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Newsletter of the European Athletic Association

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Welcome to Gothenburg!

Message from EAA President Hansjörg Wirz



Writing just days before the opening ceremony of the 19th European Athletics Championships, I am delighted to report that

Gothenburg and its inhabitants are ready for what promises to be a fantastic week of athletics and more.

When the Swedish Athletic Association submitted its bid to host the highlight of the European Athletics competition programme back in 2001, they said they would deliver more than a sporting event. Over the last five years they have worked hard to prepare for the Championships, as well as a range of entertainment, cultural, sporting and educational activities throughout the city. Now, with the time practically upon us, we are certain that the atmosphere of fun and friendship that will reign in the streets, squares and parks will provide a lasting memory for everyone lucky enough to be in Gothenburg.

We are also confident that the athletes will play their part as the focus of the week. There is no doubt that, as they chase the coveted title of "European Champion", they will create excitement and drama for the spectators in the Ullevi Stadium and television audiences across Europe and beyond.

The European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg will surely be celebrated as a shining example of athletics and the value the sport can provide to a city and to people of all ages.

My EAA Council colleagues and I must also look beyond the Championships and plan ways for European Athletics to build

on its success in the future. We believe that a key to achieving this aim is for the sport to engage even greater numbers of participants, especially young people, in all the countries of Europe.

This is a main focus of our 'European Athletics - the need for change' project. With the help of experts on youth athletics, development and marketing, we are now elaborating ideas for working together with our Member Federations and other partners to communicate with and bring the benefits of athletics to children and young people.

The initial result of our efforts in this area is an alliance with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which I will be proud to help officially launch on the eve of the Championships.

Following the launch, representatives of UNESCO and the EAA will attend the European Youth Forum in Gothenburg, generously hosted by the LOC in conjunction with the Championships. We will meet with more than 100 young leaders in athletics from 30 countries to exchange ideas on the future of the sport and the role participation can play in areas such as education and inter-cultural dialogue. Among other things, our interaction with the young leaders will give us a better understanding of the expectations individuals and society have of athletics and thereby help us to build our participant base in the future.

Our Swedish friends are right. Göteborg 2006 will be more than a sporting event. It will also be several steps towards a stronger European Athletics. We must all ensure that we make use of the opportunity a successful European Athletics Championships offers us to promote our sport.

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EAA and UNESCO sign partnership agreement

Patrick Nally explains the background to an exciting new partnership between the EAA and UNESCO.

The focus of the EAA's 'European Athletics - the need for change' project is how best to manage, develop and present the sport for the future.

A key issue facing athletics - and sport as a whole - is the general decline in the teaching of sport and physical education in schools, which has implications from the grassroots level up to international competition standard. This decline has also given rise to social and cultural concerns with, for example, lowering standards of public health and fitness and increasing childhood and adult obesity.

The EAA is forging a relationship with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to advance the cause of sport and physical education on behalf of European Athletics and the global athletics family.

Market forces may change but good values are constant

UNESCO is, itself, responding to change. It is seeking to mobilise a variety of partners to achieve its strategic goals and programme priorities. It recognises that sport - and athletics in particular - can provide an effective promotion and communication platform for the raising of public awareness and education.

Changes in technology and media are forcing changes in every aspect of our

lives, including in the commercial world. With news, entertainment and information delivered in 'real time' and the ability for the public to select 'what you want, when you want', companies have become more concerned about their corporate social responsibility and are now placing more emphasis on 'values' and 'brand connecting' with their target audience.

In this context, education and learning have become the 'new frontier' of cultural and social responsibility. UNESCO and the EAA will work together and with their partners to 'connect' through education and the sport of athletics to promote good 'values' and combat the effects of hectic lifestyles, longer working hours and the apparent eroding of family values.

With the rapid changes in all forms of media and the confusing proliferation of communication and oversimplification of messages, traditional teaching methods are not enough, and we need to look for new ways to create memorable, interesting, entertaining and enjoyable educational and learning experiences. There is a genuine need to safeguard the legacy of mankind's importance for the future and sport - set in the context of its history, achievements, cultural and social heritage - provides an ideal educational 'tool'.

UNESCO, as the lead agency for sports education within the United Nations system, and the EAA, as the governing



body for European Athletics, will work together to develop specific projects to promote their common goals.

Their first activity together is for UNESCO to participate in the European Youth Forum in Gothenburg on the occasion of the European Athletics Championships. Within the framework of the Forum theme of 'Making Europe Smaller', UNESCO will focus on 'How to use sport (athletics) to promote universal values and inter-cultural dialogue'.

People of every nation love sport and athletics. In its simplest form, it is the first sport they encounter. It establishes important reference points for the social and physical well-being of children and is the catalyst for all other sports.

The EAA and UNESCO will cooperate closely to review ways in which the sport of athletics, and its many attributes, can be used to promote physical education, health and fitness, working with the private sector to develop cultural and socially responsible educational projects and programmes.

