

**ESAA COMBINED EVENTS AND RACE WALKING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Following the enforced cancellation of the ESAA Track and Field Championships and The ESAA Track and Field Schools’ Cup competition, strenuous efforts were made to find alternative dates for the 6 ESAA Combined Events Regional Rounds which were due to be held on 27/28 June. Dates in early September were considered but these proved to be impracticable so, regrettably, cancellation of the Regional Rounds was the only option under the current circumstances.

In these uncertain times, however, a ray of hope remains in that we believe it might still be possible to hold the 33rd ESAA Combined Events and 47th ESAA Race Walking Championships at Bedford International Stadium on the weekend of 19/20 September, as originally planned. Clearly though, given the cancellation of the Regional Rounds an alternative qualifying route to the ESAA Championships needed to be established so this Policy Statement is being issued to each county by way of an explanation of the 2020 system.

**Background:** As soon as it was clear that the Regional Rounds could not take place, various Combined Events enthusiasts (including ESAA Regional Co-ordinators and some County Secretaries) began to offer suggestions as to possible ways forward. On the basis of those suggestions, what might be called a Working Group came into being, comprising Iain Presnell (ESAA Combined Events Co-ordinator), Richard Bowden (ESAA Combined Events Assistant Co-ordinator), Dennis Johnson (Local Organising Secretary for the ESAA Combined Events Championships in Bedford in 2020 and 2021) and noted Combined Events statistician Alan Lindop. In all our deliberations over the past few weeks, Chris Cohen CBE – ESAA Honorary Secretary, and Brian Baker – Results/Chief Recorder at the ESAA Combined Events Championships, have been fully informed of the various opinions and ideas emanating from the group, so that they could check that our proposals would be workable.

**Aim:** To construct start-lists of up to 45 athletes in each of the 6 ESAA age groups.

**Methods:** In the first instance, lists of up to 45 athletes in each age group have been drawn up, with reference to 2019/2020 Combined Events performances from the sources below:

1. Power of 10.
2. Tops in Athletics (Alan Lindop is the Chief Compiler).
3. British Athletics 2020 (National Union of Track Statisticians).
4. ESAA Regional Rounds 2019 (as some of those performances did not appear in Power of 10).
5. The South of England Indoor Combined Events Championships (December 2019).
6. The Scottish National Indoor Combined Events Championships (February 2020).
7. The England Athletics Indoor Combined Events Championships (March 2020).

In our estimations of potential 2020 scores, we have tried to take into account predicted improvements where athletes remain in the same age group as in 2019, anticipated scores for those athletes moving up an age group and, in a few cases, athletes who have moved their focus from an individual event to Combined Events. In calculating those potential progressions we have made reference to a considerable number of performances from past years, adopting what we feel to be appropriate comparable scores.

**Although we have identified up to 45 athletes in each age group, we shall certainly welcome input from County Secretaries and/or Team Managers. To that end, we are issuing, via Regional Coordinators, invitations to up to 30-33 athletes in each age group, allowing county officials the opportunity to submit nominations for places in the remaining 12 to 15 slots.**

While we hope that the counties will be fully in support of our motives and methods, we certainly appreciate that this is not a perfect system. In these unprecedented times, however, we do feel it is the most suitable way of ensuring that the standard, competitiveness, excellence and enjoyment of this great event will be maintained in 2020, if the current restrictions on movements and gatherings are eased sufficiently by September.

**Timeline: Invitation and County Nomination criteria**

**By mid April** A list of athletes to be compiled based on the above research, with invitations issued to a maximum of 30-33 athletes per age group, numbers dependent on the overall standard within the age group.

For those not on the original list of invitations there will be a later opportunity for County Secretaries or Team Managers to nominate additional athletes, eventually resulting in a start-list of a maximum of 45 athletes per age group. The number of spaces available for entry via this county nomination route will depend upon the number of invitations issued and the acceptance rate per age group, but will be a minimum of 12 per age group and in some age groups a much larger number (and these places will be filled solely from nominations received from all the County Schools’ AAs).

**By the beginning of May:** County Combined Events contacts to be sent a list of invited athletes (via the Regional Coordinators), together with the Athlete Invitation Form (incorporating the ‘Athlete Information Form’) for them to forward to athletes on the list of invites (for their respective counties).

