

Lincoln Wellington AC

Guide To Summer Athletics Competitions For Young Athletes

Your child may have been a member of Lincoln Wellington for just a few weeks or possibly a few years. Almost certainly your child will have been rewarded with a positive experience which may include making new friends, getting fitter and learning new skills in a safe and friendly atmosphere. Probably the next step is to experience competitive athletics for the first time to get the most out of your child's new skills, gain confidence and to realise their athletic potential.

Many youngsters are often anxious about competing for the first time and often worry that they may not be good enough or embarrassed if they come last. These concerns are natural and usually unfounded and most are pleasantly surprised at how well they do. Even if they do finish last, it is often the kid who finishes last who gets the biggest ovation. Athletics is about setting your own goals and achieving running faster, jumping further or throwing further than you have managed before and recording a pb (personal best) to give yourself a target and challenge for the future.

How old does my child need to be to compete?

A child has to be aged 9 as a minimum on the day of competition to compete in U11 age group events. The other young athlete age categories are U13, U15, U17 and U20. This refers to the age of the athlete on 31st August of that year.

What Competitions Are Available?

The **Lincolnshire League** is a great first opportunity to compete. There are events specifically for the U11s as well as the UKA (UK Athletics) recognised age categories. The U11 events are tailored to the needs of the youngsters. For example, the races are usually over a shorter distance or the shot putt competition is replaced with a ball throwing competition.

This year, all of the Lincs League meetings are to be held at the South Kesteven stadium in Grantham. To enter the Lincs League, simply register your name and date of birth with the team manager (Denise Timmis for females, the male team manager is to be confirmed) and you will receive numbers which you need to keep for the rest of the season. You can decide what events you would like to do on the day if you wish (1 track and 1 field for the U11s or up to 3 events and a relay for the U13, U15 and U17 age groups). These meetings are very friendly and designed specifically for developing athletes to come along and have a go. It is also an opportunity to make friends and share experiences with children from other local clubs. The dates for this year's Lincs Leagues are 19th and 26th April followed by later fixtures on 12th and 26th July.

Open Meetings

There are numerous open meetings which are usually less formal than league meetings or championships. One of the first of these is organised by Scunthorpe and District AC on 29th March. Others include the popular mid-week open meetings at Loughborough. These are graded on expected times/ distances/ heights and match athletes of similar ability, regardless of age. Open meetings are usually by postal entry or entry on the day for a small extra fee.

National Young Athletes League

LWAC re-entered the national Young Athletes league 3 seasons ago. This has been hugely successful in fostering a camaraderie and team spirit within the young athletes in our club. It's great to hear the shouts of support and encouragement the Lincoln contingent give to their team-mates. This is only available to athletes in the U13, U15 and U17 age groups.

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Following promotion, the club currently competes in the Northern League 1. Clubs in this division include local rivals Boston plus established clubs such as York, Wakefield, Rotherham, Wakefield, Hull Achilles and Jarrow & Hebburn. Last year we achieved a very creditable 3rd place out of 16 teams. The dates of this year's YAL meetings are on 3rd, 17th, 31st May, 21st June and 19th July. The team is selected for these meetings by team managers Andy Dunderdale and Neil Campbell with advice from our club coaches. Normally, anyone who wants to compete gets the opportunity at some point during the season and this achievement is rewarded with a medal at the end of season presentation evening.

County Championships Although early in the season, this is usually one of the season's top targets for many athletes. Ideally you will have tasted competition in one or more of the earlier open meetings or Lincs Leagues to get to know the competition environment and sharpen up, but this is not essential. Again, it is about setting your own goals and having a go. These take place over two days on 9th and 10th May for the U13 age category upwards. (11 year olds +). This provides an opportunity to compete in heats and a final in many of the events. Club entry forms are now available (in club hut or website – completed entries can be passed to Dave Wells on a club night by 14th April deadline.

Who can I ask for More Advice?

Your child's coach is the best person to advise on what competitions to enter. Other parents and athletes are normally willing to offer the benefit of their experience as well. It is often good to try a range of events

What Will I Need?

Competition day is here and here is a checklist of things to take along:

- Club Vest (needed for all competitions except for some open meetings). These are available from Lorraine Clarke, our kit officer kit@lwac.org.uk .
- Numbers (if available in advance)
- Safety pins for above
- Shorts, trainers, spikes (not essential for first competitions but will provide advantage)
- Warm clothing, tracksuit, T-shirt, waterproof, etc. Aim for layers to keep at the right temperature.
- Lots of fluids (water or sports drink)
- Food, a packed lunch as competitions often take several hours and catering at events varies
- Money for entry fees or refreshments

We hope to see lots of new faces on the competition circuit this year. But most of all we hope you and your child enjoy the experience regardless of ability. Most competition details are listed on the LWAC website

<http://www.lwac.org.uk/fixturestandf.htm>



An example of first year competitors - County U13 girls 100m relay champions 2008. Three of the girls (Ellie Mason-Powers, Amy Clarke and Allison Mouzon) were in their first season of competition and the fourth Katie McMunn took several individual county titles in only her second year of competition.