By Patrick Nally

Patrick Nally is a pioneer of international sports marketing and sponsorship - packaging rights and forging relationships between sport and major multinational companies. He is working closely with the EAA on the 'European Athletics - the need for change' project and has played a leading role in the development of the new relationship with UNESCO.



Göteborg 2006: a benchmark for future host cities



The European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg will be “more than a sporting event”.

The success of the 2006 European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg will be a tremendous advertisement for European Athletics, but not only for the sport. The stunning transformation of a sporting championship by the Swedish city into what Claes Bjerkne, CEO of Göteborg & Co, calls “more than a sporting event” may provide an equally enduring legacy.

As European Athletics adapts to the demands of the 21st century, major sporting events are also required to alter time honoured ways of presentation. Championships are being redefined and big sporting events are being turned into city centre festivals. Prospective hosts may need to offer more than a championship.

Christian Milz, the Director General of the EAA, calls these events “the shop window of our sport”. These showcases are crucial when European Athletics is seeking a new fan base and provide the opportunity to “touch and inspire new and existing athletics fans”.

Gothenburg offered three mission statements in its bid for the 2006 European Athletics Championships: it would be more than a sporting event; events would be within walking distance of the city centre; and the stadium would be full each day.

The initiative was part of the ‘Göteborg model’, in which long-term investment and intensive, strategic planning ensure that not only major sports events come to the city, but also concerts, theatre festivals and other cultural events.

“When the event is in the heart of a city everybody will get involved,” Bjerkne explains. “The stadium is within walking distance of the city centre. It’s easy for everyone to take part. It’s better in a ‘small’ big city because the entire city can be the arena. The City Festival which takes place during the Championships will ensure that it is a great atmosphere for everybody.”

Gothenburg has offered future hosts an important element to contemplate: widening the scope of the city’s candidature beyond the traditional sports concept.

Bjerkne says it is worthwhile for a city to make an investment even if there is no immediate financial return. Hosting major events can, if handled in a professional way, offer a huge financial boost to the city and the region, and enhance ‘sports tourism’. “It does not necessarily matter,” he says, “if the event budget doesn’t make a profit.”

Bjerkne’s advice is “not to underestimate the difficulties” of bidding for and staging events. “Take time to build up knowledge and relationships. You have to deal with events in a professional, cost effective way,” he says.

It is important to adopt a clear and commonsense approach. He explains: “Take the event industry seriously. Events are an important element to entice people to visit the city. So, you want to have a long-term mix of events as the ultimate goal is to make the city more attractive.

“A single event doesn’t change anything. Two or more makes a difference. You have to have support from political leaders, use local connections, develop knowledge and strategy and have people with many skills. Don’t bring top people in too late. We have a strong tradition of sports clubs and have combined the support of the city with the base of the clubs.”

The benefits for Gothenburg – and other cities – of staging a major event are enormous. But the choice of venue is also important for European Athletics as it seeks new candidates for future events.

At a time when European Athletics is pursuing its ‘need for change’ project, one of its targets is to ensure that athletics’ appeal extends to a new audience, and in particular young people, who have not yet discovered the varied attractions of the doyen of Olympic sports. Extending the appeal beyond the competition in the stadium means that events such as the European Athletics Championships have to reach out to the entertainment industry.

As José María Odriozola, the President of the Royal Spanish Athletics Federation, remarked after Barcelona had been awarded the 2010 European Athletics Championships earlier this year: “The Championships will be a very important tool for us to promote athletics throughout Spain and especially to young people.”

For ten days in August 2006, Gothenburg will enjoy a wonderful cultural festival as well as excellence in the athletics arena. Is this the way ahead for such events? Claes Bjerkne believes that it is.

By Iain Macleod
Iain Macleod Consulting & Partner, Switzerland

* Göteborg & Co is a company owned 50% by the city of Gothenburg and 50% by trade and industry. Shareholders and principals have entered into long-term co-operation agreements to develop and market Gothenburg and the region. Göteborg & Co is responsible for marketing, sponsors, planning and implementation of the 2006 European Athletics Championships.



The Avenue full of people during the 1995 World Athletics Championships in Gothenburg

France and Russia win 2006 SPAR European Cup



The French men regained the title they had previously won in 2003, while Russia's women won the Cup for a record 10th successive time in Malaga on 28-29 June.

Just as they had done at the European Athletics Indoor Cup in March, the French men and Russian women emerged triumphant at the 2006 SPAR European Cup.

France left it late and only clinched their Cup victory in the last event, thanks to their quartet winning the 4x400m relay, while Russia's ever-dominant women's team went in front after the third event and never looked back.

Two European Cup best performances were achieved in Malaga, both in the women's competition. Russia's world record holder Tatyana Lysenko launched the hammer out to a staggering 76.50 metres, adding more than two metres to the old mark which had stood since 1999, while Poland's Monika Pyrek cleared 4.75 metres in the pole vault.



