

NORTHERN ROAD RELAY STATEMENT

We have had a further meeting of our Board on the 15th July to review the future of competition organised by us in 2020.

We have reluctantly decided to cancel the Autumn Combined Road Relays at Sportcity Manchester in September.

There are a number of reasons why this decision has had to be made but particularly as the current government guidelines do not allow us to organise such an event involving huge numbers of athletes, officials and spectators congregating in such a confined area. Our specific concerns are as follows:

1. The date for the event relies on Manchester City FC and their fixture list. This will not be available until mid-August giving us very little time to organise in time for a mid to late September event.
2. Although the area in, around and outside of the track may be available, if government guidance allowed its use, the use of the track arena would make it impossible to safely manage the start/finish/handovers points.
3. The course we have all been used to could not be used because a COVID 19 testing centre has been erected on the main car park which is an integral part of the course. It is likely to remain there for a considerable period of time. The alternative involves use of a narrow canal bank which has its own risks especially for younger athletes. There may also be restrictions in parking.
4. We are particularly conscious of the risks to our officials who would be there all day and we also have to be aware that we would be introducing into the local area hundreds of people some of whom have travelled considerable distances.
5. Currently in the North West there are areas that are showing spikes in the virus with potential local lock downs.
6. Our inability to use toilet facilities within the stadium means hiring in of portable toilets with the event organiser being responsible for the cleaning of those toilets after each use.
7. The overall confined nature of the area in normal times adds to the atmosphere but currently detracts from our ability to operate safely.
8. It is an expensive venue to hire so if entries are down it may result in a financial risk to Northern Athletics, who in turn are the safe and responsible custodians of your affiliation fees.

We will continue to review future competition. At a meeting we will hold on the 2nd September we will consider the viability of the October Cross country Relay Championships in Sheffield and the indoor season from November onward. As we stated in June we wish to return to competition as soon as we are able to do so. We hope our decision to roll over fees already paid by our clubs to now cover affiliation up to September 2021 will help alleviate the situation for everybody who has an interest in the continuation of Northern Athletics.

Tony Wood

Chairman

Northern Athletics

On behalf of the Board

15th July 2020