

CLUB MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS, SECOND CLAIM & HIGHER-COMPETITION ATHLETES

The committee have decided to provide information for all athletes in relation to club membership status. It appears there may be some confusion on this issue and there is concern that some athletes may have misunderstandings or have been misinformed or badly advised on these matters.

The reality is that there are very limited circumstances where it is advantageous for an athlete to leave a local club, especially if their training is being carried out locally and they are content with their on-going training.

The usual reason for an athlete to consider moving clubs is that they want to compete at a higher level. This consideration may sometimes be made by an elite athlete. However, athletes at this level (County or International athletes for example) gain little from a club transfer in the way of competition as the vast majority of their competition will be either in Championships (County, Regional, National, County Schools, English Schools etc) or representing their county or country. Coaches of elite athletes will usually design their training to ensure their performance peaks for the athlete's major events. There can also be additional opportunities for these athletes to compete in league and open meetings, but this participation isn't generally improved by a club transfer.

Many top, including athletes with international status, compete for a single club throughout their career. Good examples are Steve Backley who has and continues to be registered with Cambridge Harriers and Greg Rutherford (Milton Keynes). Other examples nearer home are Barry Royden and Martin Brockman who have always been first claim with Medway & Maidstone.

HIGHER COMPETITION ATHLETES

The reality is that top performing athletes are not always available to compete in league meeting in addition to their personal championship and other priorities. Where athletes really want better *league* competition than their home club can provide, they may consider registering as a *higher competition athlete* with another club. This allows them to compete in a higher league (*providing they can get in the team in their chosen event*) at the same time also being eligible to compete for their local club. The UK Women's league and British Athletics League are normally on different dates to Southern Athletics League fixtures, allowing athletes both competition options. This option also resolves issues relating to athletes having to move away from their local training facilities etc.

SECOND CLAIM MEMBERSHIP

Except in a very few circumstances, being a second claim member of a club offers very few additional options for either the athlete or the club to which they are second-claim registered. Where both first and second claim clubs are in the same league structure, the athlete can only compete for their first claim club, even if the two clubs are in different divisions. Also, athletes can only compete in Championships for their first claim club. The only exception, where second claim status means anything, is where an athlete's first claim club is not in a particular league, this sometimes occurs in Master Athletics track & field leagues or Cross-country leagues.

Second claim status is considered by the club on an individual basis and the club will only consider Second claim status where it is advantageous to the club and athlete from a *competition* perspective.