Monika Pyrek

However, the SPAR European Cup is more than just a showcase for individuals. It is the world's premier competition for national teams and this year even more was at stake as the top two nations in the men's and women's competitions qualified for the IAAF World Cup in September.

France's male stars did their job on the first day, with Ronald Pognon winning the 100m in a windy 10.13, Marc Raquil becoming the first man to win the 400m four times by battling the wind down the back straight to stop the clock in 45.89 and Naman Keita taking the 400m hurdles in 50.20. But the French men were only sixth over night with 50 points after the disqualification of their 4x100m quartet, although only four points behind second placed Poland.

By contrast and unexpectedly, having last won the Cup in 1993, Russia's men were emulating their women and had romped to a 17 point lead at the end of the first day with a tally of 71 points, thanks partly to wins from high jumper Andrey Silnov and shot putter Pavel Sofin, with a personal best of 20.59m.

However, France showed their mettle on the second day to overhaul the Russians' big lead. The first event on day two was the 110m hurdles and it was the perfect platform for Ladjí Doucouré to start the French fightback, with the 2005 world champion winning in 13.27 seconds.

Gradually, event-by-event, France closed the gap on Russia with two pivotal moments demonstrating the swing of the pendulum on the second day. Russian triple jump champion Danila Burkenya, arguably the favourite, had to withdraw from his event after sustaining a groin injury during his first attempt and scored



Pavel Sofin

no points. On the positive side, having had two failures at 5.65 metres, French pole vaulter Romain Mesnil decided to gamble everything by taking a final attempt at 5.70 and soared clear to give him victory over Italy's 2003 world champion and 2005 Cup winner Giuseppe Gibilisco.

Team Standings

Men		Women			
1.	France	118	1.	Russia	155
2.	Russia	116	2.	Poland	111.5
3.	Great Britain	109	3.	Ukraine	99
4.	Poland	107	4.	France	98
5.	Ukraine	103	5.	Germany	93
6.*	Spain	99.5	6.	Spain	90
7.*	Italy	93	7.*	Great Britain	85
8.	Germany	86.5	8.*	Sweden	81
9.*	Finland	65	9.*	Romania	76.5

*Teams relegated to First League in 2007

As 9 teams competed in the 2006 SPAR European Cup, the teams in the last 3 places are relegated to the First League in 2007. However, as the host team, Germany, is automatically qualified to participate in the 2007 SPAR European Cup, Spain's men's team (6th place) is relegated to the First League instead of Germany (8th place).



Tatyana Lysenko



Marc Raquil ensures France's victory in the 4x400m and the Cup

France were still five points in arrears of Russia before the final event, the 4x400m relay, but anchored by individual 400m winner Marc Raquil they secured maximum points. Russia, in one of their weaker events, could finish only eighth to leave France the overall winners by two points. As partial compensation, Russia's men's team finished second and qualified for the World Cup for the first time.

The 2006 SPAR European Cup was more than just a duel between the two leading men's teams. Among the other memorable moments: Britain's Christian Malcolm won the 200m in 20.29 and Italy's prodigious young long jumper Andrew Howe leapt a personal best of 8.29m.

Poland's Piotr Malachowski also had a Cup to remember, throwing a personal best of 65.56 metres in the first round and then a national record of 66.21 metres with his fourth and final effort to defeat German legend and five-time Cup winner Lars Riedel.

Russia's women will also be at the World Cup in Athens in September after they won 11 of the 20 events to leave Poland in second place by the massive margin of 44.5 points, a level of superiority only previously surpassed when they won by 45 points in 2004.

Every track event except for the 3000m and the two hurdles races was won by

Russian runners, though they only won two field events, thanks to Lysenko and long jumper Tatyana Kotova.

Poland did admirably to finish second, equalling their best ever showing in the SPAR European Cup and qualifying for the World Cup for the first time. In addition to Pyrek, javelin thrower Barbara Madejczyk rose to the occasion with a national record of 64.08m which won her the Athlete of the SPAR European Cup Award.

At the other end of the Cup standings, Great Britain and SPAR European Cup debutants Sweden, along with bottom nation Romania, were relegated, but they both had their moments in the sun on Spain's Costa del Sol.

Britain's Tasha Danvers-Smith and Jo Pavey overturned the form book and had impressive wins in the 400m hurdles and 3000m respectively, while Swedish stars Susanna Kallur and Kajsa Bergqvist lived up to their billing as favourites and were victorious in the 100m hurdles and high jump.

French shot putter Laurence Manfredi, fourth in Malaga, also deserves a special mention. She became the third athlete to compete in the Cup on a record 12 occasions.

By Phil Minshull, a Madrid based sports writer and broadcaster

Athletes of the SPAR European Cup: Ivan Heshko and Barbara Madejczyk

Ukrainian middle distance runner Ivan Heshko and Polish javelin thrower Barbara Madejczyk were deserved winners of the men's and women's Athlete of the SPAR European Cup Award, which rewards competitors who rise to the occasion and make an outstanding contribution to their team's performance.

