

REPORT ON AAA COURSE MEASUREMENT WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD AT KENNEDY HOTEL,
LONDON, SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 1988

Present: John Disley, Chairman, AAA Course Measurement Working Party
Mike Tomlins, Secretary/AAA Course Measurement Co-Ordinator
Max Coleby, Member AAA Course Measurement Working Party
Jack Selby, Member AAA Course Measurement Working Party
Stuart Holdsworth, Course Measurement Secretary, Midlands AAA
Paul Hodgson, Course Measurement Co-Ordinator, Northern AA
Richard Smith, Course Measurement Secretary, Southern AA
Dave Dodwell, Course Measurement Secretary, Welsh AAA

The meeting was called to review and discuss progress in the Measurement field in England and Wales, and to propose plans for improvements and consolidation of the road measurement procedures.

1. PROGRESS IN THE AREAS

Members reported on the recognition and support given to measurement by the administrations in the areas represented at the meeting.

In general sufficient support was given in every area except the Northern Counties, who still seemed rather unsympathetic to the needs of measurers and the importance of the process of registration of certified courses. A further NCAA training seminar, however, had now been sanctioned and would take place at Teeside Airport on 13th/16th November.

The South and Midlands were solidly committed to measuring and certification and both had continued to fund training courses for measurers and the secretarial aspects of certification.

Currently there were 47 accredited measurers in the SCAA, 16 in the MCAAA (both these figures reflecting the uplift in numbers from the autumn 1988 seminars), the Welsh AAA 8, and the NCAA 20, although this latter figure should increase by around 10 following the forthcoming seminar at Teeside. This will mean that the number of accredited measurers countrywide is now around 100, although not all of them are currently active. Reasonable geographical cover is now in place in the Midlands and Southern areas, although the Northern representative expressed his continuing concern about the uneven distribution of measurers in his area. All areas recognised the need to train more measurers and continue to expand the scheme.

Members listed the support that they were now receiving:

Measurement Seminar costs
Administrative expenses for Area Secretaries/Co-Ordinators
Travelling expenses to appropriate meetings
Jones Counters
Measurers Fluorescent Jackets (SCAA)
AAA Insurance cover for Measurers per AAA block officials insurance

2. REFINING THE PRESENT PROCESS OF MEASUREMENT REPORTING

Members discussed various aspects of technical procedures, which included:

Documentation: It was considered desirable to adopt a common set of report forms throughout the four areas, and for the Midlands system to be universally adopted whereby a Certificate of Course Accuracy is valid for one year only, but can be renewed without remeasurement if the organiser confirms in writing that the course is unchanged.

Members also considered there was room for improvement with regard to certain of the report forms. The Data Sheet in particular needs revision, with more space allocated for the 'Site/location' column, and provision also needs to be made on the Summary Form for the Name and Address of the Race Organiser/Director.

It was agreed that Measurers, in addition to providing copies of their reports to their Area Measurement Secretaries and the RRC, should also send a copy to the Race Organiser. This should help to provide continuity of measurement information if different persons take over the organisation of the event in subsequent years.

Calibration Figures: A discussion took place on pre-measurement calibration ride figures and the 'short course prevention factor' of 1.001. A consensus agreed the desirability of using the s.c.p.f. but this should be based on the average of the four calibration rides. Obvious 'rogue' figures should be discarded and replaced by another ride. The average should then be multiplied by 1.001, with 'rounding up' being preferable to 'rounding down'. The resultant figure will be the 'working constant'.

3. PUBLICITY OF THE MEASUREMENT FACILITY

Members discussed the best way to ensure that race organisers understand the importance of proper measurement. There was a feeling that the existence of the AAA Measurement Scheme still needed to be publicised more effectively.

a) The original policy/recommendation of the Working Party of linking measurement certification with the granting of the Permit was still regarded as the proper way of ensuring that all races that advertised their precise distance, eg The Wrekin 10 Miles, or the Thomas Cook Charity 10 kilometres, were in fact accurately measured and certificated as such by an approved appropriate grade AAA measurer. Some areas are moving towards this concept.

b) It was unanimously agreed that fresh publicity should be undertaken, linked to the soon to be announced STAR*RANK scheme. The three elements of the STAR*RANK scheme (Standards, Records and Rankings) will all operate on the basis of accepting only performances made on certified courses, and the 'Hot 100' races must include certification as a prerequisite of inclusion on the list. The group strongly recommended that the AAA fund an advertisement in the major running magazines explaining the function of measurement in race preparation, including the point that only performances on properly measured courses will qualify for STAR*RANK. Max Coleby offered to draft such an advertisement.

c) A 'logo' should be designed to identify certification - a seal of approval that race organisers could use to decorate their event adverts to show that their was certified as accurately measured.

4. MEASUREMENT CERTIFICATION FOR 'PERMIT' EVENTS

Members agreed that we were now very close to having enough measurers to press for implementation of the original policy of 'no permit without a certificate of course accuracy', meaning that race organisers without course certification would not be allowed to advertise their events as being of a specific distance.

With some recruiting (further training seminars during 1989), and the proper use of the existing corps of measurers, members agreed that it was now feasible to recommend to the AAARRC that the following criteria should be adopted:

- By 1st January 1989 - All courses for National, Area & County Road and Road Relay Championship events must be certificated.
- By 1st January 1990 - All other road races run under the AAA Permit Scheme that declare an exact distance must have a measurement certificate to gain a permit.

