

The IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System



President's Message

"I am convinced that this programme will have a very positive impact on the future of our sport. We are planting the seeds for long-term growth and our Member Federations will reap the benefits. If this programme achieves its aims, as I am certain that it will be, my presidency will have been as successful as I could ever have wished it to be." With this integration of the athlete and coach development pathways, the IAAF CECS will take care of the 'seeds' from gathering and planting, through to maturation and 'harvesting'. In short, the IAAF has truly created a 'total coach education' system to meet the needs of Athletics now, and in the future."

Lamine Diack, President IAAF, 2007

Introduction

Recognising that the resources and effort involved in developing an education programme may be beyond capabilities on a national level, the IAAF operates a Coaches Education and Certification System (CECS) which is available as a service to Member Federations which would like to make use of it.

In March 2007, the IAAF Development Commission meeting in Mombasa, Kenya approved a new the present and future fulfilment of the objectives of the Athletics' World Plan.

The CECS now features five levels of courses. For each course level the IAAF provides a standard syllabus, qualified lecturers and the necessary learning support materials. Financial resources for the system come from the IAAF and its Area associations, Olympic Solidarity and other partners on the international and national levels, as well as self-funded options at the higher levels. Operation of CECS is co-ordinated by the IAAF Member Services Department (MSD) and the IAAF Regional Development Centres (RDCs).

The new 5-Level CECS structure has been created to specifically address the following areas (see 'Fig.1' pdf and 'Fig 2' pdf):

- Combining the traditional implementation of the CECS with the existing operations of *IAAF Kids' Athletics*, *IAAF Youth Athletics* and the *IAAF Academy* into an integrated system.
- Provision of a cohesive training for coaches to develop the competence to implement the *IAAF Kid's Athletics* programme of training and competition and be able to 'hand-hold' children through the transition into the 'real Athletics' of their youth years.
- Creation of a clear *Coach Development Pathway* that mirrors and supports the *Athlete Development Pathway* so that coaches are able to progress at an individual rate. As they move along the coaching pathway they will benefit from the development of their coaching, according to their potential. This pathway is now more challenging and specific at the higher levels, as well as more attainable and realistic at lower levels
- Implementation of a programme which is competence-focussed, rather than knowledge-based; and which updates existing educational materials to incorporate the latest practical and technical information with flexible, interactive delivery media; resulting in a future-proofed programme.

Entry to the CECS is either through the Level I or Level II course which are staged nationally and are designed to train a large number of coaches who can work with athletes in specific phases of the Athlete Development Pathway, at the grass roots of the sport - in clubs and schools.

Please note: Individuals interested in attending a Level I or Level II course should contact their National Federation directly.

Level III and Level IV courses are normally staged at the RDCs and are designed for a smaller number of coaches who will have specialist duties within their Federation. The Level V is the IAAF Academy programme

The long-term goals of the original CECS remain enshrined in the new structure:

- to ensure that each country has sufficient coaches, qualified according to international standards, to enable its athletics programmes to function as effectively as possible;
- to ensure that each region, and in turn, each country, is eventually capable of educating its own coaches to the same international standards without dependence on outside resources.

Additional objectives of the CECS now include:

- to provide competence, knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of athletics to coaches in order to equip them to provide opportunities for all athletes, regardless of age, gender, race or ability, to reach their potential;
- to foster the ethical and moral development of coaches;
- to provide a standard curriculum with a worldwide application leading to a professional qualification for coaches;
- to make an appropriate contribution to the development of athletics in each community while respecting the values of that community;
- to increase opportunities for women to become certified and to work as Athletics coaches;
- to contribute to making Athletics the “number one sport in schools by 2012”.

For details of the 5 Levels of award see ‘Table 1’ pdf and below:

Level I

In 2006, the IAAF started to implement its ambitious Youth Athletics programme intended for both schools and clubs. The main objective of the IAAF is to make Athletics the “number one sport in schools by 2012”. Kids’ Athletics has been known in the past mostly as a fun and well-balanced introduction to athletics-like competition. The emphasis was clearly on the competitive environment for children aged 7-12 years but now with the introduction of the new Level I in the CECS, there is the opportunity to emphasise and develop the educational aspects of Kids’ Athletics.