Heshko contributed 17 points to his team's score with a win in the 1500m on day one and second place in the 800m on day two to help Ukraine finish in fifth place and avoid relegation. Madejczyk's first place in the javelin with a new national record helped her team to finish second and qualify for the World Cup for the first time.

Both athletes were delighted to receive the award, which was presented for the second time in 2006.

"I was really surprised when I heard that I had won the Athlete of the SPAR European Cup Award," said Madejczyk. "During the competition, I just did my best. It was only when I switched on my mobile phone afterwards that I realised how well I had done as I had received messages from many people. It's moments like this that make competing really worth all the effort you put in during training."

Heshko added: "I'm very proud and happy about this award, but it's not really for me but the whole of the Ukrainian team. This year was the first time we were competing in the SPAR European Cup since 2002 and we all knew we had to give 100 per cent if we were to retain our place."



Barbara Madejczyk and Ivan Heshko with EAA President Hansjörg Wirz

Athletics' biggest team competition

37 national teams and a team representing the Athletic Association of the Small States of Europe (AASSE) competed in the European Cup First and Second League matches across Europe on 17-18 June.

At the First League Group A match in the Czech capital Prague, it was the Belgian men and the women from Belarus who earned the right to compete in the SPAR European Cup next year.

In the women's competition the outcome was never in doubt. Belarus had a five point advantage going into day two and then won five of the nine events on Sunday and finished second in two more. The Czechs and the Italians were tied for second place after the first day, but the hosts could not keep up with the Italian pace on Sunday.

The men's competition was much closer as the Swedish team rallied on the second day, winning half of the 10 events, including the 110m hurdles where Robert Kronberg took his sixth consecutive win in the European Cup. However this was not enough to beat day one leaders, Belgium, who will compete in the SPAR European Cup for the first time in 2007.

The hosts, Greece, scored a winning double at the Group B match in Thessaloniki thanks to excellent performances from some of their stars. Olympic triple jump silver medallist Hrysopigi Devetzi won the long jump as well as her specialist event and Olympic 400m hurdles champion Fani Halkia was victorious in the hurdles and flat 400m. Impressive amongst the men was Dimitris Tsiamis, who set a Greek triple jump record of 17.55m.

Both host nation teams earned promotion to the First League at the Second League Group A match in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The men took the title by 20.5 points ahead of Ireland and the women finished second, four points behind Norway.



Greece's men winning the 4x400m in Thessaloniki

Bulgaria's men and Cyprus' women won the Second League Group B match in Novi Sad, both teams beating the hosts Serbia and Montenegro. Bulgaria won by just three points to earn an immediate return to the First League, while Cyprus will make their debut in the higher division.

France and Russia win European Cup Combined Events

Around 200 of Europe's best multi-eventers competed in the European Cup Combined Events at three venues across the Continent on 1-2 July.



Romain Barras

At the Super League in Arles (FRA), it was France's men and Russia's women who took the team titles. The men's competition was only decided in the final event, the 1500m, when France emerged victorious, winning by 421 points from Russia. Long time leaders and defending champions Estonia finished third despite one athlete withdrawing from the competition and another no-heighting in the pole vault.

In the individual competition, where the lead changed hands eight times over the course of the two days, Romain Barras (FRA) did enough in the 1500m to win by 26 points from world bronze medallist Attila Zsivoczky (HUN), with Aleksandr Pogorelov (RUS) in third place. However, Barras' personal best score of 8416 points will not be ratified due to a following wind of 4.4m/s in the 100m.

In the heptathlon, the Russian women were pushed to the end by newly promoted Sweden, led by Olympic and world champion Carolina Klüft, finally winning by just 71 points. Unsurprisingly Klüft was the individual winner, scoring 6665 points. Behind the Swede, Karolina Tyminska (POL) set a new personal best of 6402 points and last year's European Junior champion Jessica Ennis (GBR) was just beaten into fourth place by the athlete who took the bronze medal in Kaunas, Ksenja Balta (EST), who added nearly 400 points to her previous best score.

The winners of the First League match in Yalta (UKR) were Belarus' men, with Aleksandr Parkhomenko, who achieved a personal best of 8104 points, and 2005 European Junior champion Andrei Krauchanka finishing in first and third places. In the heptathlon, individual winner Aryiro Strataki (6058 points) led Greece to the team title. The Dutch men and the French women finished in second place and will also compete in the Super League next year.

At the Second League match in Monzon (ESP), the men from Belgium and Sweden and the women from Spain and Latvia earned promotion to the First League. The individual winners were François Gourmet (BEL) with 7882 points and Esenija Volzankina (LAT) with 5996 points, a personal best by over 300 points.

Italy is top mountain running nation

170 athletes from 27 countries took part in the 5th European Mountain Running Championships over an 'up and down' course in Úpice - Malé Svatonovice in the Czech Republic on Sunday 9 July. The Italians reaffirmed their position as Europe's best mountain runners, taking both team titles as well as an individual gold and bronze.

