



TRACK ACADEMY
BY CONNIE HENRY

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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Amechi Okafor Chairman

It has now been a full year since we have operated as a fully-fledged charity. From an organisational and administrative point of view, this has been a huge undertaking. Credit must be given to the staff who have diligently worked at great pace in bringing systems and policies up to speed.

More importantly, it has been a fantastic year for the development of our athletes on and off the track. It is our ethos that track and field attainment goes hand in hand with better socialisation skills and educational achievement.

Within that remit we have once again been a resounding success.

Athletics has had a great profile this year. The IAAF World Track and Field Championships were an incredible success with a packed stadium throughout the ten-day event. This is testament to the popularity of this brilliantly engaging sport.

It is now our challenge to improve funding streams to ensure that our work is continued, furthering our role within the community in helping our youth fulfil their potential.



Connie Henry, Track Academy Founder & Executive Director



Track Academy has enjoyed an exciting period of improvement in 2016/17. One major change has been our rebrand which has seen a new logo, colour scheme and name; Track Academy by Connie Henry.

This is all part of a slick new look, of which I am very proud and on which the whole team has given their input. A special thanks to TBG Media, which has chosen Track Academy as its charity and which masterminded our rebrand.

The mentoring programme has gone from strength to strength. As a result, we have brought on extra staff to help with the challenge of changing the lives of young Londoners.

It is a difficult task, and one which requires consistent new thinking in terms of how to engage the next generation. However, it is extremely rewarding to see full workshops bursting with positivity.

Meanwhile, our education workshops and weekly study support sessions have welcomed new tutors and inspiring guests over the last year. This has really helped to motivate our student athletes. Since a new programme was launched last year, we're also continuing to monitor those athletes that have now started studying at university.

On the track, the student athletes have been superb, winning medals nationally, competing internationally and representing Track Academy fabulously at events and workshops. There have been moments this year when our mentors and coaches have sat back in awe at these incredible individuals, and the changes we have helped to bring about in them.

We are especially proud of the ongoing relationship with the College of North West London, which has supported Track Academy with the use of office space. We are now developing new and exciting pathways together, such as mentoring, first aid courses and free coaching badges.

A special mention to Willesden Sports Centre where our sporting activities take place. The manager and all the staff have been loyal supporters of our great charity since its embryonic phase ten years ago. We simply would not have the life-changing impact on our student athletes without their support and their belief in what we do.

A final mention and thank you to all of Track Academy's staff. All go above and beyond on a regular basis to support our incredible young people. They help them understand that they can be more than the circumstances into which they were born.

In Kijita (Wajita), there is a proverb which says: "Omwana ni wa bhone". This means that, regardless of a child's biological parents, its upbringing belongs to the community.

A great year for multi-skills



Track Academy's multi-skills programme has continued to build on the success of 2016, where we achieved 47 registered participants and eight transitions into the main athletics group.

Moving into the second year of the programme, 51 participants have registered, with 26 retained from the first year and 25 new participants. Excluding those who transitioned in year one, this gives the programme a 67 per cent retention rate. This year has focused on adding three elements to the programme; workshops, competitions and event specific sessions.

Firstly, educational workshops aim to complement the athletes' learning during school and the multi-skills sessions, by adding theory to the practical skills being developed at Track Academy.

Workshops delivered this year include nutrition, muscles, bones and exploring careers. The Nutrition workshop focused on the Eatwell Plate, eating your five a day and the benefits of vitamins and minerals.

The Muscles workshop helped athletes to identify their own muscles and how they work in the body. The Bones workshop included the functions of the human skeleton and location of specific bones. The Exploring Careers workshop involved Head Coach Clarence discussing the various

career routes he took in life, allowing the athletes to ask questions along the way.

Meanwhile, the young age of the multi-skills participants means there are often not many athletics competitions on offer. However, a trio of Indoor Minithons at Lee Valley have been identified to suit the group.

The competitions aim to improve the athletes' confidence, teamwork, empathy, sporting ability, motivation, resilience and athletic mindset, to name a few attributes.

Each competition requires the athlete to take part in three events across one afternoon. Performances are then equated into points and a corresponding medal is then presented.

Sixteen of the multi-skills athletes have taken part in at least one of the three competitions. Charlotte has competed in all three, achieving two bronze and most recently a silver medal. The total medals from all three competitions is 19 bronze and three silver.

Finally, event specific sessions have been introduced to the programme this year. Alongside the multi-skills development of balance, agility, co-ordination and speed delivered by Coach Zoe and Coach Nigel, there was a need for specific event groups to be included.

This was achieved by inviting coaches from the main group athletics session to regularly coach the basics of their event. This involved Coach Susan (Throws), Coach Tony (Hurdles), Coach Ieva (Distance) and Coach Sam (Jumps).





Athletics success

Track Academy athletes have stormed to success this year, with gold medals, personal bests and even an appearance on the world stage under their belts.

