

WCLAC survey results

Below are the survey results and answers to comments that have come out of the survey that was performed in December/January.

The responses have been formulated by the Competition Director, although all of the executive have had a chance to contribute.

We are very thankful for the 72 families that took the time to contribute responses to the survey.

Q3. In order to alleviate the problem of too many washouts, it has been suggested that if a Friday night is washed out then, when possible, we automatically reschedule for the next morning. Are you in favour of this suggestion?

No, if Friday night is a washout then we wait for the next week.	26%
Yes, if possible, we should reschedule for the next morning.	55%
Yes, but why stop there. If a NORMAL Saturday is washed out, then reschedule it for the Sunday morning. (But never go Friday-Saturday-Sunday.)	19%

74% of families are in favour of at least rescheduling Friday nights for Saturday morning if there is a washout.

Q4. For the 2011/2012 season, a roughly even number of Friday night and Saturday morning competitions were scheduled. Please provide a preference for your family.

We love Friday nights! Make them all Fridays!	28%
We slightly prefer Fridays to Saturdays	16%
50-50 feels right for us	35%
We slightly prefer Saturdays to Friday	14%
We love Saturdays! Make them all Saturdays!	7%

50-50 is the most common response, but there is a preference towards Friday nights.

Q5. The programming of events is always a balancing act. With an expected increase of kids next season we would expect our current programs to usually run to 9:30-10pm on a Friday night and 12:30-1pm on a Saturday. Which of the following best describes your family's view on this?

We don't care how long it takes; we want a good balance of track and field events.	48%
We don't mind some imbalances in the program if it means we can save a bit of time.	40%
Keep it as short as possible, even if we don't get many distance events or High Jumps.	12%

Finishing early doesn't seem to be as important as getting a good balance of events.

Q6. Is there anything else you would like to be considered in the competition programming for next year?

Text below which is indented and in italics are responses/comments/questions given in the survey. Responses are not indented and not in italics.

Friday/Saturday Mix Comments

The complete mix of Fridays and Saturdays are extremely difficult to have children try other sports such as domestic basketball VJBL Basketball (top level basketball) run on Friday nights and junior cricket also run on Fridays nights. Most other sports require you to enter into a team commitment athletics was always a Saturday and should be that way. Keep in mind with the short programming and distance events not taking place that walk has a qualifying time minimum so if they are not having time walking they can't possibly qualify for region.

Too many Friday Night comps this year - Makes it very hard when you are missing so many weeks because of other commitments on a Friday. We have only been able to attend around 50% of all comps this year because of the number of Friday Nights.

We would prefer that the scheduling of the normal program be set for Friday evenings throughout the season so families are able to make other commitments (ie; other sports, etc) on weekends.

Make all events Friday night with Sat backup.

The Friday/Saturday mix is always going to be difficult to deal with. We're never going to be able to please everyone, and that was one of the main reasons for the survey. More than twice as many families prefer Fridays to Saturdays, so it would be difficult to justify moving to more Saturdays.

There are a hundred other kid's activities and sports out there, and it's impossible for us to accommodate them all. We're bound to be clashing with others, especially when we're splitting our

competitions over 2 time slots. In the end, we're going to have to make these decisions in the best interest of Little Aths.

We would like to ask that there are no Friday Night sessions in December as it is the busiest month for Christmas functions, School Graduations and other gatherings. Saturday mornings do not have any of these functions so it would be more ideal to hold comps on Saturday mornings in December. We would also prefer that the WCLA Open Day be moved back to January if possible?

This point has been made a number of times and will be considered. Note however that 2 of the 3 Friday night comps in December were in place to give the kids a break before Sunday competitions. If these events are again in December, then we would have at least 2 Fridays.

Timing/Event Balance Comments

*Maybe 3 events a session not 4 to shorten time.
3 events for Friday nights or 4 quick events.*

This is certainly worth considering for some Friday nights.

Cut off times for walks and distance runs.

