

Road Running Leadership Group Announcement

New Licence System and Online Running Club for Road Running

In response to input from the running community, the Road Running Leadership Group (RRLG), chaired by UK Athletics (UKA) with shaping the future of road running, proposes a new system of regulation for Britain's 2,000 plus races and the creation of a new online running club for the nation's hundreds of thousands of runners. The Group will spend the coming months refining the details of its plans with the aim of having them approved ahead of their introduction in April 2008.

The current system of race permitting, in which race organisers pay a levy for every entrant who is not a member of an affiliated club, will be replaced by a simple sliding scale fee for a licence based on the size of their race. Runners who are club members registered with a national governing body will continue to enjoy cheaper race entry, but in future race organisers will keep all entry fees from both club members and non-club members alike. It is anticipated that the vast majority of races – possibly all – will enjoy increased income under this new scheme whilst continuing to benefit from the comprehensive insurance cover afforded by UKA affiliation.

The RRLG is committed to ensuring that the new licences become an integral part of enhanced standards of administration of the sport in the UK. Funds raised from the licences will be used in part to deliver an improved set of resources for race organisers, as well as to tackle key issues such as health and safety, medical cover and relations with the police and local authorities. The Group will work closely with existing permit secretaries to ensure that the new system is simple and effective for them to implement throughout the UK.

A new online running club will be created for the increasing majority of race entrants who are not members of clubs. A key objective of the online club will be to give road runners a first step into the community of the sport, and provide a platform for local clubs to promote their own events and grow their membership. Benefits of the online club will include the cheaper race entry enjoyed by all affiliated club members, as well as access to a wide range of supporting resources and benefits. Members of affiliated running clubs and Home Country membership schemes will automatically be enrolled in the online club.

In return for retaining all race entry fees, race organisers will be required to provide the RRLG with contact details for all non-club runners who enter their races (subject to data protection laws), or to provide other resources to raise awareness of the online club. In this way the Group will be able to build membership of the club, raising funds for the furtherance of road running and providing race organisers with valuable opportunities to market their races to a wider, committed community of runners.

Ed Warner, Chairman of UK Athletics who has recently taken on the chair of the RRLG said: "The sport of road running deserves greater and better support. I am encouraged that the Road Running Leadership Group has developed plans that will be of benefit to organisers of all races from small to large, and to committed club runners and occasional runners alike. By early 2008 I expect us to be underway with positive changes that will make British road running the clear number one in the world for participation and governance and that will boost elite British endurance performance."

Nigel Rowe, Chair of England Athletics' South West region and director of the Plymouth Half Marathon said: "The countless volunteers within running clubs who help organise road races up and down the country are the backbone of the sport. Our proposals will enable them to retain more income to be invested for the benefit of road running in their localities, and in turn will provide them with improved central resources to assist them in their excellent work."

The RRLG will continue to discuss the details of its plans with race organisers, runners and other interested parties. The Group can be contacted through its project manager Mike Summers at msummers@ukathletics.org.uk or enquiries@roadrunninguk.com.

Notes to Editors

Current members of the RRLG are:

Ed Warner (Chair) – Chairman, UK Athletics

Dave Bedford – Race Director of the Flora London Marathon

Hugh Brasher – CEO Sweatshop

Max Coleby – Co-founder of the BUPA Great North Run

Zara Hyde-Peters – Director of Athlete Development at UK Athletics

Nigel Rowe – Chair of South West region, England Athletics

Steve Seaton – Publishing Director, Runners World magazine

Geoff Wightman – Chief Executive of Scottish Athletics

Elections to the RRLG to replace some of the current appointed members will be held before March 2008.