

The IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System

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“ *The authors discuss the goals and objectives of the newly implemented, world-wide IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System. They present the three-level structure of the curriculum, detailing specific aims, entry standards and elements covered for each course. They then summarize the procedures for implementation and development of the curriculum and the concepts of lecturer training and equivalency. They conclude with anticipated measures for the further education of participants.* ”

1 Introduction

To address the problem of a lack of qualified coaches the International Amateur Athletic Federation has established a world-wide coaches education and certification system. By providing organizational, material and personnel requirements, the system's aim is to assist participating countries to increase their capacity to train adequate numbers of competent coaches through standardized courses, qualifications and follow-up measures. The system is available to all IAAF Member Federations, and is co-ordinated by the IAAF Development Department and the eight IAAF Regional Development Centres (RDCs) around the world. The purpose of this paper is to describe briefly the main features of the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System.

2 Goals and objectives

The main goals of the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System are:

- a) to ensure that each country has sufficient coaches, qualified according to international standards, to allow its athletics programmes to function and develop as effectively as possible;
- b) to ensure that each region and country is eventually capable of educating its own coaches to the same international standards without dependence on foreign lecturers.

The more specific objectives of the system include:

- to provide a standard curriculum of world-wide application and leading to a professional qualification for coaches;
- to provide knowledge and understanding to coaches of both the theory and practice of athletics, in order to equip them to provide opportunities for all athletes, regardless of age, sex or ability, to reach their potential;
- to further the ethical and moral development of coaches;
- to increase opportunities for women to become certified and function as athletics coaches;
- to respect and be sensitive to the values of each local community in which it operates and strive to make an appropriate contribution to the needs of that community;
- to strengthen the links between the IAAF, its Member Federations and the IAAF Regional Development Centres, while at the same time, and without sacrificing quality, decentralizing responsibility for the system's administration.

3 Structure and elements

3.1 Three-level structure

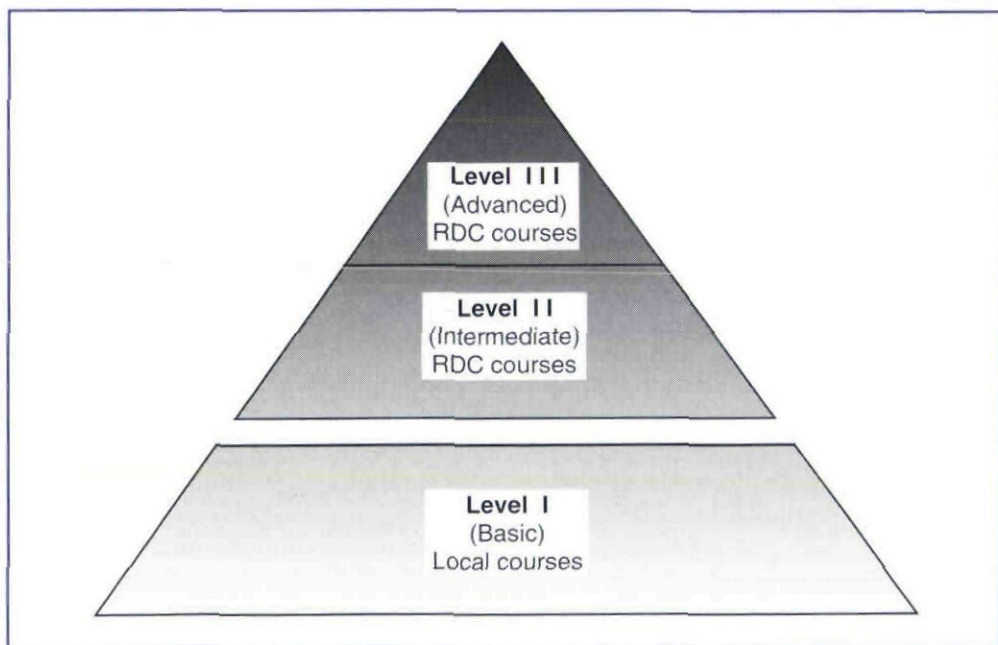
The IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System has a three-level structure. Entry is at Level I. Coaches who successfully complete the Level III course will receive the IAAF Diploma in Coaching.

The main objectives of the courses on each level are:

- a) to prepare coaches to work on the defined level regardless of whether they attend any further courses;
- b) to act as a filter for higher-level courses in the system.

3.1.1 Level I

The specific objective of the Level I course is to train as many coaches as possible to a level at which they can begin working effectively on grass-roots and youth athletics in their countries. For the vast majority of coaches Level I will be the only course they are able to attend and for this reason the course must provide more than merely an introduction. The Level I curriculum covers all events and emphasizes the practical aspects



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of coaching. It also provides a sufficient theoretical basis for coaches to be able to carry on learning, either through their own efforts or within the structure of the IAAF system.

