

Adopting Age Group changes in the UK

Questions and Issues

Why is this issue being raised?

The Rules Revision Group has received a request from UK Members Council, UKA Board, each of the Home Country Association's Boards and the CEO Forum to consult with the sport and gain feedback as to whether adopting the IAAF Rule Book should include the adoption of the IAAF Age Groups.

What would the age group structure be if IAAF Age Groups are adopted?

Two year bands would apply throughout the young athlete age groups and athletes would change age groups at midnight December 31st / January 1st. An Under 18 age group would be introduced so the age groups would then be Under 20, Under 18, Under 16 and Under 14 replacing the current structure of Under 20, Under 17, Under 15 and Under 13. Note that the Under 18 age group is known as "Youth" by IAAF.

Would this apply to all disciplines?

Yes – if adopted then the new age groups would apply across all disciplines and have the effect of standardising across the sport and allowing structured preparation for international competition at Under 20 and Under 18.

Would there be an Under 12 age group?

The recommendation is that the Under 12 age group is not included within the rule book to allow the promotion of informal competition on a local basis without having prescribed specifications.

How would we cope with changing age groups in the middle of the cross country season?

It would require a review of the competition structure with one possibility being that league competitions are held in the first half of the season and championships in the second half after the age group change.

What would the effect be on hurdles and throws specifications for young athletes?

Specifications will change on January 1st as described in the Specification Chart which is attached as an appendix. Certain options are presented for Hurdles and Javelin events; please submit your observations on these options.

If approved when would the changes come into effect?

Whilst changes would be incorporated in the 2016 Rule Book it may be that certain aspects could be delayed for implementation.

Would the change affect Schools' competitions?

No – Schools' competition is managed separately and no changes will be made to their structure.

What would happen to age group records / best performances?

It will be necessary to start again for the younger age groups but previous records at Under 17, 15 and 13 would be retained.

Would the adoption of IAAF Age Groups affect athletes taking major examinations?

It has been suggested that this will help the majority of athletes who are taking major examinations.

Will the new rule book allow young athletes to compete in a higher age group?

Yes – but there will be two exceptions as it will not be possible for Under 14s to compete as Under 16s in 400m Hurdles and Steeplechase. This will apply to both Girls and Boys.

Can you identify any challenges that would be created?

The purpose of this consultation is to seek your views on the proposals and we look forward to receiving your responses to the email address given below.

Are there any examples of IAAF age groups already applying in the UK?

The transfer from Under 20 to Senior age group in track and field has applied for several years and IAAF age groups in Under 20 and Senior competition apply in the Cross Challenge and UK Cross Country Championship. The Fell and Hill and Trail Running disciplines operate IAAF age bands within the UKA Rules for Competition.

In 2011 Scottish Athletics started a pilot scheme which ran for three years where for the track and field season IAAF age groups were applied. They found that:

“Across the athletics community in Scotland, there is an agreed consensus that the change has been positive and beneficial. That is evidenced by the support for this proposed rule change from all disciplines of the sport in Scotland.”

And

“There was an increase in junior membership of Scottish Athletics, as well as in Championship event entry numbers.”

Please submit your comments on age group consultation on the required template to agegroupconsultation@uka.org.uk by Friday May 29th 2015 and proposals for rule changes to rules@uka.org.uk by Monday 27th July 2015.