

2015 Athletic Facts

Fact File 34

An analysis of youth and junior male thrower numbers in 2015

Background. In FF 33 we recorded a dramatic decline in the number of senior male throwers over the last 5 years. The obvious question is – can this decline be reversed in the years ahead? To obtain a good indication of whether future numbers will increase or decrease we need look no further than the change in younger age group numbers over the last 5 years. We asked Rob Whittingham to analyse the figures.

Procedure. The following analysis uses Power of 10 data. The P10 site is financed by UKA from a Sport England grant. For this trend comparison we have taken as the starting point 2010 which is the year UKA changed the coaching structure which many claimed would reduce the number of specialist coaches for the more technical events. The numbers for 2015 are up to September. While there may be a few more additions during the remaining period of 2015 past analysis shows these should be so minimal as not to affect this study's conclusions. The numbers for the younger age groups are detailed below together with the cut off performance below which numbers are not recorded. The lower target performances have not changed from 2010 to 2015 so actual numbers are directly comparable.

Numbers of throwers

Table 1 Distribution in 2010 and 2015

	Min Distance	Numbers 2010	Numbers Sept 2015	Decline
Shot				
U20	10 m	234	167	28.6%
U17	10 m	440	325	26.1%
U15	9.5m	556	436	21.6%
Discus				
U20	25 m	225	181	19.6%
U17	25 m	435	353	18.9%
U15	23 m	457	378	18.4%
Hammer				
U20	25 m	105	79	24.8%
U17	24 m	194	149	23.2%
U15	23 m	195	159	18.5%
Javelin				
U20	35 m	257	194	24.5%
U17	35 m	370	279	24.6%
U15	30 m	424	318	25.0%

Trends in drop out rates. An U15 in 2010 will be U20 in 2015. Comparing numbers of U15's in 2010 with the U20's in 2015 gives a measure of the drop out rate over the last 5 years. If the number of U15's from 2015 reduce at the same rate over the next 5 years then the numbers of under 20's in 2020 may be predicted.

Table 2. Drop out rates and a prediction

	Shot	Discus	Hammer	Javelin
2010 U15	556	457	195	424
2015 U20	167	181	79	194
Drop Out	70%	60.4%	59.5%	54.2%
2015 U15	436	378	159	318

	<i>Shot</i>	<i>Discus</i>	<i>Hammer</i>	<i>Javelin</i>
2020 U 20 Predicted	130	150	64	146

Comments. This study shows that the decline in the numbers of young throwers is even greater than that of the senior males which we detailed in FF 33. If the trend of the last 5 years continues at the same rate then by 2020 there will be fewer than 400 U20 throwers in the Country. This is a reasonable estimate as discus throwers frequently also throw the shot. Hammer and javelin competitors tend not to double up.

ABAC has tried on several occasions to obtain up to date coach numbers from Sport England and the NGB's but without success. As UKA issue Coach licences it is reasonable to expect they know the true situation. Declining throws coach numbers results in fewer throwers. The decline in throwers has now been quantified by ABAC. Perhaps UKA is aware of the situation. After all we used their own P10 figures. It is time somebody in authority addressed this and the coach issue.

There is complacency in UKA, or it may be ignorance. Here is one of the mission statements taken from the athletics document submitted to Sport England prior to the 2013 – 2017 funding cycle.

- **UKA has invested a separate “Legacy Award” (paid via Sport England) to completely rewrite and modernize the formal coach education system, creating a genuinely World exemplar which will benefit sport for decades to come.**

Signed by : **John Graves**, Exec Chair England Athletics and **Niels de Vos**, Chief Executive UKA.

Well that's alright then!

End