



ESAA

English Schools' Athletic Association

22nd March 2020

Dear friends,

We are all aware of the challenges that have been thrown up by the Coronavirus in all areas of our lives, and we can only hope that the disease doesn't touch any of you directly or indirectly over the next few months.

On behalf of English Schools Athletic Association, I wanted to update as many of you as possible on where we are and how we hope to overcome the challenge we are facing with athletics in schools for the summer term.

We had hoped that, by postponing the First Round of the Track & Field Cup we could stage this round on the dates of the Regional Round. It has become clear over the last day or two that, for a variety of reasons, this will not be possible, so the decision has been made that this year's Schools Track & Field Cup will be cancelled. All entries to this year's competition will receive free entry to the 2021 Cup competition. As the competition is completely staffed by volunteers, as is the whole of the Association, we will not be in a position to refund payments to schools that have entered, but this will be held over until next year.

At this stage, we do not intend to cancel the Track & Field Championships or the Combined Events Regional Rounds. We would ask counties not to commit to paying any hire charges or first aid fees but ask the relevant groups if they will take a provisional booking and wait until later for confirmation. It may be that sporting events are not allowed to hire first aid or ambulances at that time, so that is another area of insecurity.

Regarding the Track & Field Championships, we are working on a variety of contingency plans, and hope that we will be in a position to hold an event of some sort. The last option for us would be outright cancellation, but we want to give ourselves as long as possible before making that decision. We recognise that, for thousands of young people every year, this is their Olympics and for thousands who have gone before, their first memories of major competition are our championships. We do not aim to lose them without a fight!

Regarding the Combined Events Championships, we can, if necessary, postpone the regional events to the weekend of September 12th and then stage the final one week later than originally planned, on the weekend of September 26th. The venue at Bedford will be available, but the regional events will rely on other venues being available, which we don't know at this early stage. The Race Walk Championship would fit into the new weekend.

With every press conference the situation changes and becomes more complex, so we want to remain optimistic for as long as we can before taking any drastic action. The Association is already committed to spend more than £50,000 this summer on events that may not take place. We cannot afford to commit any more until we have some certainty.

Finally, please stay safe and we look forward to seeing you all, fit and well, when we come out of the other end of this crisis.

With best wishes

Chris

Chris Cohen CBE

Honorary Secretary