Italy's Marco Gaiardo won the men's race despite being an uphill specialist. He took the lead after the last climb of the 11160m race (total climb 900m) and went on to win by eight seconds in 57:42 from the surprise of the Championships, Selahattin

Selcuk from Turkey. France's Julien Rancon finished third a further nine seconds back. In the team event France took silver and Great Britain bronze behind Italy.

It was the Czech favourite, Anna Pichrtova, who took the women's title over the 7740m course with a climb of 600m. Living just 3km from the venue, she knew the surroundings well and dominated the race from the start. She crossed the line waving a Czech flag in 41:28, 44 seconds ahead of 18-year-old Slovenian Mateja Kosovelj. Italy's Vittoria Salvini finished third and led her team to gold ahead of the Czech Republic and France.



Marco Gaiardo winning the men's race

Abeylegesse stars in Antalya

Turkey's Elvan Abeylegesse made a great return to competition to win the women's race at the European Cup 10000m in pouring rain in Antalya, Turkey, on Saturday 15 April. She clocked 30:21.67 to smash Paula Radcliffe's Cup record by nearly 20 seconds and break her own Turkish record in only the second 10000m race of her career.

Abeylegesse had already lapped the rest of the field by the half way point, which she reached in 15:16, and then ran a quicker second 5000m to become the 12th fastest women ever over the distance.

"I was ready to run a fast time," she said after the race, "but I had to struggle with two unexpected opponents; the rain and the wind."

Italy's Silvia Weissteiner finished a distant second in 32:30.55, with Hungary's Krisztina Papp third in 32:31.54. Sixteen women ran inside the 33:20.00 qualifying time for the European Athletics Championships. The women's team title went to Belgium for the first time ahead of Italy and Portugal.

France's Mokhtar Benhari won the men's race in a personal best of 28:47.22. He saw off the challenge of last year's bronze medallist, Ricardo Serrano from Spain, and of his team mate Ismail Sghyr, who finished second and third in 28:50.18 and 28:51.14 respectively. Benhari and Sghyr led the French to team victory ahead of Portugal and Italy.



Elvan Abeylegesse

European Champion Clubs Cup

Club Luch Moscow from Russia confirmed all the predictions to win both the men's and women's competitions at the European Champion Clubs Cup Group A match in Valencia, Spain, on 27-28 May.

Luch's women amassed 141 points to host club Valencia Terra i Mar's 111.5, with Fondiaria Sai Atletica from Italy third on 97.5. It was the 10th straight win for the Russian club.

Luch's men won for the eighth time with 126 points from Italians Fiamme Gialle on 111 and Sporting Clube Portugal on 93, just one point ahead of Panhellenios of Greece.

Four Cup records were set over the weekend. In the women's 3000m steeplechase Lyubov Ivanova (Luch) smashed the previous best by almost half a minute with an excellent 9:32.83, while her team mate Yevgenia Isakova clipped 0.05 seconds from the previous 400m hurdles record with 54.45. Barbora Spotáková (USK Prague) threw the javelin 65.28 metres to break the old mark of 64.54m. The only men's record to fall went to Fiamme Gialle's 4x100m quartet who clocked 38.85 to shave 0.03 off the previous best which had stood since 1991.

The Group B match took place in Istanbul where Woodford Green of Great Britain and USC Mainz of Germany maintained their first day leads to win the men's and women's competitions respectively.

SPAR European Cross Country Championships 2006



The 2006 SPAR European Cross Country Championships take place in San Giorgio su Legnano, close to the Italian city of Milan, on Sunday 10 December. This year Under 23 races will be included in the Championships for the first time.

Timetable

11:00	Junior Women
11:40	Junior Men
12:30	Under 23 Women
13:20	Under 23 Men
14:10	Senior Women
14:45	Senior Men

LOC Contact

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For more information about the event visit
www.sangiorgio2006.org

EAA Events awarded to Olympic cities

At its meeting in Gothenburg in April, the EAA Council awarded three future major events to previous host cities of the Olympic Games.

The 2010 European Athletics Championships will be staged at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, venue of the 1992 Olympic Games, at the end of July or beginning of August. The stadium, which will be modernised for the Championships, will have a capacity of 45,000.

The venue for the 2009 European Athletics Indoor Championships will be the Palasport Olimpico Isozaki in Turin, which was built to host ice hockey at the 2006 Winter Olympics. In order to ensure the best possible sight lines for the 6000 spectators, a platform will be built above the main arena floor.

The 2007 SPAR European Cup will take place on 23-24 June in the Munich Olympic Stadium in the Olympiapark, which hosted the European Athletics Championships in 2002 and the SPAR European Cup in 1997 as well as the 1972 Olympics.



European Athletics Indoor Championships 2007

The 29th European Athletics Indoor Championships take place at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham, UK, on 2-4 March 2007.

Venue

The National Indoor Arena was Britain's first purpose built sports arena and was specifically designed for athletics. It houses a six lane demountable 200m track with Mondo surface. Regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands, will be funding the replacement of the athletics track surface ready for the Championships.