Level I courses are conducted in the countries of the IAAF Member Federations using IAAF-accredited lecturers and standard materials. Course structure and timetables are somewhat flexible (provided specified time requirements are met) in order to adapt to local conditions, but the norm is a 15-day course. Entry standards are minimal. Level I participants are assessed through standardized examinations.

3.1.2 Level II

The specific objective of the Level II course is to bring experienced coaches to a level of specialization in one of the five event groups – sprint and hurdle events, middle- and long-distance events, walking events, jumping events and throwing events – so that they can begin to meet their country's need for high-level coaches. It is anticipated that the majority of Level II participants will progress to Level III. The Level II curriculum includes common core elements and event-group-specific elements.

In the beginning, Level II courses will be conducted at the RDCs by IAAF-accredited lecturers. As countries become progressively more able to build up the infrastructure, organizational ability and personnel required, they will be able to conduct these courses using IAAF staff and eventually their own IAAF-accredited lecturers. Entry conditions for Level II include specified minimum marks on the Level I examinations, one year of practical experience and nomination for the course by the coach's Member Federation.

3.1.3 Level III

The specific objective of the Level III course is to provide intermediate-level coaches with advanced-level instruction in one or two specialist events. As with Level II, the Level III curriculum includes both common core and event-specific elements.

Level III courses will be conducted at the RDCs by IAAF-accredited lecturers. Entry

conditions for Level III include specified minimum marks on the Level II examinations, one further year of practical experience and nomination for the course by the coach's Member Federation.

4 Procedures

4.1 Curriculum development

The curriculum for each level of the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System is standard for all courses, in all regions and in all languages. The elements of each level are elaborated with the assistance of experienced coaches, expert lecturers and curriculum specialists representing all of the IAAF's six Area Groups. The elements are tested under a variety of conditions before being officially accepted, and are then reviewed on a regular basis. Course materials are produced to the highest standards of quality and available in five languages – English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese.

4.2 Lecturer training

The IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System features specific training for course lecturers which ensures consistent, high-quality instruction on courses and helps to reduce the dependency of countries on outside experts for the education of coaches. Lecturer training consists of a two-step procedure. For the first step, experienced lecturers and coaches are invited to lecturers seminars where they receive an introduction to the IAAF Development Strategy, a thorough exposure to the curriculum and training in teaching methods. For the second step, participants who are recommended by the seminar instructors are invited to work on a Level I course, normally with a more experienced lecturer. IAAF lecturer accreditation will be awarded after a satisfactory performance on this course.

4.3 Implementation

The IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System, including lecturers seminars, Level I courses in each country and Level II and III courses at the RDCs, will be implemented according to a logical cycle. In other words, Level I courses began after the training

of Level I Lecturers; Level II courses will begin after the qualification of Level I candidates; etc. The timetable for the cycle in each region will be specific to the conditions and situation in that region and at its RDC. The minimum time for a complete cycle will be three years, with between four and five years being the anticipated maximum duration.

Level I courses began in 1992 and Level II courses will follow when coaches from all the countries served by an RDC have had a chance to attend a Level I course.

IAAF Member Federations wishing to stage a Level I course in their country should contact their RDC or the IAAF Development Department.

4.4 Equivalency

Generally, the IAAF will only award its Level I Certificate, Level II Certificate and Diploma to coaches who have participated in the appropriate course and passed the required examinations. In rare cases, the IAAF, at its sole discretion, may count attendance on courses in other systems as equivalent to attendance on the IAAF Level I course. Such a decision will only be made on applications from Member Federations (not individual coaches) and following a careful study of the curriculum which was actually followed. If equivalency is granted the candi-

dates will be required to pass all Level I examinations. There will be no equivalency arrangements for Level II, Level III or lecturer accreditation.

5 Further education measures

Participants who successfully complete the Level I course will automatically be included on the mailing list of the quarterly regional technical bulletin published by the RDC. Participants who complete Level II and read English will be placed on the mailing list of the IAAF technical journal *New Studies in Athletics*. Participants who complete the Level III course will receive all IAAF technical and scientific publications.

In addition to receiving the above publications, all Diploma holders will be eligible to attend high-level seminars which will be staged regularly at the RDCs and cover a variety of topics. IAAF-accredited lecturers will be required to attend at least one of these seminars as a participant every two years in order to maintain their accreditation.

6 Additional information

For additional information on any aspect of the IAAF Coaches Education and Certification System contact the IAAF Development Department.