We already have the walks earlier to make sure those doing it are actually interested in doing it. The decision has been made that those mucking around or not attempting to do the walks will be excluded. I don't think much will be gained by excluding kids from doing events that they want to do just because they don't perform to a particular level. It seems to go against the motto of Little Aths which is "Fun, Family and Fitness".

I like the even amount of both short and long distance events. Maybe a relay week in there so this gets kids involved in relays.

Worth considering.

Some events don't get run anywhere near as much as others - hurdles not much, yet a massive number of discus and shot put events. I would like to see more hurdles, and some relays throughout the year.

In all the programs we have 2 field events (1 throw and 1 jump) and 2 track events for each age group. Hurdles are in 2 of the 6 programs. The clubs will have a chance to have input to the balance of the programs for next year (just as they were given an opportunity before the 2011/2012

season). We will look carefully at whether we can get extra hurdles into the programs since they are usually the first thing to be dropped when the track gets wet.

Less 100's for the older age groups.

A table is presented at the end of the document that shows the number of times each age group has done each event. The U14-U16 have done 8 100's and 4 200's. I'd like to get that to roughly 6 and 6 next season. The clubs will be given a chance to have input to the balance of the program, just as they were before this season.

Perhaps getting the younger age groups events done first on Friday night comps?

This is certainly at the forefront of the competition director's mind every Friday night. Occasionally mistakes get made, but on the whole I think the younger kids have been finished earlier than the older kids.

Long distance needs to run at the beginning of the program. Commencing youngest to oldest age groups. Cancellation of events needs to be monitored and spread evenly amongst all age groups. Cancellations of events if need be, ASAP. It must be mandatory that all clubs take responsibility to manage events allocated and not rely on others clubs to do so.

We have 20 groups and 12 field locations. If we schedule a distance event that requires the front and back straight to be clear (like the 400's or probably the 800's) then we have 8 age groups to send there. Even if we send a couple of groups to do 1500M, we still have too many sitting around waiting.

If we start off with both straights going, then we have 2 locations to send age groups to and there is less waiting for other groups.

Maybe this suggestion could be considered in conjunction with a staggered start to the program (mentioned in the "Start time related" section below).

Looking at the last page of this document should confirm to you that I have been trying to even out the events for each group.

I'm not sure what the "take responsibility" part of the comment is about. I think all the clubs have done a great job at running their events. The only issues we have had were when age group team managers weren't able to make it and some clubs have had difficulty filling in their role.

Try and keep Fri nights as short as possible (not past 9pm) as some families have no choice but bring younger siblings with them and 9.30-10pm is too late to start last event. eg U9G 800m started at 9.40pm one Friday night which is too late for that age group and especially when you have younger siblings in tow.

Agreed.

There is often too big running events on the same day for the little kids that is too much like 100 and 200 m running better splitting the big events with 60 or 70 metre.

I'm not sure about this one. The little kids do 200m twice in the 6 programs, and in both programs they are (deliberately) paired with 60m. This seems to have already been addressed.

Start time related

Start on time.

Possible earlier start especially on a Sat morning, don't want it to go too late as I'm sure many families are also involved in seniors.

Starting on time - 8.45am on Saturday's.

Agreed.

I was speaking to a friend. They told me that their LAC ran a program as such: eg Saturday morning 8:30am - 10:30 - U6 to U11 10:30am - 12:30pm - U12 to U17 Would that be a consideration for our teams? Just a thought

Worth thinking about, but I'm not sure it will work here. I'd like to see it in use. We have 12 field venues and can have a couple of groups at each straight at any given time. If you are running U12 to U16 (8 groups total for our centre), then the arena can only be half used at best. I don't understand how we can end up saving time by doing this, but I'd like to see it running.

I have considered a staggered start to the program (some at 8:30, others at 9, and the rest at 9:30), and this may work well. We'd have to be careful of who starts last as the older age groups sometimes need to get away early for senior athletics competitions.

