

ATFS BULLETIN

Association of Track and Field Statisticians

December 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Another great year of athletics is slowly coming to a close for 2019. Apart from the World Championships in Doha there were many great events including African Games, World University Games, Pan-American Games and Asian Championships alongside various regional Games, Championships, the IAAF circuit and domestic competition. December will see the South East Asia Games in the Philippines whilst Southern Hemisphere countries will be part way through their domestic seasons. For many athletes the build up for next year's Tokyo Olympics have begun for another great year of athletics.

I would like to congratulate Erlend Teemägi our Estonian colleague for his European Athletics Federation Member Award presented at the annual Golden Tracks Award Ceremony in Tallinn.

Earlier this year Peter Matthews forwarded an email from Priit Tänava to inform me of the death of Estonian statistician Enn Endjarv (17 Jun 45 – 27 May 19) who had passed away. Enn worked as a computer technician. In the early 1970's he started work on decathlon statistics and was internationally recognized in this field. He collaborated on many year books and reference books.

I have just received an update on the 1900-1910 project from Tomas Magnusson. The research for July 1907 has been completed. Tomas went through 9,824 clippings for the month of July and currently the Database now contains 137,556 marks since the last update. Tomas said he has received a lot of input lately from John Brant and Ulf Lagerstrom. Many thanks again to Tomas for all the work he has done co-ordinating this project.

I would also like to draw members attention that next year is not only Olympic year but it is also election time for the ATFS. Our secretary Michael will soon be sending out a request for nominations for the positions to be elected for. If you are interested in going onto the Executive get yourself nominated.

I shall take this opportunity now to wish you all and your families the very best wishes for Christmas and wish you all a safe, healthy and happy 2020.

Paul

Paul Jenes
ATFS President

TREASURER'S REPORT

Holiday greetings to all ATFS members!

It's that time of year again, and I know what you are thinking: "I MUST send my ATFS subscription soon."

Correct! Subscription notices will be mailed in January, but it is never too early to attend to this matter. Our 2020 dues will remain at €25 Euros, or \$30 USD. The Association enjoys good financial health; however, our expenses have been higher than usual this year, because of increased mailing costs and a subsidy for Athletics 2019 production. Therefore, your subscriptions are vital to support our current and future endeavors, including the rapidly progressing 1900-1910 historical project.

You can send via PayPal to the account: tom@interis.com, or via post to PO Box 4288, Napa, CA 94558 USA.

Best wishes to all!

Tom Casacky
ATFS Treasurer

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Quadrennial Elections

Well, we've had a number of sovereign country elections so far this year, and while the world is waiting for the 2020 US elections, the ATFS, will be in the spotlight before then with our **QUADRENNIAL ELECTIONS** in 2020 to coincide with the Tokyo Olympics.

Article 7 and Article 8 of the ATFS Constitution state:

Article 7 (Executive Committee)

The management of the affairs of the ATFS shall be entrusted to an Executive Committee, consisting of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and five other members.

If among this number any IAAF-recognized area – Africa, Asia, Europe, North & Central America & Caribbean, South America, and Oceania – is not represented, the Executive Committee may add one member from each such area. This member shall be the person from that area receiving the greatest number of votes in the Executive Committee election.

Article 8 (Elections)

Elections for the Executive Committee shall be held in the year of the Olympic Games, and the elected Committee shall remain in office for the subsequent four years.

Nominations shall be called for by the Secretary. Any member in good standing is eligible for election.

In the event of one or more vacancies occurring between elections, either through death or resignation, the Executive Committee shall have the option to recruit replacements.

As such, it is my intention to call for nominations with the publication of the March/April 2020 ATFS Bulletin. The nomination period will remain open for approx. one month, with the election period to also run for one month and the declaration of the voting to be announced prior to the Opening Ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics.