Last December, we were delighted to welcome Olympian James Dasaolu to our annual Indoor Sprint Challenge. More than 100 athletes took part on the day, with around two thirds from Track Academy or Thames Valley Harriers.

The fastest race was won by Subomi Onanuga (SEN) of Thames Valley Harriers, while the fastest woman was Laura Clarke of Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers (U23). Dasaolu, who is himself the second fastest man in British history over 100m, said how fortunate the athletes were to have such a fantastic indoor training facility.

We secured an outstanding medals tally at the Middlesex Indoor Championships in March, with our athletes bringing home four golds, seven silvers and three bronzes. What's more, 15 students beat their

previous bests across the weekend at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre. Gold medals went to Jahreem (U17M) in the shot put, Ruth-Ann (U15G) in the triple jump, Nilrem (U20M) in the 400m and Leroy (SEN) in the senior 400m.

Even more golds were awarded to our students when we returned to the Middlesex County Championships in May. In total, we brought home seven golds, five silvers and one bronze, with Brittany winning both a gold in the Under 20s 100m and a silver in the Under 20s 200m.

Other medallists included Ricardo who won the Under 15s high jump with a PB, while Malachi attained a silver in the Under 17s 400m. Track Academy's bronze medal of the weekend was won by William with a personal best in the Under 13s 300m.

Our year of success continued when Leroy Cain and Confidence Lawson (*pictured above right with Mo Farah*) were crowned regional champions at the South of England

Athletic Association Under 20 and Senior Championships in June. The area covered by the association extends from Cornwall to Norfolk, with almost 70,000 active athletes representing around 570 clubs.

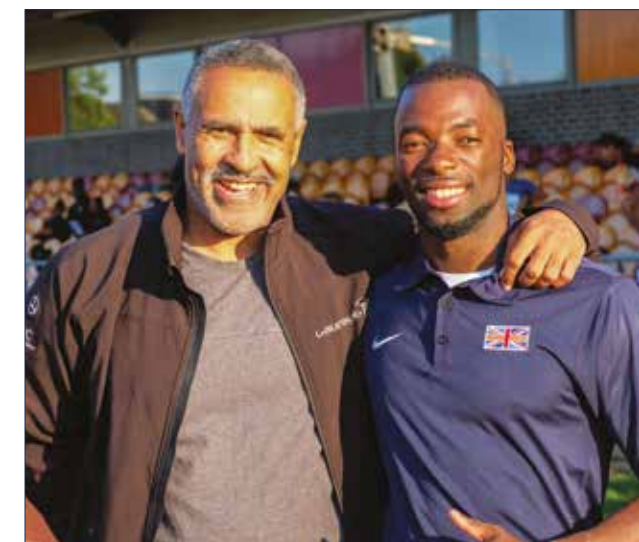
Leroy stormed home to win the Senior Men's 200m, while he also took silver in the Senior Men 100m. Confidence pipped Leroy to the post in the 100m.

In the same month, Leroy smashed all his own records in the Under 23 England Athletics National Championships. In a thrilling 200m final, he shaved 0.5 seconds off his personal best, becoming national champion in the process.

Unbelievably, Leroy's gold medal-winning time was his fifth personal best of the championships, having beaten his previous records in the 200m semi-final, plus the heat, semi-final and final of the 100m.

We were thrilled when Amar Aichoun (*left*) was chosen to represent Great Britain at the World Para Athletics Junior Championships in Switzerland in August. Amar, who has multiple sclerosis, won a silver in the 200m and a bronze in the 100m.

Reece Earle was a double gold medallist at the South of England Outdoor Championships and Under 13 Open Events at Crystal Palace. The U13 triumphed in the 100m and the 200m, achieving a personal best in the latter.



Willesden Sports Centre came alive in August for our Invitational, with guest stars Daley Thompson and Nigel Levine (*below left*) coming along to join the fun. Athletes competed in the 100m, 400m, 800m, triple jump, javelin, shot put and high jump, with a roaring crowd cheering them on.

Amongst the winners was Mya Ashbourne (U15) who won the women's 100m; the men's 100m was won by Antonio Infantino (SEN). Jamal Rhoden-Stevens (SEN) triumphed in the 400m men's race, with Finette Agyapong (U23) taking the women's 400m crown.

The Track Academy athletes say they really value their attendance at the Willesden Sports Centre sessions, both in terms of sport and education.

At a Track Academy Advisory Group session earlier this year, the young people said the academy makes them more confident, increases their happiness and speed on the track, while they feel they have more to give athletically and educationally than before.

Evaluation and fundraising

How has Track Academy done in 2017?

This has been a strong performance year for Track Academy in terms of participation and attendance, as well as overall impact of its programmes. For this, we have many funders and supporters to thank.

We rely on the generous grants and contributions from our major donors, local sponsors and individuals donating to our project. Thanks to them, Track Academy has made some really fantastic progress this year towards achieving its goals.

It has been a particularly successful year in terms of recruitment of new members, with over 160 joining in 2017 - more than in the previous two years. Most new members joined between April and June, reflecting the annual increase in interest as the outdoor athletics season begins.