*start early - 8am. lots of other centres do, *and* complete 5 events.*

How many events you can get through depends on a lot of factors. Start and end time are a big factor. So are the group sizes, number of kids in the centre, number of event locations and number of age groups. For example, we are getting through 80 events (20 age groups with 4 events each) in 3.5-4 hours. If we were running an on-track program for our U6-U7's then we could run 5 events for the 16 other age groups and still be only running the 80 events in roughly the same time. And of course, if a centre had 3 discus locations then that would be a big advantage as well.

Splitting

I think dividing the larger age groups (such as u10b) is a great idea.

If there is too many kids on one group like the under 10 now. i think splitting the team in half would make the day go better. This way not all under 10 kids are always the last to leave.

In certain events there are more than 20 kids and takes a while to complete the event, therefore how about splitting the event or have them take their turn in sequence rather than rotation.

The issue of age groups finishing last is a funny one. There has been a few age group team managers mention that they always finish last. But seriously, calling the U10's in 2 groups has worked well. We've had a few occasions where a couple of Age group team manager haven't been able to make it to competitions and it has been difficult to find people to fill in for the night.

Calendar Scheduling

When having a late Friday night competition and scheduling additional for the next morning is too much for younger children.

Noted. It was really a "last resort" type of thing because of all the washouts.

As long as a washed out programme is run the following week, it is all good.

CAN WE HAVE THE TYPE OF PROGRAM LISTED FOR EVERY WEEK, COVERING THE WHOLE SEASON SO WE CAN PLAN SPECIFIC TRAINING DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD.

The above 2 comments opposing views on a subject (i.e. set all programs for each date before the season versus what we did this year where if a program is washed out it can be run the next week).

If we decide which programs are run which weeks before the start of the season then we will always end up with an imbalance of events for kids (unless there are no cancellations). I've plotted out how the events would have gone if we decided which programs are to run which weeks and it would have been very unbalanced. An example is given in the table below. Many of the other age groups looked similar.

	DISC	SP	JAV	LJ	HJ	TJ
BOYS U11	4	7	4	4	7	4
GIRLS U11	4	7	4	4	4	7

The majority of the table for U10 onward would look like the above example. Even if we set aside the last 3 weeks to try to make up any unbalances it would not have helped much. With 3 weeks to go the above table would have been

	DISC	SP	JAV	LJ	HJ	TJ
BOYS U11	4	6	2	2	6	4
GIRLS U11	4	6	2	2	4	6

Can you imagine the uproar if after ¾ of the season some group had only done Javelin twice?

While the end result of this season (as presented in the last page of this document) certainly contains a couple of imbalances (principally the U8 Jumps), I think you would agree that on the whole the number of each events were fairly balanced.

Other

Need special attention for kids to correct their techniques in some events. You can organise camping session targeting 1st event or training videos....

There is no doubt that kids need plenty of help with their technique. This is basically a club function.

One of the hardest program is the one that has the 400 meters as the last event, by then the kids are tired and you have all these kids crowding around the 400 meters starting line and starters and the team managers have a hard time getting them in order. I have an idea that might work. The starters on the front and back straights will have to communicate with each other. You start the 400 meters from the normal place, and run the 100 or 80 meters on the back straight. The 400 meters start, after the 400 meter runners have run past the back straight starting area, move the 100 meter runners on to the track, after the last of the 400 meter runners has gone through the back straight gate you can start the 100 meters on the back straight, it may work or it may not its worth a try. Have this as the first event of the day. Another thing we could do is get another sensor for the front gate, so we can run 10 lanes for the 100 meters and speed up the 100 meters block of events

This will certainly be discussed in more detail. There are a number of ways to address this issue and we will be discussing them all for next season.

Eliminate option of walk or 1500m/800m... In some cases there are kids who would rather do 1500m walk and 1500/800m run rather than some of the sprints. Why not open it up and say the child must choose 2 track events in that programme out of a choice of 3.

Agreed. I've thought this myself during the season but wasn't willing to implement it mid-season. It will require some extra consideration in the scheduling of events. When it is either 1500M or 1500W, then we can run them one after the other. If an athlete can do both then they need to be well separated in the competition day.