12 athletics world records have been set at the NIA since it opened in 1991. It hosts the prestigious Norwich Union Grand Prix meeting each February and was the venue for the 2003 IAAF World Indoor Championships.

Tickets

Tickets can be purchased online via www.birminghamathletics2007.com or by calling +44 870 739 2007. Day tickets are priced from £12 to £25 and three day passes from £36 to £60, with concessions available



Olympic champions Lynn Davies, Sebastian Coe, Denise Lewis and Jason Gardener at the official launch of ticket sales earlier in the year

LOC Contact

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EAA-EBU: A true tale of two Knights

Richard Bunn, Head of Television Programmes and Controller of Sport at EBU from 1978 to 2000, looks back at 25 years of partnership with the EAA.

Once upon a time, two Knights sat around a table reflecting on their future. It was 21 October 1977 and the two Knights were Sir Charles Curran, President of the EBU and Director General of the BBC, and Arthur Gold (later to be knighted), President of the EAA. The meeting had been called to discuss how a more permanent relationship could be developed between the two organisations to give the EAA financial stability while ensuring that the EBU acquired the broadcast rights for EAA events.

This original contact led to detailed discussions to try and find a solution, since never before had such an agreement been considered, let alone negotiated. Inevitably, the Knights passed the responsibility for the real work of negotiating to their faithful lieutenants. On the EBU side were Alan Hart, BBC Head of Sport who had attended the Knights' first meeting, Boris Acquadro, Chairman of the EBU Sports Working Party, and the author of this story. On the EAA side were General Secretary Pierre Dasriaux and Treasurer Jean Frauenlob.

After an exchange of thoughts and ideas which lasted many months, the two sides signed the first long term agreement in April 1981, covering the period 1982 to 1984. The rights fees, which included those for OIRT representing all Eastern Bloc nations, were to be negotiated on an event by event basis, taking account of what had been paid in the past for a similar event. (So it was in those days of yore.)

One unique feature of this contract was that an extra sum was paid to assist with the "office and administrative expenses" of the EAA. As for the non-European rights, the EBU took on the responsibility to exploit them, paying the largest share of the income to the EAA. So the EBU became a rights agent to secure the relationship with a federation.

In 1984, a new contract was signed for the period 1985 to 1988, including a schedule detailing the rights payments to be made for each event. The EAA had an assurance regarding future revenues and the EBU members could budget for and schedule EAA events in advance. The next contract was signed in 1987, covering the period 1989 to 1992, and for the first time the OIRT concluded a separate agreement, thereby controlling its own destiny and negotiating freely, just like good capitalists.

An unfriendly, hostile figure appeared in 1989, rising out of the new commercial environment that had taken hold in Europe and threatening to end the happy relationship. A tempess agency sought to seduce the EAA with the promise of a new world and large sums of money. The EBU learned of this and as a loyal partner agreed to renegotiate the terms for the years remaining on the contract and at the same time to extend the relationship until 1995. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1992 and the integration in 1993 of the European members of OIRT into the EBU, these broadcasters were brought into the contract.

This new contract had another first, the EBU formally recognising the EAA's marketing partner with a commitment by all parties to work closely together. The EAA had understood the vital importance of broadcasting and marketing and created a Marketing Commission in 1988 to which the EBU and the marketing company were invited to send representatives, firstly as observers and from 1991 as members in their own right.

The Marketing Commission was ably led first by Jean Frauenlob and then by Luciano Barra, who in the same spirit of co-operation established a process for the bidding and selecting of organisers for EAA major events.



The EAA and EBU always demonstrated a strong desire to develop European Athletics into the most attractive product for the television audience, while not forgetting the spectator in the stadium. For example, the programming interests of broadcasters were considered, resulting in decisions which reduced the length of the European Athletics Championships to a minimum of six days and a maximum of eight days, made the European Cup an annual event, established the European Cross Country Championships and most recently introduced a European Athletics Indoor Cup.

Both sides recognised that by careful management and coordination of each event, the spectator in the stadium would have a better experience and the viewer at home would enjoy the maximum live exposure of all disciplines. This led to innovations in the television production of events, giving the viewer a greater understanding and appreciation of what goes into athletics.

Successive contracts were signed for the periods 1996 to 1999, 2000 to 2003 and 2004 to 2007 and the relationship continues.

The original EAA Knight was succeeded by Presidents Homen and Wirz, who shared and developed this spirit of partnership and co-operation with EBU Presidents Autin, Scharf and Wessberg. Throughout the relationship, which has not always been absolutely smooth, both parties recognised the benefits they enjoy.

As in all good fairytales, there are signs that the EAA and EBU will continue to work together happily ever after. Our two Knights would be very pleased.

Last Honours for István Gyulai

EAA Vice President Ágoston Schulek pays tribute to the late István Gyulai (1943-2006).