Michael McLaughlin

ATFS Secretary

THE REMARKABLE LITHUANIAN SUPPLY OF DISCUS STARS

By: Ulf Lagerstrom

It is remarkable that Lithuania, the small nation in the Baltic region, again independent in 1990 after the downfall of the Soviet empire, could be a supplier of so many excellent discus throwers.

Its population was less than 3 million, and athletics was not the most popular sport - that is/was basketball, with football next. In their pre-war sports history, high jumper Bernotas was the prime athletics performer (1,95).

In fact, it was during the Soviet (USSR) reign that their discus story began. It is a mystery that they took this event to their hearts. The Lithuanian record, set in the war years, was a modest 43,08. Almost ten years after the war ended, **Anatolijus Pocius** (b 09.07.1930) appeared on the scene, setting a 46,39 national record and gradually further bettering it. In Olympic 1956, in Vilnius, he achieved quite a decent 53,12, which result placed him in the group of the best 25 throwers of the world. He was never in a final of the Soviet championships.

As he did not go any further, his role was taken over by **Algimantas Baltusnikas** (b 05.09.1934). The latter was to be the first monumental figure in Lithuanian discus history. During the insane Stalin days he and his father were deported to Buryat Mongolia in 1948, and could return home only in 1956. In Buryat Mongolia he began to practice sports.

After almost being a 50-plus performer in 1956, his sudden, unexpected breakthrough occurred a year later. Then he threw 54,83 to enter the world list (WL) in 8th position. In the Soviet title meet, he even beat the defender, Russian SP/DT star Otto Grigalka to the victory with his new best. That happened shortly before his twenty-third birthday.

SEVENTH IN THE WORLD

In 1958 Algis managed to throw still further, 56,58 (WL 7th), and was placed as high as 7th in the T&FN world merit ranking despite a spotty record. He did, however, nail two important East Bloc wins. In the national meet he partly failed though, ending only 3rd.

Despite upgrading to 2nd in the 1959 title meet, it was not a memorable season for him.

In Olympic 1960 he again captured the Soviet title, did 55,46 at best, yet was not considered for Olympic participation in the west (and never would) as he obviously was listed as “politically unreliable” by the authorities.

In 1961 he became Soviet champion for the third and last time, with a 57,93 career record (WL 7th). It was also a USSR record.. He was world merit ranked 10th.

Algis continued to perform well for a few years, though not improving any further. For some reason of his own, he did not keep pace with the event’s progress but stayed in the 55-56 m territory. After the 1967 campaign he was no news any more. Anyhow, he continued to throw the platter some 45-49 m until 1974. He dedicated his time to teaching, lecturing, and serving as a coach.

TAKING TURNS WITH JARAS

However, he had got first-class company in **Vytautas Jaras** (b 21.10.1940) as early as 1960, when the new lad threw 54,21 before being 20 of age. In fact, in 1959 he had thrown 50,28, the leading Euro junior performance that year. Jaras had started trying to heave the platter even as a young boy, on a friend’s insistence.

With 58,73 (WL 11th) he broke Algis’s record in 1962, and then improved on his own mark on five occasions during the coming six years. In 1973 he set his career best at 62,64. At the time, 60 m throws were, however, no more as valuable assets as before.

He and Algis took turns in producing the Lithuanian year-best marks for some time in the 1960’s.

Jaras abandoned the sport in the mid-1970’s, and during his years he became Soviet champion just once (in 1967). He was placed second four times and third three times.

His most unfortunate experience occurred at the 1966 Euros in Budapest. Leading the qualifiers with a 57,54, he was certain of a meritorious placing in the final on the next day. Yet it began then to rain, the circle becoming slippery, and Jaras and prominent

competitors like star Danek, did not get their leg-work working properly. He ended in 9th. An East German won at 57,46.

ENTERS UBARTAS

Enters the next monumental figure in Lithuanian discus throwing. When Jaras was abandoning the scene, only 17-year-old **Romas Ubartas** (b 26.05.1960) showed his talent by throwing 46,48 in 1977 after taking up athletics at 15 of age.

