

2016 Athletics Facts

Fact File 58

Men's Distance Events

Fact File 55 recorded a decline in participation in most men's track and field events since 2009. In the same period distance events showed significant increases. We noted that 2009 numbers were low because of fewer distance track races in the UK at that time. So we asked Rob Whittingham to delve further back to look at trend figures over a longer time period. Here is what he found for UK and World Rankings.

1. 5000 Metres. UK Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
13:30.0	3	7	10
14:00.0	20	21	47
14:20.0	52	53	93

It is clear that over the last 20 years there has been no increase in performance numbers. Over the last 30 years there has been a decline of 50%.

5000 Metres. World Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
13:20.0	69	33	15
13:40.0	223	143	146
14:00.0	641	232	200+

While UK numbers have declined by 50% since 1986 world numbers increased by over 300%.

2. 10000 Metres UK Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
28:30.0	4	4	18
29:30.0	13	15	40
30:30.0	41	36	70

There has been virtually no increase from 1996 and a 50% decrease since 1986.

Compare this to the numbers achieving much higher world standards

10000 Metres World Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
28:00.0	77	40	32
28:30.0	157	127	102
29:00.0	317	289	200+

Again, while UK numbers have declined by 50% world numbers increased by 50% to 200%.

3. Marathon UK Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
2:15:00	3	7	10
2:20:00	15	14	53
2:25:00	37	36	130

There has been no increase from 1996 and a 70% decrease from 1986

Compare this to the numbers achieving much higher world standards

Marathon World Athletes

Level	2016	1996	1986
2:10:00	104	23	10
2:12:00	219	83	42
2:15:00	432	221	150+

Again, while UK numbers have declined by 70% world numbers increased by 300% to 1000%

Summary. In the 18 years since UKA was formed there has been no increase in the number of quality long distance runners despite substantial exchequer and lottery funding. If the levels from 1986 (10 years before UKA) are used there has been a 50% to 70% drop in numbers.