Additional to the provision of a cohesive education programme for coaches to develop the competence to implement the *IAAF Kid’s Athletics*, KA, programmes of competition and training will be acquisition of the skills and knowledge to take children through the transition into the ‘real Athletics’ of their youth years of 13-15.

Around the world the *IAAF Kids’ Athletics* and similar national programmes have involved hundreds of thousands of children in fun, athletics-like competition. Without doubt, one of the greatest disappointments, and at odds with the response of children to these competitions, has been the poor retention of these children in the athletics community and their transfer to ‘club athletics’. The new Level I will produce qualified *Youth Coaches* who will not only be able to train and prepare young children for *Kids’ Athletics* competitions but also provide the ‘bridge’ to ‘real’ athletics. At grass roots it is the affiliation to individuals that determines retention and Level I *Youth Coaches* will be competent and able to take the kids through to the youth programmes of training and competition relevant to 13-15 years of age. In the final analysis it will be these interpersonal relationships and the human element that will effect retention and transition, more than any impersonal system, no matter how well intentioned.

To make the most efficient use of resources and ensure the optimum application and activity, Level I courses will be conducted at locations in the countries of Member Federations, using IAAF accredited Level I Lecturers and standardised course materials.

Level II

The Level II course is intended to train coaches for effective work with youth and beginner athletes, the ‘club athletes’. The Level II syllabus covers all event groups and emphasises the practical skills of coaching. At the same time, the Level II course provides a theoretical base which is sufficient to allow coaches to continue learning, either through their own efforts or within the structure of the CECS. Entry for the Level II is granted to successful and active Level I coaches but entry can also be made directly from suitably profiled individuals (see Table 1).

On completion of the course, the Level II certified coach will be expected to be able to introduce athletes to the rough form of each event covered on the course. The Level II certified coach will also understand the concept of long term planning of training and be able to plan and implement training sessions within a training microcycle.

To make the most efficient use of resources, Level II courses will be, as for Level I, conducted at locations in the countries of the Member Federations, using IAAF accredited Level II Lecturers and standard course materials. The course structure and timetable for Level II courses are flexible (provided certain specified requirements are met) in order to adapt to local conditions. The norm will be for a 14 day course.

For more information on the Level I and Level II Coach please read *The Role of the Level I and Level II Coach* pdf

Level III

The Level III course is designed to be an introduction to performance coaching for coaches who have performed well at Level II and have gained a level of coaching specialisation in one of the following six event groups:

- Sprints and Hurdles
- Middle and Long Distance Running
- Race Walks
- Jumps
- Throws
- Combined Events

With this specialisation they can begin to meet their country's need for high level coaches. It is anticipated that the majority of Level III participants will continue to Level IV. In addition to elements specific to the events group, the Level III syllabus contains core elements which are common to all events.

On completion of a Level III course a coach will be expected to be able to identify and coach the basic competition model for each event within an event group. The coach will also be expected to be able to plan and implement a series of appropriate training sessions within the context of an annual training plan.

Level IV

The Level IV course builds on the experiences of Level III and can be thought of as the development of performance coaching, providing coaches with advanced level instruction in their chosen event group. As with Level III, the Level IV syllabus includes event specific elements but more of the common core elements are now studied with a specific application to the event group context.

On completion of the Level IV course coaches will be able to identify and coach high level and advanced competition models for their specific event or events. They will also be expected to be able to plan and implement macrocycles of training for high level athletes within the context of a multi-year plan. These plans should lead to the achievement of potential, elite performance and competitive results.

Level III and Level IV course are conducted at the RDCs. Entry to Level IV is open to coaches who pass the Level III assessment procedures, have completed a minimum of one further year of practical coaching experience and have been recommended by their National Federation.

Level V – The IAAF Academy Programme

Perhaps the most important educational initiative in recent years to support the development of key personnel in Athletics was the introduction of the IAAF Academy in 2004, providing professional education of the highest level. To achieve this the MSD has created partnerships with respected and recognised universities worldwide to offer courses which blend academic rigour in the sport sciences with the practical experiences of the most elite of IAAF experts.