Two years later he did 53 m, and another two years gone by he exploded, doing 65,62 (WL 9) in 1981. Jara's record was shattered. That year, optimistically he even competed at the USSR title meet, though ending up only 8th, at inexplicably poor 56,94 .

In both 1983 and 1984 he produced 66-plus performances, yet without coming through to a win in the Soviet title meet. Surprisingly, in May 1984 he even lost his Lithuanian record to a little-known quantity. He was Igoris Avruninas, 27, who lived in Belarus until 1979.

He was a shot putter who had tried discus throwing and did 62 m in 1983. Now he threw 67,14 (WL 17) for a new record. His performance was made in a very small town and in unknown conditions. He would appear again in the event only years later in Israel, to where he emigrated. It was really a strange interlude.

Ubartas represented a new kind of a physical specimen. He was 2,02 m tall, whereas his pre-decessors measured approx. 1,93. However, it was to take some more time for him to mature as an athlete and reach consistency. He was a teacher, later resuming his studies.

KIDYKAS JOINING UP

Coached by Jaras, he was ready in 1986 to become a world beater. He was joined by 24-year-old **Vaclovas Kidykas** (b 17.10.1961), who had achieved 62,60 in 1984 and 67,34 in 1985. The pair of them were easily 1st and 2nd in the 1986 Soviet championships, and in the Euro meet at Stuttgart Ubartas managed to become the champion, just centimetres ahead of a Russian team mate. Kidykas got third.

Both of the Lithuanians had a splendid season, and were world merit ranked 1st and 3rd, respectively. That was the beginning of the Ubartas success story.

During his long career - which only ended in 2002 when he was 42 of age - Ubartas won the Olympic gold in 1992 (at 65,12) and the silver in 1988 (67,48).

In 1986 in Moskva and 1990 at Seattle he was victorious at the big Goodwill Games with 67 m performances. He won the 1986 Euro championships. In Grand Prix finals he was a winner in 1987 and 1991.

On the other hand, he never came through to first-places in the Worlds, nor at the international student games, nor in the Euro Cup. He did not participate many times in those though. Ubartas was world merit ranked # 1 for three years, 1986, 1991, and 1992.

His career best result was produced in 1988, at 70,06 (WL 3). In 1990 he bested 68,94 (WL 1). In 1993 he was banned for four years after a drug test. Ubartas came back to competition after, albeit never showing old form.

THE PAIR BREAKING THROUGH

His and Kidykas' break-through had occurred in 1986. That season they suddenly became a triumphant duo, frequently ending 1-2 at important competitions, to the astonishment of the track community.

Mostly it was Ubartas who came out as winner, yet Kidykas got the better of him in two big East Bloc events, with Ubartas in second. The latter won at the Goodwill Games, the Euro crown, the USSR title meet, and in the match vs East Germany (the new WR holder, Schult, third).

Two years later Ubartas went undefeated through the (1988) season - save the Olympic second-place behind Schult (68,82 to 67,48). Kidykas failed badly, being 13th.

To be noted is that both of them were permitted to travel to England, to represent USSR In a match vs Gt Britain and France. They did well indeed, again ending 1-2 with impressive throws (at fine 67,72 and 67,54 respectively).

Ubartas was world ranked 2nd that year, It was his first of two second-places (the

other one in 1990). Kidykas was not at all considered after his dismal Olympic performance.

Four years later Ubartas became the 1992 Olympic gold medallist with 65,12, 18 cm up on Schult. Now free to travel as a Lithuanian national, he commenced his campaign early in the USA. There he threw 68,18 for a seasonal best, albeit clearly inferior to his 70,06 career best (1988).

After, he did not manage to avoid defeats in Europe, but still was world ranked # 1 (Kidykas # 9). This was Ubartas' very last year at the top.

Kidykas continued to try to remain world class for several seasons. Without being placed high at important international events he was still regarded as a member of the world top-10 group a few times, the last one in 1996. He had then teamed up with the new star, Alekna. His longest throw in the 1990's landed at 67,04 (WL 6). That was in 1990, when he was world ranked fourth.