The whole world of athletics was shocked by the news of István Gyulai's death on 12 March 2006. As General Secretary of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), István was dedicated to his work until the time of his death. Only his most intimate friends and relatives knew what an uphill battle he fought against the deadly disease about which he never spoke.

Who was this talented, ambitious, learned sports diplomat who was always smiling and ready to help? István grew up in very trying circumstances. He lost his father when he was very young, and his widowed mother brought him up alone during the difficult years that followed the Second World War. These difficult circumstances could have contributed to his many achievements in the fields of learning, work and sport.

István was a member of the Hungarian athletics team for nine years, national champion 23 times in relay and sprint events and participated in the 1964 Olympic Games. He received a teacher's degree after studying in training camps and while holding part-time jobs in order to support his family. His team mates always respected him for his diligence and persistence entwined with his talent for achieving what he wanted. He was a real member of the team in another sense; he always joined his team mates in playing games and jokes with them.

István became proficient in English and German and also learned Russian at an advanced level without ever living in countries where these languages were spoken. He made use of his good command of foreign languages as a radio and television reporter. He was an assistant editor and later became the Director of the Sports News Department of Hungarian Television, where he worked for 22 years. He always prepared himself diligently and conscientiously for each and every broadcast and his live coverage contributed to the fact that many sports, including athletics, became well-known in Hungary.

As the Vice President of the Hungarian Athletics Association, in 1984 István was elected a member of the IAAF Council. Because of his competence, diligence and diplomatic skills he excelled in this position as well. As a result of his excellent work, IAAF President Primo Nebiolo asked him to become the IAAF General Secretary in 1991. Very soon Nebiolo realised that he had chosen an excellent colleague because István was not only indefatigable and learned, he was also a creative partner and willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of athletics.

Very soon thereafter, István was held in very high regard by the athletics family all over the world, as he was at their service 24 hours every day. He was in contact with the representatives of all the continents. He kept up to date with all issues and fields of athletics. He approached his work in such a way that he never had a backlog; he never had any pending jobs or unanswered letters on his desk.

He started his job at the IAAF in London with a small staff and then he built up the nearly 80-member headquarters in Monte Carlo. He worked together with Primo Nebiolo and it was during these years that athletics worked its way up and joined the circle of the most prestigious international sports federations.

István was a Hungarian, a European and a citizen of the world. For him athletics was always the most important consideration when he made decisions and he represented the interests of athletics everywhere as an eminent sports diplomat. It was a memorable experience to watch him conduct congressional meetings of the IAAF's 211 members. He always fully understood the balance of forces and he was capable of defending the interests of athletics and the prestige of the Council against every temporary whim.



István Gyulai (1943-2006)

István served with two IAAF Presidents, Primo Nebiolo and Lamine Diack. He always used his vast experience and knew how ideas could be converted into practice as well as how and when to abandon ideas that were doomed to fail. He was also loyal to his superiors who knew that his objections were dutifully in the best interest of the sport. He was a perfectionist at work and he expected the same from his colleagues. He actively participated in all sessions of the EAA Council as a representative of the IAAF and he politely provided advice and criticism lest we should make mistakes.

Although István lived far away from his family for a long time, he was very proud of his four talented children and he always took the opportunity to help their career. It is due to his help that they became successful in the fields of sport and work. He adored his grandchild and he made every effort to be able to spend as much time with her as he could.

With the passing of István Gyulai, we lost one of the most influential leaders of the sports world. We can be proud that we had the opportunity to be among his colleagues and friends. Hundreds of his friends and admirers from all parts of the world attended his funeral. His death leaves a gap that cannot be filled, but his work in athletics and his influence upon sport in Hungary, Europe and the world continues.

We shall keep his memory. God rest his soul, may he rest in peace.



European Athletics Calendar Conference

This year's European Athletics Calendar Conference will take place on 12-16 October at the Hotel Admiral in Varna, Bulgaria, and is being held in conjunction with an EAA Council meeting.



Preliminary Programme

Thursday 12 October

- 18.00 Euro Meetings General Assembly
- 20.30 Euro Meetings Dinner (by invitation)

Friday 13 October

- 09.00-15.00 European Athletics Calendar Conference
- 13.00 Press Conference
- 11.00-13.00 Balkan Athletic Association Meeting
- 11.00-13.00 Small States Meeting
- 19.00-20.00 EAA Welcome Cocktail for new Presidents & General Secretaries of EAA Member Federations
- 20.00 Dinner for all participants hosted by the EAA and the Bulgarian Athletics Federation

Saturday 14 October

- 09.00-12.30 Workshop of Member Federation Presidents & General Secretaries
- 15.00-18.00 Head Coaches' Meeting
- 15.00-18.00 IAAF Circuits Working Group Meeting
- 15.00-19.30 EAA Reflection Commission Meeting

Sunday 15 October

- 09.00-18.00 EAA Council Meeting
- 20.00 EAA Council Meeting Dinner

Monday 16 October

- 09.00-13.00 EAA Council Meeting

EAA International Partners

The EAA's long-term International Partners are an indispensable part of the European Athletics family and we are proud that, despite an ever-changing sponsorship market, the successful relationships we have developed are reflected in the extended duration of our partnership associations.



