

## 2017 Athletics Facts

### Fact File 63

#### Niels de Vos- UKA's failed CEO has the Midas touch

**Introduction.** Among his more memorable contributions Nigel Farage asked EU Council President Herman Von Rompuy I “*Who are you,? I have never heard of you*”. Many in the athletics fraternity could well pose the same questions to UKA's CEO for the last 10 years – Niels de Vos – a man who has kept a very low profile and has overseen a decline in all aspects of our sport during his period in office.

When Niels was appointed in 2007 there was a fanfare of trumpets for the man who had been the CEO of Sale Sharks and had been in charge of the 2002 Commonwealth Games held in Manchester. The fact that he knew nothing about athletics was considered irrelevant and UKSport happily set him 3 key targets against which his performance was to be measured. Namely:

1. To increase the number of medals won – He **Failed** (see table below)
2. To reduce the staff at UKA by 50% - He **Failed** (the staff have doubled)
3. To use his business acumen to increase sponsorship to the point where public funding was no longer required – He **Failed** (all the major sponsors have been lost and the administration is still dependant on public and lottery funding)

#### Better to be a failed administrator than a successful athlete

CEO rewards. Since his appointment 10 years ago Niels has received average annual pay increases of 8% at a time when the National pay growth hovered around the 1% mark. Not for him the effects of the 2008 financial crash. In that year alone his salary ballooned from £128,333 to £169,301, an increase of 22.4%.

In his 10 years in office Niels has received a total of £2,144,720. Compare the growth in his salary with the actual number of medals won by British athletes in Championship years

|              | <i>De Vos Annual Remuneration</i> | <i>Olympic/World medals</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • 2007/2008  | £138.333                          | 7                           |
| • 2008/2009  | £169,301                          | 7                           |
| • 2009/2010  | £192,981                          |                             |
| • 20120/2011 | £187,169                          | 7                           |
| • 2011/2012  | £182,806                          | 6                           |
| • 2012/2013  | £276,594                          | 6                           |
| • 2013/2014  | £251,119                          |                             |
| • 2014/2015  | £232,313                          | 7                           |
| • 20152016   | £236,318                          | 7                           |
| • 2016/2017  | £287,736                          | 6                           |

Athlete rewards. And how much have top athletes received from their endeavours? One of the prime sources of income for athletes is the prize money they earn from the Diamond League. In 2017 **the top 28** British athletes earned \$374,791 in total, less than Niels de Vos paid himself in the year ending April 2017 (\$376,934). The top 28 athletes include Mo Farah. The highest British money earner in the 2017 Diamond League was CJ Ujah who won the 100 metre final, earning a total of \$63,000. Significantly this was substantially less than de Vos had paid into **his pension fund in 2017** which was **\$88,575**.

**Comment.** Niels has done very well for himself while athletics has declined at grass roots level and has not moved forward as far as medal counts at major Championships. He has failed to reduce staff numbers by the agreed target and has failed to gain new first tier sponsors.

Meanwhile our top athletes have earned significantly less than the CEO is paid.

The real scandal is that UKSport have not acted to punish the CEO's failings.

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**Footnote.**

Appointed in 2007 as CEO of UKA Ltd., Niels de Vos's remuneration package comprises a base salary plus a contribution to a money purchase scheme plus an annual pension contribution. The 2013 accounts also include another salary component detailed as a "long term incentive plan accrual." He received a bonus of £100,000 in 2013 for **decreasing** (!! ) the medal count in the home Olympics in 2012.