

2012 Athletics Facts

ABAC Fact File 15

Funded Athletes' performances at the 2012 Olympics

Introduction: In Fact File 9 ABAC looked at the number of athletes funded for the 2012 Olympics. Their performances, potential and costs were detailed. To summarise: 54 athletes were funded in Bands A and B and Relay categories. An additional 40 athletes received financial support as part of a longer term development plan. The total cost of the elite athletes programme in Olympic year was c£4,300,000.

How did they perform? 79 athletes were selected to represent GB at the 2012 Olympic Games including the relay squads and the marathon runners. In the men's competition there was only a single GB representative in 9 of the 21 individual events. In the women competition 7 of the 17 individual events had only 1 GB competitor.

Of the 46 individual athletes on Band A and B Podium Funding in 2012, only 28 actually made it to the Games.

9 of the 46 were injured either prior to selection for the Games or subsequent to selection.

Only 9 Podium funded athletes made the top 8 (the minimum expectation for podium funding)

Only 1 podium funded athlete (Ennis) set a PB and only 3 (Ohuruogu, Farah and Rhys Williams) set a season's best. **Grabarz**, who was equal 3rd for the bronze medal along with two others in the high jump, **was not podium funded** in Olympic year having been removed from earlier support funding.

Osagie who ran a 4th fastest British All time (1.43.77) for 8th in the final of the 800mts **was not Podium funded**

Pavey and **Bleasdale** who finished 7th and 8th respectively in both the women's 5000 and the 10000, (both set PB's in the latter) **were not on Podium Funding**.

Lawrence Clarke finished 4th in the 110h final **was not on Podium Funding**.

Alex Smith made the final of the hammer, the first British athlete in over 30 years to do so and **was not on Podium funding**. **Sophie Hitchens** in the womens' hammer who also made the final and broke the British record **was not on podium funding**.

Of the 129 medals available across 43 individual athletics events plus 4 in the relays, GB took 6 individual medals. That is 2 below the target set by the GB's Head Coach, Charles Van Commenee and 4 below UKA's CEO, Niels De Vos's prediction of 10. An earlier funding target

of 12 medals set 8 years ago has been quietly forgotten.

Overall team performance. GB was 4th in the athletics medal table but this kind of reckoning is somewhat skewed because of the value given to gold, i.e., a solitary gold medal ranks a country higher than another with no gold medals even if they have many silver and bronze ones.

A more accurate reflection and assessment of a country's athletics' team's achievement is to use the points tally for final positions 1-8.

On the points table GB were ranked 7th in London; a drop from 4th in Sydney 2000, 5th in Athens 2004 and 6th in Beijing 2008.

Judgement day for UKA. Head Coach, Van Commenee (on a contract paying him £1 million over the last 4 years) is renowned for his "famously uncompromising approach". His task was to get the Olympic athletics in peak condition for the biggest days in their careers. Sadly many team members failed to meet realistic performance targets. Indeed if it had not been for the 2 gold medals won by Farah and some events lacking world class performers team GB would be clutching even fewer medals than the final tally of 6. And it may be questioned what credit can CVC take for Mo Farah's 2 gold medals because he had been in the UK system for 10 years and only improved to his world beating level once he moved himself to Oregon, USA, under Nike's sponsorship and their coach, Alberto Salazar?

Comment: So after 12 years of lottery and exchequer funding and sponsorship to UK Athletics amounting to c£300m, there has been no improvement on the 6 medals won in Sydney in 2000. But this does not represent the true decline in standards. In Sydney team athletics GB ranked 4th in the finals' points table but in London they dropped down to 7th.

All of which begs the question, just how effective has funding of UKA been and what has their c140 strong team of staff been doing in the last Olympic cycle?

By comparison, cycling has just 10 Olympic track events for men and women, where only one competitor from each country could be entered (a rule brought in by the IOC after Beijing, where GB cyclists won 14 medals). In London GB's cyclists won 9 medals (7 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze)

If British athletes are to improve their showing at the Rio Olympics in 2016 and the two World Championship in between, then a thorough **independent review and analysis** and assessment of the effectiveness of UK Athletics spending, coaching and management structure must be carried out as soon as possible. (Please not Mori Ipsos)

The base of our sport has been eroded to a point where it will soon not be viable. CVC knows he has been got out of jail by some golden oldies and medals in some very weak events at the London Olympics. He is smart enough to know there is not sufficient new talent emerging for anyone to achieve an improvement by the 2016 Olympic Games. The

ABAC view is that CVC will not take up the challenge. And we suggest the following prayer for Funded Athletes.

The Funded Athlete's Prayer. *(With Acknowledgement to Milton "On his Blindness")*

When I consider how your tax is spent

And my performance which I try to hide

Lodged with me useless

Though my soul more bent to serve therewith my masters

And present my best account

Lest they returning chide

Does UK Sport exact day labour - cash denied?

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