



Review of EMAC Track & Field Activity 2021/22

Despite a late start to the 2021 Outdoor season and the consequent crowding of activities EMAC managed to facilitate a range of good quality Track & Field competitions in 2021.

Track & Field League

Unlike some other Masters' area clubs we managed to stage (nearly) all of the Track & Field League matches across the 4 rounds with a highly competitive Final in late September. The numbers of teams competing in the League were down on previous years as not all clubs were able to fully recover from the effects of the pandemic at that stage. However, many of the athletes from these clubs still managed to compete by turning out as 2nd claim members for other teams that were in the League.

The problems with hosting league matches were not all attributable to the pandemic but in many cases relate to getting full access to tracks with an increasing number only offering limited access particularly in relation to the long throws' facilities.

Milton Keynes AC kindly hosted the Final again providing excellent support in what was a trying year. Milton Keynes narrowly won the Men's competition ahead of local rivals Bedford whilst Fairlands Valley Spartans won the Ladies competition by a considerable margin ahead of Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes won the Baldwin Trophy for the best combined Men's/Ladies performance.

The League is already established for the 2022 season with fixture dates set and venues being finalised. The first competition will be back to our traditional format of the first Wednesday in May. We have had to bring the final 2 matches slightly earlier so that we keep clear of the Commonwealth Games which will have a significant impact on both athlete and officials' availability. The Final will be back at Bedford on Sunday September 4th.

Championships

Because of the compressed season last year we were unable to find a practical date for an Outdoor Championships but we did manage to stage an Indoor Championships at Lee Valley. The usual opportunity of combining our Indoor Championships with the BMAF Indoor Pentathlon Championships at Lee Valley was no longer available to us because of a necessity based move of the BMAF Championships to Sheffield. EMAC and VAC, therefore, agreed to stage a combined Indoor Championships under their own organization.

This provided many challenges not the least of which that the only date we could get for our 2022 championships was in 2021. Despite the proximity to Christmas they were very well supported by athletes and we have had very positive feedback from those who participated.

Finding a date and venue for an Outdoor Championships in 2022 is again proving difficult in part due to the compression of the season by the Commonwealth Games. We are hoping to stage something late in the season but there are no firm plans at the moment.

Inter area competition

EMAC took part in the England Masters Athletics Association (EMAA) outdoor Inter Area at Nuneaton back in July. Despite being undertaken at relatively short notice and fraught with all of the general organization problems of being at the tail end of a pandemic it proved a very popular event with 9 regional teams entering- the largest number ever.

EMAC sent strong teams with the Men coming 2nd behind hosts Midlands Masters and the Ladies coming 4th in a tight competition again won by Midlands. Overall we came 2nd on a combined basis behind the hosts.

We have an Indoor Inter Area planned for Sunday March 13th and strong teams are coming together. We also have an Outdoor Inter Area planned back at Nuneaton for July 31st 2022 which is right in the middle of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. This may provide some challenges!

In summary a very successful 9 months or so for EMAC Track & Field despite all of the limitations that resulted from the overall pandemic environment.

Graeme Packman

EMAC Track & Field Secretary