes in the U20 rankings in technical events that made P 10's top 100 target for 2010 and 2015

	2010	2015	
2kSt	82	67	
110H	71	64	
400H	63	66	
HJ	52	85	
PV	56	62	
LJ	78	76	
TJ	69	49	
SP	79	99	
DT	74	72	
HT	78	77	
JT	63	71	
<hr/>			
U20 Total	765	788	Increase = 2.92%

So based on P10's top hundred targets it would appear reasonable to claim a small increase in numbers over the last 5 years in these technical event groups. However, this is a misrepresentation of the true picture.

3. The lowering of 100 targets from 2010 to 2015. The mission statement for P10 is prominently displayed on its home page. The first paragraph reads.

"The sport of Athletics has a mission to strengthen the depth for every event, in every age group across every nation and region of the UK."

Contrary to meeting these objectives we discovered that P10 has been lowering the top 100 targets since 2010. The U20 targets have been reduced and the new targets are as follows.

2kSt/c lowered from 6:51:00 to 7:00.00,
HJ lowered from 1.89 to 1.85 in 2015
TJ lowered from 13.20 to 13.00 in 2015
DT lowered from 37.00 to 35.00 in 2014
JT lowered from 47.50 to 45.00 in 2014

400H lowered from 59.50 to 61.00 in 2015
LJ lowered from 6.42 to 6.40 in 2015
SP lowered from 12.30 to 11.50 in 2014
HT lowered from 35.50 to 29.00 in 2014

In all, 9 of the 11 events with top 100 targets have been lowered. Events such as the decathlon do not have 100 athletes. **The hammer top 100 cut off target was lowered by 18.3% in 2014.**

Correcting the 2015 figures. We have recalculated the above table using the top 100 target standards of 2010.

	2010	2015	
2kSt	82	52	
110H	71	64	
400H	63	54	
HJ	52	69	
PV	56	62	
LJ	78	69	
TJ	69	42	
SP	79	60	
DT	74	57	
HT	78	63	
JT	63	47	
U20 Total	765	639	reduction = 16.47%

So, whereas P10 figures show that there were 23 more athletes (788-765) achieving top 100 rankings in 2015 compared to 2010, if the 2010 standards are applied there were in fact 126 fewer athletes (765 -639) achieving the 2010 standards in 2015.

ABAC comments. This study shows that by manipulating down the top 100 standards P10 has grossly distorted the number of 2015 athletes performing to target. If the original 2010 standards are applied a claimed gain of 23 athletes becomes a reduction of 126 athletes. That is a miscalculation error of 149 athletes equating to 149/765 or a 19.5% over statement for the numbers in this important age group.

If previous procedures are repeated the 2015 Rankings will be used by UKA in their submission later this year to Sport England for funds for the next 4 year funding cycle (2017-2020).

We note that P10 has previously manipulated performance levels for ranking. In 2009 the then new P10 manager was instructed by UKA to lower ranking levels in order to provide evidence of progress for the 2009 – 2012 funding period which would appear to have taken place even with no actual improvements in levels. (See **Footnote*)

We conclude

1. That the P10 mission statement for athletics has not been met and there has been a deliberate attempt to obscure a serious decline in standards in technical events.
2. That UKA, by hiding the declines in athlete participation and performance and (as previously reported) by concealing a serious decline in coach and officials numbers, is not presenting a true picture to funding bodies.

It is time Sport England audited UKA including a review of Power of 10.

***Footnote.** *The number of athletes in the top 10 Rankings was set as a KPI for the funding cycle 2009 to 2012. UKA instructed P10 to lower many of the Ranking targets for 2009 so that there would appear to be clear improvements during that funding cycle even if the 2008 numbers were only equalled. The present 2013 to 2016 funding cycle added another set of KPI's and these related to the number of top Ranked 100 athletes in each event. As we enter another funding cycle we can see that the top 100 Rankings targets have been reduced to make it appear there has been clear progress. In this Fact File we quantify the sleight of hand.*

End March 8 2016