ALEKNA SUCCEEDING

He who took over Ubartas' role was **Virgilijus Alekna** (b 13.02.1972). In Olympic 1992, he did 60 m for the first time. Two years earlier, at 18 of age, he had bested 52,84. He said that he had been inspired by Ubartas' success to take up discus throwing after trying the javelin.

2,01 m tall, 130 kg, and long-armed Alekna was an imposing figure. His career in the event was only superseded by that of Al Oerter. The latter gained four Olympic gold medals, Alekna two. Alekna's competitive edge may best be illustrated by his placings in the world merit rankings.

In the years of 2000 through 2006 he was placed # 1 no fewer than six times. Then he was dropped to second in 2007, that placing being repeated in 2008.

2010 was his last year in the world top-ten group (as # 8).

In his best seasons Alekna remained undefeated with winning streaks during certain lengths of time, and during periods all but controlled the event. He won the Olympic finals in 2000 and 2004, and was 3rd in 2008 (5th in 1996).

In 2004, at first the Hungarian, Fazekas, was announced winner, then was suspended.

To detail all Alekna's achievements would be too extensive, and the following brief summary of his more important victories may be sufficient: Worlds 2003, 2005 (at 70,17) - Euros 2006 (due to slippery circle 2nd in 2002) - IAAF World Athletics 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009 (only arranged in 2003 through 2009) - World Cup 1998, 2006.

In the 2000 national title meet, staged at Kaunas, he managed a huge 73,88 career best, fairly close to the WR at 74,08. His second-best in the series was 72,35. It is a fair assumption that wind conditions were quite favourable. Yet in windless conditions he had four throws at 70 m or better in Zürich a week later, winning the event of the prestigious Weltklasse meet with 71,12.

In fact, only Alekna and one of his chief opponents, Gerd Kanter of Estonia, were then all-time leaders with five competitions each at 71,00 or better. Presumably at least half of those were reached in ideal wind conditions. In no fewer than 20 meets Alekna produced 70 m or better.

In 2012, aged 40, Alekna was world merit ranked for the last time, in fourth, before semi-retiring. He still threw 64,70 at 42 of age, and did not yet stop heaving his beloved platter.

He was a PE graduate, later advising athletes. For many years he was the guard of the president of Lithuania. He also dedicated himself to politics and was in due course elected to the national parliament.

ANOTHER WORLD BEATER ENTERING

When Alekna was losing his touch, immediate relief was not there. However, in the 2010 World Junior championship a 19-year-old Lithuanian captured the discus title. He was **Andrius Gudzius** (b 14.02.1991), with a 61,85 best to head the world junior list of that year. At 16 of age he had already started at international Youth events, though with mixed fortunes.

Four years later, in 2014, surprisingly he bested 66,11 (WL 10), but his approach to the

world top was a fairly slow process. In 2016 he did 67,96 though on a sloping ground. His attempts to qualify for the year's Olympic and Euros finals were by far not successful.

It was only in 2017 that he was beginning to look like a winner, after being advised by Alekna. Obviously he had needed more self-confidence.

That season he went to town. He emerged victorious in both the Worlds at new pb 69,21 (WL 2) and the Diamond League. He threw the disc five times over 68 m. He was world ranked # 1.

After having failed to be placed in the three preceding Euros meets, in 2018 he killed off the opposition with 68,46. In other meets mostly he had to bow to Fred Dacres of Jamaica. Consequently Gudzius dropped to # 2 in the ranking.

Unfortunately, his 2019 season was marred by injuries, but Gudzius is expected to return in 2020 in old form.

Note:

A few results in the manuscript have been corrected and a couple of facts added by a Lithuanian statistician.

MAJOR HONOURS WON

their aggregate collection

Olympics (medals): Gold 3, Silver 1, Bronze 1 [Only wins counting]

Worlds: 2

Euros: 2

World Athl.: 5

World Cup: 2

Euro Cup: 1

Grand Prix 2

World merit ranking firsts: 9

Note - Kidyka's contribution limited to 1 Euro Cup win.