The Academy aims to provide the coach with the relevant professional knowledge, understanding and practical experience to create an environment capable of delivering high levels of individual and team performance at specific events, or the development of innovative coaching development

environments, over multiple seasons. It recognises an athlete-centred approach and the role of Academy coaches as leaders and managers of a support network assembled around the athlete. Central to each course design is a philosophy that focuses on meeting the practical demands and challenges that face coaching at this level. Utilising a problem-solving approach, the perspectives of multiple disciplines are brought together in order to facilitate innovative and creative solutions. Coaches are encouraged to explore and develop the critical factors that impact on this process namely; their personal coaching, leadership and management skills. The components of Observation and Analysis, Feedback, Planning, Preparation and in-event Performance are examined from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Implementation of the new System

The change from any system to a new system requires the management of change, with ongoing evaluation of quality and progress. Change management can be considered both a process and an outcome. The creation, testing and implementation of the new IAAF CECS structure is an evolutionary process, not a revolutionary one. But it is also a process which leads to an outcome, the efficient emplacement and operation of the new system. It must involve all partners to ensure that new CECS participants are catered for during the change, without ignoring the legacy and needs of existing CECS qualified coaches. This management of change must be applied in a balanced manner to each level of the new system, reflecting the fact that the work force requirements of a five-level system are substantially different from those of a three-level structure (see 'Fig. 3' pdf). Additionally, the implementation has to embrace the translation of all materials, at each level, into the languages of the CECS: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Portuguese.

Level I

During the second half of 2006, two Level I Lecturers' pilot courses were successfully conducted in Mauritius and Beijing. Each coach on these courses was informed of their evaluation and encouraged to implement programmes of activity within their National Federations. A pilot Level I course conducted in Boulouris, France in early 2007 confirmed the previous experiences of the course content; and finalised the structure and materials for the two complimentary elements of the course, for Kids' Athletics and for Youth, 13-15 years.

Following the testing, evaluation and confirmation of the Level I syllabus, curriculum and materials, the process of training and qualifying Level I Lecturers could commence. During 2007, a total of nine Level I Lecturers Seminars will take place, with one 6-day seminar assigned to each RDC and the CECS Level I becomes implemented.

Level II

The inaugural pilot course testing the Level II curriculum and syllabus takes place in Brisbane, Australia during December 2007. Following the course, there will be a process of feedback and evaluation, involving Level II candidate coaches and, additionally, experts in coach education from around the world. During 2008, existing Level I Lecturers and appropriate new candidates will attend RDC-based Level II Lecturers' Courses. These 7-day courses will reinvigorate the current Level I workforce and add 'new blood', upskilling them in the knowledge and competence necessary to become Level II Lecturers.

To permit a continuity of transition, the 'Old CECS Level I' course will be retained and operate throughout 2008. With the Level II Lecturers in place within Member Federations, Level II courses will commence in January, 2009, replacing the 'Old CECS Level I'.

Level III

The Level III curriculum and syllabus were finalised in April 2007 with the creation and production of materials ongoing throughout 2007. The inaugural Level III courses to fine-tune the content will be conducted at RDCs from January 2008. Level III Lecturers will be developed on-course from existing Level II Lecturers, working alongside one of the 22 'Master Level II Lecturers'. These 'Master Level II Lecturers' have become both new Level III and Level IV Lecturers and it is anticipated that all new Level III Lecturers will have the skills and competence to be Level IV Lecturers as well.

Level IV

The curriculum, syllabus and content for the Level IV course were tested during several courses covering all six event groups and several languages commencing in 2005 and continuing through 2006. An editorial group of 22 experienced IAAF Lecturers and coaches provided input and feedback, and in April 2007, the Level IV was finalised and implemented through all RDCs from May 2007.

Level V – The IAAF Academy

The IAAF Academy commenced with the Chief Coach course in 2004 and has subsequently tested and added the strands of 'Elite Coach', through all event groups, and 'Coaching Development Director'. The Level V, IAAF Academy, is fully operational and offers courses from a global network of 12 partner universities.

The Academy will continue to develop innovative courses to provide coaches with the relevant professional knowledge, understanding and practical experience to create an environment capable of delivering the highest levels of individual and team performance.

Note Terminology: From January 2008, there will be no longer any need to prefix any course as 'new IAAF CECS'. Reference will be simply made to CECS Level I through CECS Level V, the Academy. The pre-2007 CECS Level I will remain, however, until the end of 2008. During this legacy/transitional period through 2008 this course will be referred to as the 'Old CECS Level I' course. From January 2009, the change to the new system will be complete and the process of transfer of coaches from the old CECS qualifications to the new can commence.