5. TRAINING AND GRADING OF MEASURERS

The expansion of the AAA Measurement Scheme highlighted the continuing need to train more measurers. Advertisements should be placed and further seminars organised to train and subsequently accredit new measurers. Each Area should hold at least one training seminar per year designed to recruit, train and accredit Grade 2 Measurers to measure events for which AAA permits are granted at Area level.

Discussion then took place on the subject of upgrading the proficient Grade 2 Measurers to Grade 1 status. One option would be for the AAA to fund an annual seminar for the purpose of upgrading existing Grade 2 Measurers to Grade 1 where appropriate. However, after considering the matter, members proposed the following:

Area Measurement Secretaries, through the constant monitoring of reports and other data submitted by their measurers, identify suitable candidates for possible upgrading to Grade 1 status. Then, either they, or another existing Grade 1 measurer, visit one of the candidates' previously measured courses, armed with the appropriate paperwork, and checks the validity of the measurement. If this is found to be totally satisfactory, the paperwork, together with a recommendation from the Area Measurement Secretary or the Grade 1 measurer concerned, will be sent to the AAA Course Measurement Working Party Chairman for final approval.

The problem of apparently 'inactive' measurers was then discussed. It was agreed that approved measurers should be expected to measure at least 12 courses per year, with a figure of 5 or 6 per year considered marginal. Certainly, anything less must call into doubt the measurers continued official status. Area Measurement Secretaries should contact those measurers under their control who are submitting no or very few reports to ascertain whether they are no longer prepared to do the work, or are just not receiving assignments. Those no longer interested, should be deleted from our lists and, where their Jones Counters have been provided by the Areas, asked to return the equipment.

The AAA Course Measurement Secretary confirmed that, following the final 1988 training seminar at Teeside, he would update the full list of AAA approved measurers and distribute copies to all interested parties.

6. MEASUREMENT EXPENSES

Members discussed the out-of-pocket expenses associated with measuring assignments - measuring is not similar to other AAA official duties which are usually connected with officiating at actual athletic events. Although measurers are sometimes involved in actual race day activities (eg. checking that the course used by the runners is identical to the one measured), measurers do most of their work at unsocial times and frequently are required to travel long distances to carry out their work.

It was recommended that the following expenses be paid by the race organiser for the services of an AAA approved measurer:

Travel expenses, as previously, of 20p per mile (usually car miles as a cycle has to be transported), or equivalent rail fare if appropriate.

Meals as necessary during assignment, and overnight accommodation costs if appropriate - measurement of a marathon can take five to eight hours.

7. PRODUCTION OF MEASURERS' MATERIAL

One of the original recommendations of the Working Party was for the AAA to fund the production of a Course Measurers Handbook, and members agreed that this should be done. The AAA should also be asked to fund the production of a twice-yearly Measurement Newsletter, listing measurers, certifications and also serving to update measurers on changes and refinements to rules and measurement techniques. No specific timescales were set concerning the above.

8. A.O.B. - AIMS/IAAF PANEL OF MEASURERS

The Chairman agreed the need to add to the number of UK measurers currently on the AIMS/IAAF measuring panel. There is the intention to hold an international measuring seminar in Poland in May 1989, and members were also told that the AAA RRC had agreed to provide certain funds to assist with the organisation of a further international measuring seminar in England, at which it was hoped it would be possible to approve 5 or 6 more UK measurers for the AIMS/IAAF list. Only experienced measurers holding a current passport, who are both willing and able to undertake international assignments would be considered.

1st January 1989.

JD/MT/RS

SUMMARY OF MEETING'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO AAA RRC:

1. That the AAA sanction and fund fresh publicity for the AAA Course Measurement Scheme in all the major athletic journals, stressing the importance of accurate measurement by AAA approved measurers in race preparation. The advertisements should be linked to the STAR*RANK scheme, making the clear point that only performances achieved on properly measured courses will qualify for STAR*RANK standards, records and rankings. This advertisement should be placed as soon as possible in accordance with the draft submitted by Max Coleby on behalf of the Working Party.
2. That the AAA approve the use of a new 'logo' to be used in respect of events that have been certified as accurate by an approved AAA measurer.
3. That with effect from 1st January 1989, all courses for National, Area and County Road and Road Relay Championship events must be certificated. (Viz. a certificate of course accuracy obtained following the measurement of the course by an approved Grade 1 measurer in the case of National Championships, and an approved Grade 1/2 measurer in the case of Area and County Championships).

That with effect from 1st January 1990, all other road races run under the AAA Permit Scheme that declare an exact distance must have a measurement certificate to gain a permit.

4. That the AAA fund an annual seminar for the purpose of upgrading measurers to Grade 1 status, and/or approve the arrangements described above whereby candidates' work is checked by an existing Grade 1 measurer, with final approval by the Chairman of the Course Measurement Working Party (JD).
5. That the AAA fund production of a Course Measurers Handbook and a twice-yearly Newsletter, as previously described.
5. That the AAA provide funds to assist towards the expenses of those UK measurers who are invited to attend the forthcoming international measuring seminar with a view to becoming AIMS/IAAF approved measurers.