SPAR International has been the Principal Partner of the EAA since 1996. SPAR is keen to support athletes at all levels and its continued partnership with the EAA allows it to build on the community sponsorship it already offers at local level in many countries around the world. The SPAR Brand communicates values of Passion, Trust, Community, Friendship and Commitment.



SEIKO has been the Official Timing and Measurement Company for European Athletics events since 1991. Continuing research and development of systems has ensured that athletes can compete with the assurance that their achievements will be recorded accurately, while allowing the ever increasing demands for immediate data and results to be realised.



EPSON has been the EAA's Technical Partner since 2001. Its technological prowess ensures that fast, accurate and reliable results are provided to the media and spectators at European Athletics events. EPSON feels that the spirit of challenge and the desire to exceed shown by athletes matches perfectly with its corporate culture of creativity and challenge.



The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has been the EAA's Official Broadcast Partner since 1981. Over the last 25 years, the two organisations have worked together to develop European Athletics into an attractive product for the television audience, while not forgetting the spectators in the stadium.

The EAA appreciates that these distinguished brands share our passion for European Athletics and value the ideals it represents and we would like to thank them for their continued support.

For information about sponsorship opportunities of European Athletics, please contact EAA Marketing Manager Lars Kaiser, Tel: +41 21 313 4365, Email: lars.kaiser@european-athletics.org



IMPRESSUM

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“Stuttgart 1986 was an overwhelming experience for me”

German freelance journalist Ursula Kaiser profiles five time European champion Heike Drechsler (GER).

Germany's Heike Drechsler is one of the most successful athletes ever at the European Athletics Championships. From finishing fourth in the long jump in Athens in 1982 at the age of 17 to taking fifth place in the same event in front of her home crowd in Munich in 2002, she competed in the event six times, winning five gold and one silver medal.

In 1983, when the tall blond girl was only 18, she became the youngest ever world long jump champion. She duly added the European crown in Stuttgart three years later, before also winning the 200m in an equal world record time (she also won 200m silver in 1990). But it was in the long jump where she really excelled, winning four consecutive titles from 1986 to 1998.

Heike Drechsler was a phenomenon. Sometimes the young lady, who started for Jena, Ludwigshafen and then Karlsruhe, also competed in the heptathlon, where she scored 6741 points and impressed with 13.34 seconds in the 100m hurdles and 1.84m in the high jump.

Drechsler was born in the GDR and after the borders opened, she at first experienced some problems with her life: “I felt very often under big pressure,” she said. But she changed totally and became one of the nicest and most interesting German athletes. Today she is very open minded and everybody can see her love for life.

However, she found it hard to end her career. “The dream of flying and the feeling not to be able to leave something that you can do better than everything else was the reason why I was still jumping after 20 years,” she always said. She competed for the last time in 2004 at the IAAF Golden League meeting in Berlin where 60,000 spectators celebrated this unique woman and athlete.

Today, Drechsler lives in Karlsruhe with her partner, former European decathlon champion Alain Blondel, and son Toni, who was born in 1989. She is still a superstar, even though she does not jump into the sandpit anymore. She has many other things to do, even if she sometimes misses her sport.

She is still very popular and in great demand and she is an idol for a lot of young athletes. “This makes me proud,” the former long jumper always said about this honour. From time to time she visits schools and joins walking days. She gets emails from many young athletes and pupils - they want to know what her life was like or to get tips and advice. And sometimes she also does a few crazy things, like a competition with dog sledge races, biathlon or cycling at minus 30 degrees in Canada!

Drechsler, who still holds the European Athletics Championships best performances for 200m (21.71) and long jump (7.30m), thinks that the stars of this year's Championships will be Swedish high jumper Kajsa Bergqvist, Russian pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva and German javelin thrower Steffi Nerius.

In the athletics world there is now a new generation, but Drechsler still is involved in her favourite sport. At the world championships in Helsinki last year, she worked for Eurosport, interviewing athletes after their events. “Now I am on the other side and I like it very much,” she says about her new role and laughs. “After my long career it is something special to watch athletics from another view. I am able to empathise with the situations of the athletes, for example when a jumper is prepared for an attempt and is ready to go. Sometimes I am more excited than I was in my own competitions. And the direct contact after the event is very interesting,” she says.



Her best memories of her competing days are from 1986 European Athletics Championship in Stuttgart. “I won my first two titles in front of my home spectators,” she says. “I was only 21 and it was an overwhelming experience for me. The atmosphere in the stadium was unbelievable.”

The two time Olympic long jump champion will never forget those years, but it was another life for her then. The new chapter in her life is also very interesting: “My sport opened a lot of doors for me,” she says. The five time European gold medallist is very often in the media and is asked to do a lot of different things. She loves tennis, cooking and reading and now she has a different kind of view about sport. “I enjoy my life much more than years before, it is a different world,” she says.