

Report of the Honorary President 2005/06

The four championships that are run each year under the auspices of the IUAA are going from strength to strength. Excellent IT support, guidelines for hosting colleges, well thought out time tables, websites etc ensure that IUAA championships are among the best in the country. For this I can claim very little credit and as President it is my minimum function to insure that these championships continue to run smoothly. Those of you who attended the championships of 2005/06 will attest to the fact that all is well in this department.

At the beginning of my tenure I thought it necessary to decide upon areas upon which I thought I could suggest changes for the better. I quickly settled upon the following areas.

Development: It is vital going forward that the IUAA ensure that there is an appropriate level of competition for all students who wish to join the IUAA system. As I see it there are three categories of college athlete, (a) The 'elite' or those who regularly challenge for medals and points at our four championships, (b) The 'club' runner or those who may win the odd point at the track or field or scrape on to a XC team which medals and (c) The 'novice', someone who takes up running for the first time on entering college.

The athletes in category (a) are well catered for but some may argue that a few more competitions would be desirable. The athletes in category (b) may also wish to take part in a few more competitions and certainly these athletes would be very happy if the opportunity was presented to them to perhaps medal at a regional level.

The athletes in category (c) can take part in the road relays but after that it is a long wait to the XC. With most colleges starting back in late September or early October a wait of two months for a first opportunity to compete is too long. It is very difficult for clubs to retain a novices interest for that period of time.

It seems sensible that should we cater for the development of a large base of athletes at entry level and that then there is an excellent chance that over their time in college more students will come through and make an impact on 'senior' intervarsity teams.

With these comments in mind I am delighted to support the executive motion to introduce a tiered structure within the T&F championships and I am also very enthusiastic about UL's proposal to allow groups of

clubs within regions to get together and host regional competitions for their members. These 'federations' need to be officially endorsed, in order to ensure their continuity. If they are officially endorsed their endeavours will also be covered by AAI insurance.

It is also proposed here today that we re-label one of the VP positions as VP for Development giving that person the responsibility for supporting the development of clubs.

International Competition: While the Antrim International has been lost from the calendar discussions are under way which may see a IUAA team line up at the Stormont International and initial discussions have taken place with the AAI about organising a Celtic XC in the first instance. The newly labelled VP for international affairs will have responsibility for developing these links.

AAI Integration: Over the last twelve months we have witnessed a sea change in the way the AAI has organised its operations. Slowly but surely the people involved in Irish athletics are embracing the new governance structures. The IUAA have been involved in this new movement for over twelve months. While the new AAI board has been very busy over the last number of months getting its affairs in order it is now beginning to turn its attentions towards integrating the Schools and Universities completely into fold. The President of the association is going to have a very busy 06/07 overseeing this integration in a manner that is satisfactory to all of its members.

Executive Function: It has become clear over the last number of months that people are unclear (exec included!!) as to the functions of the IUAA exec. Some motions and documents are before you today which will hopefully clear up any uncertainties.

The IUAA has for years been a leader in Irish athletics in terms of ideas and initiatives. Wishing to ensure that this association continues to lead the way I finish up my address by asking you to endorse all of the motions here before you today and to perhaps consider getting involved in this policy making by putting your name forward later when executive elections take place.

Ian O' Sullivan
Hon President 2005-2006