

Clubs will be affected by new British Athletics 2014 – 2016 Rule Changes.

1. Background. Over the last few years ABAC has commented on efforts by the sports NGB's to increase revenue from athlete membership. We predicted, (and it has come about), that clubs would not fully comply with the request to register all members as this would entail them extracting fees from athletes unwilling to pay for EA registration. Revenue income to EA from affiliation fees has over the last year hovered around £1million. This income is way below the levels required to fund the 80+ staff at England Athletics. EA has taken steps to ensure that in future income from club and athlete affiliation fees will be substantially increased. Here is the latest information.

2. EA Initiatives. The minutes of the EA National Council meeting on 27.11.2013 contain the following.

Affiliation.

“Soft” compliance measures being applied working directly with individual clubs to support them around payment processes etc., whilst a more robust policy document is designed and finalised in draft by the board sub group leading on membership process and consultation – this group meets for the first time in December to consider this work.

On December 19th 2013 British Athletics released details of changes to the UKA Rule Book for the period 2014 – 2016. Here are the changes which were proposed by EA and supported by the Chief Executives Forum.

Affiliation and Registration. Rule number Generally 3, 10(2) and 203

Requirement that athletes must be registered in the current year with their National Association in order to compete in their National Championships and are expected to be currently registered in the current year with their National Association in order to compete First claim in Open team competition.

Athletes returning to competition after 12 months. Rule number 3(9)

If an athlete has not taken part in any competition for 12 months or longer, then before re-joining their original Club or joining another Club they must apply for exemption to the Home Country Eligibility Committee.

3. Comments

Up till now it has been accepted practice that clubs are consulted and vote on proposed new rule changes. This appears not to have happened in this case since the time between EA discussing plans to tighten affiliation matters (and fees collection) and British Athletics announcing the rule changes is barely 3 weeks. British Athletics claim that regarding Affiliation and Registration ***“This Rule confirms the existing arrangements but not previously included in the UKA Rule book.”***

ABAC believes that this is a sleight of hand by our NGB's aimed at putting in place rules which have not been debated and which will have a detrimental effect on clubs' operations.

It is time for clubs to take a collective stand against the undemocratic bodies, set up at Government's behest, who in recent years have presided over a contracting sport.

End.

20th Dec 2013