

2015 Athletic Facts

Fact File 35

An analysis of youth, junior and male hurdler numbers in 2015

Background. In our quest to quantify the state of athletics' technical events we move on to the hurdles disciplines. We asked Rob Whittingham to analyse the figures for all male age groups including senior men. Once again we took 2010 as the base starting year

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. At the time many claimed the new coaching structure would reduce the number of specialist coaches for the more technical events.

Table 1 lists the number of competitors at the end of 2010 together with the numbers up to September 2015. 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. Alongside the numbers are the cut off times over which performances are not recorded in the P10 data. The cut off times have not changed from 2010 to 2015 so actual numbers are directly comparable.

Numbers of hurdlers

Table 1 Distribution in 2010 and 2015

Sprint Hurdles	<i>Senior men 110m 107 cm hurdles, U17 100m 91.4cm hurdles,</i>	Numbers 2010	<i>U20 110m 99 cm hurdles, U15 80m and 84cm hurdles</i>	Numbers Sept 2015	Decline
Senior	Max Time 18.0sec	265		223	15.9%
U20	18.5sec	143		120	16.1%
U17	16.0sec	233		218	6.4%
U15	14.0sec	418		357	14.6%
400 Hurdles	<i>Senior men and U20 99 cm hurdle,</i>		<i>U17 84cm hurdles</i>		
Senior	63.0sec	417		292	30.0%
U20	64.0sec	148		105	29.1%
U17	65.0sec	165		104	37.0%
Steeplechase	<i>Senior men 3000m,</i>		<i>U20 2000m.</i>		<i>U17 1500m.</i>
Senior	11:00.0	359		263	26.7%
U20	7.30.0	155		108	30.3%
U17	5:10.0	116		88	24.1%

Trends in drop out rates. An U15 in 2010 would 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. The only discipline which includes U15 age group is the sprint hurdles.

Sprint hurdles. In 2010 there were 418 U15 sprint hurdlers. In the year to Sept 2015 there were 120 U20 hurdlers. That is a reduction of 298 which is equivalent to a **drop out rate of 71.3%** over the last 5 years.

If this trend continues for the next 5 years **in 2020 there will be fewer than 100 U20 sprint hurdlers in the Country**

Steeplechase. Surrey County AAA has informed ABAC that in 2015 there is not a single U20 steeplechaser in the County. The prospects look bleak for this event

Comments. This study shows that the decline in the numbers of hurdlers is even greater than the decline of throwers detailed in FF33 and FF34.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the reduction in specialist coaches for the more technical events is having a serious affect on the numbers taking up and being retained in these events. The decline is so serious that in another 5 years numbers will be at such a low level that many League and club competitions will be unviable.

In the last decade we have seen all senior club Cup competitions disappear. That fate also looms over many Leagues. And yet the NGB's are in denial and their paymasters too. They are either complicit in a major cover up or are incompetent. Probably both.

Here is another mission statement taken from the athletics document submitted to Sport England prior to the 2013 – 2017 funding cycle.

- **To build on the success of the current Whole Sport Plan, this 2013 – 2017 submission is focused on the refinement, evolution and sustainability of our current strategies –we have delivered a step change and the scope for further success is demonstrable and defined. The investments we have made in key areas such as networks, school club links, coaching networks, talent retention and community running groups can now be augmented with the introduction of new products and campaigns to further engage the nation in athletic participation.**

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

In one respect this series of claims have been met. There has been a step change. Down not up..

End