Transfer from the old system

All coaches who are active will require transfer on the database from their old qualification and eligibility to the new structure, and subsequently informed of their new status. The global transfer date will be January 1st 2009. 'Table 2' pdf illustrates how this process of transfer will take place.

One of the added benefits of this transfer process is the potential to identify and 'upskill' coaches who are actively coaching but were 'stuck' at an old CECS Level. The new system provides the opportunity for all active coaches to re-engage with the coaching development pathway, benefiting their coaching, their athletes and National Federations.

History

The compelling reasons for change in 2007 were outlined in the Introduction but we should not forget then history of the CECS from its commencement in 1991 through to 2006:

Following the creation of the IAAF Development Department in 1987, several detailed analyses of the sport were conducted during the period up to 1990. A synthesis of these various reports culminated in the publication in 1991 of the booklet, *IAAF Development Cooperation*, which remains an important guideline for the development programme.

The text in *IAAF Development Cooperation* identified seven distinct areas that were contributing to the overall lack of sufficient development of Athletics. Of these seven areas, *Lack of qualified coaches* was a major issue in a sport where it is recognised that much of the development of activity is, at the grass roots in particular, coach-driven or coach-led. As coaches are directly involved in the training and preparation of athletes, a country without sufficient professionally trained and experienced coaches cannot be expected to systematically develop its available athletic talent. In addition, because of the important role they often play in promoting an appreciation of the sport among both athletes and non-athletes, a lack of good coaches can have a negative effect on the development of an Athletics culture.

From this strategic identification of need, the IAAF opened a new era in the training of coaches as a key part of its *Decade of Development* to 2000. It initiated a major project to create and operate a Coaches Education and Certification System, CECS, which would address the weaknesses of previous ad hoc courses and, additionally, be available to all IAAF Member Federations worldwide. The system's first course was staged in 1991 after a careful design and testing process which involved more than 60 experts in the fields of sport development, coaching and curriculum design.

The IAAF Coaches Education & Certification System offered a three-level system of education and training to those Member Federations that did not have qualified lecturers, curricula or supporting



educational materials. Since 1991 more than 10,000 coaches have been qualified at Level I, 1,500 at Level II and in excess of 200 coaches have advanced and received qualification at Level III, the IAAF Academy. There is a lecturing workforce of 235 trained Level I Lecturers that has supported, on average, 40 Level I courses per year, utilising at least one indigenous lecturer on each course. There have been recently, and additionally, an average of 16 Level II courses and 12 Academy courses per year.

The Development Department, which was renamed as the Member Services Department in 2001, coordinates the organisation of courses through a global network of nine IAAF Regional Development Centres, RDCs. The Member Services Department, MSD, creates and supplies educational materials, maintains an accurate database of coaches and supervises the ongoing development of qualified IAAF Lecturers in more than 130 countries.

The CECS was the first worldwide coaches education programme in any sport to provide a standard curriculum, course materials and specially trained lecturers with standardised evaluation procedures. Participants on a CECS course in any country were assured that the quality of their training would be equivalent to that provided to participants on any other course in the system. Courses for each level were designed to prepare coaches to work on the defined level, regardless of whether they attended further courses. Successful completion of the CECS Level II, coupled with proof of ongoing, active coaching, led to the award of the IAAF Diploma in Coaching, granted with the authority of the world governing body for Athletics.

CECS/National Coach Education Programme Equivalency

The IAAF is offering to National Federations who are operating their own Coaches Education Programme equivalency of their programmes with the CECS Level II, CECS Level III and Level IV. The goal of the IAAF is to extend its services to a greater range of coaches in all parts of the world by granting equivalency and thus increasing access to the IAAF Academy.

If you are interested in applying for equivalency with your National Coach Education Programme, please contact the MSD. After evaluating the equivalency we will get back to you with our decision and further details of how to benefit from the courses of the IAAF Academy.

Conclusion

It is recognised that the world-wide development of Athletics is a massive, complex and ongoing process, reaching from the grass roots up to Olympian and World Championship heights. Without a healthy grass roots environment, however, children will not come into athletics, nor will they be able develop their potential. Athletics is in competition with all sports and it is vital that it gains and retains the attention of children and youth. The new CECS is a challenging and ambitious programme that offers practical support for coaches and their athletes throughout their developmental pathways.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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