

The International Festival of Athletics Coaching

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Glasgow, Scotland

More than 350 participants from 26 nations were treated to an impressive line-up of speakers, including the coaches behind five London 2012 Olympic gold medals and two Paralympic gold medals, at the fifth edition of the International Festival of Athletics Coaching (IFAC) in Glasgow, Scotland, from 26 to 28 October 2012.

In addition to the four keynote presentations and various seminars staged at Glasgow's Marriott Hotel, the programme included a range of extended practical workshops, which took place at city's premier sport facility, the Emirates Arena.

Staged under the auspices of the European Athletic Coaches Association and Scottish Athletics the event was supported by Europe-

an Athletics, Glasgow Life, the Dallas Trust, SeeGlasgow and sportscotland.

Keynote Presentation

Jama Aden (SOM)

The Somali-born Aden is now based in Qatar, where he works with endurance athletes from several countries including the 2012 Olympic 1500m champion Taoufik Makhoulfi from Algeria and Qatari Hamza Driouch, winner of the 1500m gold at the 2012 IAAF World Junior Championships. Summarising his coaching experiences, Aden, who was named the 2008 IAAF Middle Distance Coach of the Year, emphasised the need to plan individualised programmes that fit each athlete's strengths and addresses their weaknesses. He then discussed in detail the importance of



testing, competition opportunities and recovery. A particularly strong image used by Aden was the analogy of the tight-rope: finding the right balance between over supporting an athlete, too much slack, and pushing an athlete too far, too much tension.

Keynote Presentation

Frank Dick (GBR)

Dick, the President of EACA and a member of the IAAF Coaches Commission, used his presentation to conduct a debrief of the athletics events at the London 2012 Olympic Games. After discussing strengths and weakness of the various competitions, he said that in many events it is becoming increasingly apparent that the athletes seem ill prepared for the rounds format of a major championship. This is particularly noticeable in the middle- and long-distance events, where athletes have become comfortable with the one-off, paced races and seem to lack racing competencies. With this conclusion, Dick presented an analysis on how athletes delivered on the day at the Games, finding that generally European athletes were not as effective as those from the USA or Jamaica. He concluded with recommendations that coach education better address the issue of delivering performance on the day.

Keynote Presentation

Sharon Hannan (AUS)

Hannan is the long-term coach to sprint hurdler Sally Pearson, Australia's golden girl from London 2012. Her presentation described both how Person's talent was spotted and carefully developed and her own journey of development as a coach. She said she did not come into coaching with an athletics background, but got involved because her daughter wanted to take part in athletics. With her first coaching qualification under her belt, Hannan admitted that she became hooked and was driven by a thirst for knowledge, a desire to understand and attention to detail. Paraphrasing Albert Einstein, she shared her belief that once we find our limits, we should strive to go beyond them!



EACA President Frank Dick (l) and Toni Minichiello

Keynote Presentation

Toni Minichiello (GBR)

Minichiello started the long journey to Olympic glory with Jessica Ennis over 14 years ago, not far from the '10 years - 10,000 hour rule' referred to by many experts in the area of talent development. His presentation, entitled 'Staying the Course,' emphasised the importance of remaining true to goals and targets. Ennis had a turbulent journey to her Olympic title and Minichiello painted a picture of how a coach's attitude and confidence in the 'master plan' can help the athlete overcome adversity and doubts. He explained how his role as a coach evolved: from teacher to coach to mentor, advisor and support. Points covered included the importance of planning and, perhaps more importantly in his view, taking time to reflect on plans.

Practical Workshops & Seminars

Following the success of the practical workshops at IFAC 2011, the 2012 edition of the conference held an extensive programme of

practical workshops to support learning. The workshop leaders included Sharon Hannan, Jama Aden, Damien Inocencio, Stephen Maguire, Peter Hannan, Stan Madiri, Vern Gambetta, Suren Ghazaryan, Marcin Góra.

In addition, there were interactive seminars on sport science and training methodology given by Judy Murray, Frans Bosch, Dr. Yannis Pitsiladis, Tony Stanger and Dave Sunderland.



Practical workshop with Sharon Hannan (!)



IFAC 2013

The 2013 edition of the International Festival of Athletics Coaching will take place in Glasgow on 25-27 October 2013. Among the confirmed keynote speakers is Boris Verkhovsky, Director of Acrobatic Performance and Coaching at the World famous Cirque de Soleil.

Registration is now open for IFAC 2013 at www.ifacscotland.co.uk.

Reported by Jamie Bowie

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