

2017 Athletics Facts

Fact File 61

Drop Out Rates

Rob Whittingham has given ABAC an exclusive preview of his article in this year's British Athletics Annual.

Here is what he will publish

For this year I have decided to look at drop out rates among track and field athletics. Given the coverage of Power of 10 it is remarkable that British Athletics/England Athletics do not publish comprehensive drop out analysis. The only previously published figures are for small numbers of Under 15 athletes and some of these definitely contain errors.

The following are taken from the topsinathletics database and refer to athletes who appear in the rankings on the website.

1. Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under15 to Senior

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2011-2012	13,694	5,883	42.96%
2015-2016	11,563	4,681	40.48%

Women Under 15 to Senior

2011-2012	9,535	3,737	39.19%
2015-2016	9,146	3,483	38.08%

(Under 13 athletes are excluded because very few make the rankings in their first year as Under 15)

2. Two Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under 13 to Senior

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2011-2013	16,873	9,669	57.48%
2014-2016	15,057	8,707	57.83%

Women Under 13 to Senior

2011-2013	13,011	6,884	52.91%
2014-2016	12,452	6,793	54.55%

3 , Three Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under 13 to Senior

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2011-2014	16,873	11,405	67.59%
2013-2016	17,951	12,624	70.32%

Women Under 13 to Senior

2011-2014	13,011	8,394	64.51%
2013-2016	14,735	9,953	67.55%

Comment. The 1 year drop out rate has improved slightly but the longer term drop out rates are getting worse. It should be noted that these figures are for athletes making the website rankings. There will be athletes who fall below these levels who still continue in the sport. Equally athletes who only perform at levels below the rankings are more likely to drop out.

Long Term Drop Out Rates

For this analysis I used the total number of junior athletes (Under 13 to Under 20) recorded on the topsinathletics database in 2006 and looked at the number still recorded in 2012, 2014 and 2016. Many of the athletes competed at levels below that required to make the rankings.

4. Six Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under 13 to Under 20

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2006-2012	16,455	14,177	86.16%

Women Under 13 to Under 20

2006-2012	14,530	12,618	86.84%
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5. Eight Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under 13 to Under 20

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2006-2014	16,455	14,840	90.19%

Women Under 13 to Under 20

2006-2014	14,530	13,236	91.09%
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6. Ten Yearly Drop Out Rates

Men Under 13 to Under 20

Year	At Start	Lost	Dropout
2006-2016	16,455	14,177	93.75%

Women Under 13 to Under 20

2006-2016	14,530	13,705	94.32%
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Whilst the figures do not give an absolutely complete picture, they are large enough to give a very good indication of drop out rates in track and field athletics.