**By Friday 22nd May:** Invited athletes to have received ESAA invitation via their County Secretary or named Combined Event Team Manager. It will be the responsibility of the individual county to ensure the targeted athletes receive their invitations. Please look out for athletes on the list who may have changed counties since 2019. The invitation will include the usual ‘Athlete Information Form’ which, when returned, will confirm the athlete’s attendance at Bedford.

**By Friday 12th June:** County Secretaries or Team Managers to forward details of athletes (not originally invited) whom they would like to be considered as additions to the entry list, having first ascertained athletes’ desire/availability to compete in Bedford. A separate form will be circulated at the beginning of June for Counties to make such nominations. It will be the responsibility of County Secretaries and/or Team Managers to check their County Championships and/or Regional Rounds from previous years to ensure there are no glaring omissions – remember some of these results did not appear on Power of 10.

**By Friday 26th June:** All ‘Athlete Information Forms’ to be returned directly to the ESAA Combined Event Coordinator (with the County Team Manager copied in) either accepting or declining the invitation. It will be assumed that if the form is not returned by this date, then the invitation has been declined. Event Coordinator details will be published clearly on the ‘Athlete Information Form’.

For 2020 only, BPs from 2019 will also be accepted, but must be clearly indicated on the ‘Athlete Information Form’.

**By Friday 10th July** : County Secretaries and/or Team Managers will be informed if their requested nominations have been included in the start-list as soon as a decision has been made by the Working Group and ratified by the ESAA Officers. At this stage a start-list and a reserve list will be circulated to all counties.

Those athletes who are unsuccessful in gaining a place in the start-list will be included on a ranked reserve list and may be invited to compete, in the event of an athlete withdrawing (up to Wednesday 16 September), depending on their position on the reserve list.

**By Friday 7th August:** Athletes then to be entered on the ESAA Entry Portal in the usual way by Team Managers, with a deadline of Friday 7 August. BPs must be entered, and for 2020 only, BPs from 2019 will be accepted. To accommodate athletes who have been unable to achieve a valid (in-competition) performance, a verified training performance or realistic estimated performance may be given for seeding purposes, but, in fairness to all competitors, it is vital that these are realistic performances.

**Entry Fees:** By Friday 7th August Team Managers should download the Entry Payment Form and forward the entry fee (£20.00 per athlete) to the ESAA Coordinator. These are unprecedented times and some counties may feel that entering an athlete near the lower end of the rankings is not an appropriate use of limited county funds (especially in a year when County Championship entry fees etc. are not being collected). In this situation, rather than decline an athlete invitation, please contact the Event Coordinator first.

**August/September:** Programme compiled and sent to the printer after Race Walking entries have been received.

**Teams:** County teams will be made up from the athlete start-lists – if a county has 3 or more athletes on the list they will constitute a team (with a maximum of 4, as usual, with 3 to score). No county should nominate an athlete purely to make up a team and we implore Team Managers to abide by this request.

There is no restriction on the number of athletes from one county, but any county with more than 4 athletes in an age group must declare the 4 scoring team members in advance of the competition - the remaining athletes from that county will compete as individuals. More than four athletes from a county will be permitted for 2020 because:

*There may be counties where more than four athletes have the potential to finish in the top four in the finals, thereby earning an international vest. Without any prior 2020 competitions, counties will not have been able to decide which of the four (or more) should have that opportunity.*

In 2021 the maximum of 4 athletes per county, per age group rule will be in force again.

It is accepted that this is not a perfect method of ESAA Championship entry, but, in the absence of the usual official qualification competitions we do believe the combination of invitations from ESAA and county nominations will enable the competition to take place and will ensure, as far as possible, that the most talented and most deserving athletes will have the opportunity to take part in the ESAA Combined Events Championships in 2020. Crucially, we are inviting considerable input from the counties which I trust will be appreciated.

**The ESAA Race Walk Finals will take place on Saturday 19th September. The entry procedure will be forwarded in due course.**

This Policy Statement and the lists of athletes have been ratified by the ESAA Officers.

Chris Cohen CBE Iain Presnell

ESAA Honorary Secretary ESAA Combined Events National Coordinator