

Legacy on world stage is main target

WHILE one woman's run in particular caught the attention in Osaka at the athletics world championships, there were several other notable performances that suggested the new regime in athletics, coupled with the unflagging dedication of Dave Collins and his team, is starting to turn things around, writes *Tim Hollingsworth, UK Sport's director of policy and communications.*

Beijing remains a huge challenge but the prime target is London 2012 and optimism about the future is not misplaced. Several other sports have enjoyed successful world competition this summer – not just our hardy perennials such as rowing and sailing, but also medals won by the likes of judo, canoeing, gymnastics and archery.

Capturing all this and ensuring that we remain not just on track but improving all the time is UK Sport's main priority. Our role is to provide the strategic leadership and investment needed to ensure a step change in performance over the coming five years that will not just see more medals than ever before at London 2012, but a lasting legacy of sporting success on the world stage.

That is why we are launching Mission 2012, a dedicated means of monitoring and evaluating each Olympic and Paralympic sport's achievements over the coming months and years. Look out for it in December and every quarter from then on.

Legal view

FA's new agent regulations end lawyer's privilege

Historically the Football Association's Football Agent's Regulations allowed for lawyers (both solicitors and barristers), as "exempt individuals", to act as agents without being subject to investigation or scrutiny by the FA or Fifa.

On September 1, the Football Association's new domestic regulations governing football agents came into force. The new regulations see far more stringent control on the activities of agents. Most notable from a legal perspective is the change that lawyers no longer enjoy their previously privileged status of exemption and must register with the FA if they intend to carry out any agency activity in addition to providing permitted legal advice.

These changes have been prompted by a number of high-profile scandals, most recently Mike Newell's controversial allegations concerning corruption in football. The alleged involvement of bungs or bribes, ultimately resulted in Lord Stevens' Quest investigation, which revealed that while levels of corruption were not as high as was perhaps anticipated, 17 transfer deals were being investigated.

It is fair to say that the football agency emerged from this with a reputation of a business containing more than its share of "rotten apples".

Lawyers staunchly argued that there is simply no need for them to register with the FA, as the set of ethics under which the Law Society requires them to operate are in any event far more stringent than the FA's regulations.

Rallying and lobbying by the Law Society and the Association of Football Agents has led to numerous drafts and revisions of the regulations, which have delayed the date of their application, which was originally intended to take place on January 1, 2007.

Finally, in July, the much-deliberated regulations were published. Hopefully the claim that they are fair, proportionate and balanced and that they represent a significant step forward¹ in governing an area of football that clearly needed tighter regulation will be proved right. Time will tell.

What is clear, however, is that where lawyers may have lost an aspect of privilege, sports journalists just might have lost an extremely fertile source of material which often helped to fill those column inches and which those "rotten apples" helped to provide so frequently.

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