Make the Team Managers of each Club and allocated position of the helping register. Metro have approx. 11 team managers that are excluded from helping out the club each week and we still have to find parents for our three allocated events. The back straight is quite time consuming and people out there for hours. Perhaps more shading area's on the front and back straight when kids are waiting for their events.

I'm assuming you are talking about Age group team managers here. If so, then that is already the case. The number of Age group team managers each club has is taken into account in the allocating of jobs. According to my records there are 6 Metro age group team managers, although I'd be willing to consider Cameron as 2 with the amount of work he has had to do. Metro also do a great job helping judge walks, which is also counted towards their allocation. Metro only have 2 allocated events (LJ1 and Back straight gates).

Washouts could be called earlier than an hour prior to start of competition.

Make a decision in advance rather than get everyone wasting their time hanging around the track. Look at the weather forecast in a few days prior, it is mostly accurate and have the good sense to call it off, our time is very precious, not to mention the waste of petrol. If it needs to be called off, do it and bad luck, we have a life outside of little Aths.

I agree that the decision should be made as early as possible. It's not an easy one though. There are times that I would have called it all off and then we got in a full program. There were obviously other times that we tried to go ahead and things didn't turn out well. I think more than anything we need to come up with some clear agreed upon guidelines and processes for these situations so that everyone has a clear picture of what will happen and when.

Run the current program more efficiently, way too much hanging around between events. Field is empty, get more kids out, eg if shot put is empty, get someone there ASAP, doesn't matter if they don't have shot put, do an extra event that night when washout in two weeks it doesn't matter. Or if discus is full and shot put empty do shot put instead, rather than hanging around until 10 at night.

Yes, the program could be scheduled to finish more quickly if we have more Shot Put, Triple Jump and long Jump and less High Jump, Discus and Javelin. This was why Q5 was asked; to get a feel for whether people wanted things to finish as quickly as possible, or that they wanted a good balance of events. The response to Q5 seems to say the balance of events is more important.). If we took the stance as given in the response above then the result will be most groups doing Shot Put and Long Jump 50% more than their other events.

Summary of Season 2011/2012.

	DISC	SP	JAV	LJ	HJ	TJ	60M	70M	100M	200M	400M	800M	1500M	60H	80H	90H	100H	300H	1100W	1500W	
BOYS U6	7	7		8	6		7	8	8	5											
GIRLS U6	7	7		7	7		7	8	8	5											
BOYS U7	6	7		7	7		7	8	9	5											
GIRLS U7	7	7		7	7		7	8	8	5											
BOYS U8	7	7		8	6			8	5	5	5			2	2						
GIRLS U8	7	7		9	6			8	5	5	5			2	2						
BOYS U9	7	7		4	5	4		6	8	5	3	2		2	2					4	
GIRLS U9	6	7		5	4	5		6	8	5	3	2		2	2					4	
BOYS U10	8	7		5	4	4		6	8	5	4	2		2	2					4	
GIRLS U10	7	7		5	5	5		6	8	4	4	2		2	2					4	
BOYS U11	5	4	5	4	4	5		5	6	5	3	2	3	2	2						4
GIRLS U11	5	4	5	4	4	5		5	6	5	3	2	3	2	2						4
BOYS U12	5	5	5	4	4	4		3	6	5	5	2	3	2	2						4
GIRLS U12	4	5	5	4	4	5		3	6	5	5	2	3	2	2						4
BOYS U13	5	4	5	5	4	6			9	3	4	2	5		2				2		5
GIRLS U13	5	5	5	6	4	5			8	3	4	2	5		2				2		5
BOYS U14	4	5	5	5	5	5			8	4	4	2	5			2			2		5
GIRLS U14	5	5	5	6	4	5			8	4	4	2	5		2				2		5
BOYS U15 & U16	4	5	5	5	5	5			8	4	4	2	5				2		2		5
GIRLS U15 & U16	5	5	5	4	5	5			8	4	4	2	5			2			2		5