

Thornford Coaching 2009

For most 2009 was a development year. This being a year when an athlete is at the bottom of the age group.

The year for Bertie was exactly that. After a near perfect season as a U/17 Sprint Hurdler the move to 110m Hurdles at 3'3" was always going to be an issue. In April I decided that he should move up to 400m Hurdles. This would give him the summer months to experiment with his compatibility with the event. He ran 55.9 which quite frankly is excellent considering there had been no background work at all. Training now through the winter months will give him the resources he needs to run 53.50 or better.

My work with Arland over the last 3 years has produced the consummate sprinter. However his natural growth has not been realised to support his athletic potential. Arland has self belief and an appetite to train which will produce results. December has at long last produced a pb over 60m, this I hope will give Arland encouragement.

Aidan is experiencing a similar scenario to Arland. Restricted natural growth has produced mediocre performances of late. We discussed an event change and a move to 400m. However Aidan has struggled to achieve completion of training sessions. We have now decided to revert back to 200m running. With the background work that he has done this will make Aidan a stronger athlete. I hope that when the summer months arrive we will see Aidan perform with the ability I know he has.

This winter Luke is more committed to his athletic training. His development with me over the past 2 seasons at 800m has been excellent. He has lowered his pb from 2.19 to 2.04. This summer he will be top of his age group, he should achieve ESAA selection and run comfortably under 2 minutes. Luke has real talent and is a pleasure to coach. Maybe he just needs to believe in himself a little more.

In the middle of last summer we lost Emily. The disappointment of not gaining ESAA selection after winning the County Schools and achieving the qualifying time was too much. Emily was never committed to training or the sport, but I still miss her 'blonde' ways.

Emily's departure was replaced by Freya, a very committed young lady! New to hurdles, Freya won the County Schools a year under the age group. An excellent start which has given her the focus to train through the winter, compete indoors (currently UK number 11) and develop her skills in readiness for next seasons attack on the ESAA qualifying time.

I have always looked at my athletes as a development group. You are aware of my term 'I always look at the bigger picture'. Success within the group is important. This helps development, coaching, performance and sociability. This success has been highlighted in the past by Arland, Aidan and Bertie.

The focus of success within the group is now currently with Jack. He has continued to develop his hurdling skills over the past 2 years, after his excellent season as a U/13 and medalling in the Southern Inter Counties. He along with Freya has competed in the 2 available indoor meetings in December. Jack is now currently ranked at UK number 2 at U/15 60m hurdles. This is the highest UK ranking ever achieved by a group member. Although it will be difficult to retain this position, I am confident of his ability to perform in the 'Southern Indoors' and the 'AAA' at the end of February.

You are all a pleasure to coach and I wish you success in 2010.

I want to see those Berkshire Schools Hoodies!

The Coach