In terms of impact on personal and social development, Track Academy is doing very well. For example, 77 per cent of participants say they feel more confident as a result of attending.

Efficacy, self-worth and vital skills such as leadership are also increased through participation. For example, 85 per cent of female participants say they feel confident at leading others in a group activity.

Partnerships with local schools is key to the success of Track Academy, and this close working relationship is reflected in feedback from the schools' teachers.



Out of the five schools surveyed, 80 per cent agreed that the partnership is highly valued by the school, and that the relationship adds very clear benefits to the pupils who attend Track Academy and to the wider community.

In addition, Track Academy is highly valued by its members, and coaches have a vital role, with over 98 per cent of members saying that they respect their coach. 83 per cent of members plan to attend throughout their education and 85 per cent would recommend a friend to attend.

In terms of wider community impact, 98 per cent of parents reported that their children had improved health and fitness due to attending Track Academy, and 88 per cent felt that the organisation had a very positive impact in the wider community.

One parent said: "What Track Academy does is amazing. After one of the seminar/ workshops, my daughter came out positive and the impact was instant. She spoke about how work will improve her future."



This has been a very strong year in terms of performance for Track Academy. We look forward to building on this work and showcasing the impact to our funders and to new donors and supporters in the coming year.

A year in mentoring

With the influx of new student athletes each term we are reminded more and more of why our mentoring programme is a key part of our organisation and the benefits that mentoring provides to the local community.

We have operated for long enough to see many young people from their preteen years into adulthood. As student athletes move on to greater things and mature, some move on for good but others have come back and reinvested into the programme, motivated to impact young people the way that they were.



This year, we welcomed Tsimang Ekango (*left*) into the Mentoring and Education team. One of the "originals", Tsimang has attended Track Academy since its conception and has engaged with all areas of the programme.

The student athlete alumna returned following her graduation from Liverpool University with a degree in Law to cover the maternity leave of our Mentoring and Education Co-ordinator.

She has been helping to mould a programme that she wants to see based on her own experiences, while tailoring it for our new student athletes and the needs with which they come to us today. She is professional whilst still able to genuinely relate to the new generations of Track Academy athletes. She has even set up her own girls' group mentoring session.



This period has seen the Micro Mentoring Programme grow and become a lot more ingrained into the fabric of our overall delivery. It has highlighted the key role our coaches have in getting through to our student athletes.

They are major role models for those they coach, and we rely heavily on them for facilitation of not only the sports programme but our mentoring programme too. They are a constant feature, coaching two and three times a week, picking up on behaviour and developing a strong rapport.

Four new formal one-to-one matches have been established from December 2016 to November 2017, one of which has now come to a close following three months of weekly sessions. We continue to track and informally mentor nine mentees who are now at university and in employment.

Track Academy's partnership with Sported and Deutsche Bank came to an end this year and we are currently looking for new corporate responsibility links. Our partnership with Laureus has also linked us to Mercedes Benz, which came to provide student athletes with an employability workshop this summer.

Track Academy has also continued to work with Brent Social Services to keep across all safeguarding issues which have come to our attention over the last year regarding two at-risk student athletes, one of whom was also engaged with Croydon's Night Watch charity.

A commitment to education



Our education programme is experiencing a learning curve at the moment as a result of a shift in the demographic of sport session attendees. There was reduced attendance by GCSE and A Level pupils in 2016-2017 and we went into the new academic year (September 2017) with 0 GCSE athletes.

In comparison, our pre-GCSE attendance has been huge this year as well as having a new influx of primary school aged children with our Multi-Skills programme.

In response, we are planning to hold assemblies specifically aimed at year 10, 11 and 6th form pupils to increase footfall to the sports programme.

As a result of this shift and staff changes, our tuition programme is currently experiencing a drop in attendance. We are heavily focused on securing committed staff as well as publicising it amongst attendees and the local community. This will hopefully bring it back to full working order in 2018 and renew our NRCSE Bronze Award.

All members of our Stanmore College Scholarship Programme have successfully secured places at university. However, 2016-2017 has seen a winding down of this partnership as a result of Stanmore moving from A Levels to vocational courses like BTECs, with the aim of having no more academic subjects by 2018.

We still have a partnership with Convent of Jesus and Mary and this is once again popular with

their KS3 pupils. This year a partnership with Newman Catholic College was also established, and we hope that more Brent children will benefit from this fully-funded opportunity in 2018.

Our informal University Transition monitoring has tracked six of our eight 2016 first year uni students successfully into their second year. This has included workshops and regular phone calls and emails for our satellite student athletes.

Following the introduction of our Youth Leadership Programme in 2016, we have expanded the Fee Reduction Opportunities to provide the committed student athletes with free athletics level 1 badge training via our partnership with England Athletics Young Volunteer Programme.

Two of our student athletes, who have supported Track Academy coaches while gaining valuable work experience, can now put those hours towards the attainment of a coaching badge for free.