THE BOOKSHELF

EUROPEAN JUNIOR STATISTICS HANDBOOK 2019

By: Roberto Camano

The latest work by ATFS member Roberto Camano of over 400 pages featuring

- the results of all finals of all European junior championships
- European junior records
- European junior championships records
- European junior championships alltime lists (top 10)
- European junior all time lists (deep 15-20 performances, 130-150 performers)
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Cost and postage details from Roberto at: robbi.c@tiscali.it



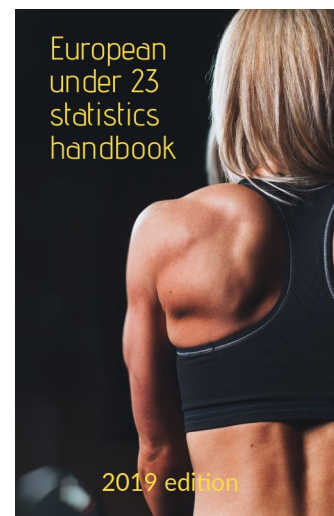
EUROPEAN UNDER 23 STATISTICS HANDBOOK 2019

By: Roberto Camano

Another great publication by Roberto Camano of over 400 pages featuring the complete results of all European under 23 championships

- European under 23 records
- European under 23 championships records
- European under 23 championships alltime lists (top 10)
- European under 23 all time lists (deep 30 performances, 130-150 performers)
- National under 23 records
- European under 23 best performances progression lists (since 1900 to now and in some event even before 1900 for men, since 1910 to now for women)

Cost and postage details from Roberto at: robbi.c@tiscali.it



ISRAEL ATHLETICS ANNUAL 2018-2019

David Eiger and Aril Cooks

The latest edition of David Eiger and Arik Cook's Israel Athletics Annual compiled for the Israeli Athletic Association covering the 2018 season is now available from David.

The publication contains ranking list for all events, profiles of leading Israeli athletes, National Records and results of major competitions.

Contact David at eigerdavid@gmail.com for your copy.

Copies of past seasons are also still available.

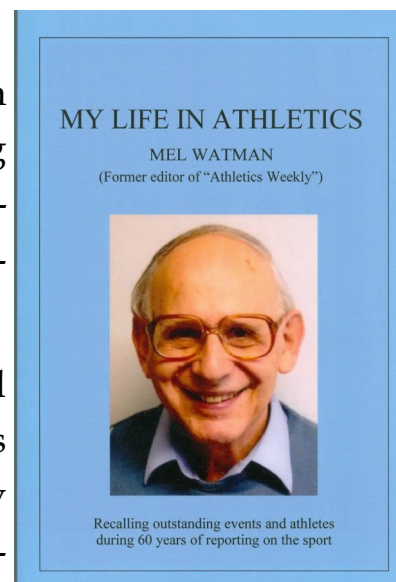


MY LIFE IN ATHLETICS - The Mel Watman Story

Mel Watman got hooked on athletics when he attended the 1950 British Championships at just 12 years of age. He was just 16 when 'Athletics Weekly' published his first by-line article and a few years later he was charged with compiling overseas news and results.

After working at suburban newspapers he joined "AW" in 1961 and took over as editor seven years later, before taking over as co-editor of "Athletics Today" in 1988 and then co-editing "Athletics International" from 1993 with Peter Matthews.

In this book, in effect a personalized history of UK and world athletics from the 1950s to 2017, numerous extracts from his published works at the time will, hopefully, convey the excitement and admiration created by the leading athletes of the day.



Contact Mel at melvynwatman@gmail.com for cost and postage details.

Mel Watman (an ATFS member for the past 60 years) has an extensive collection of athletics books (statistical, historical, biographical) for sale, plus autographs, programmes and newspaper/magazine clippings.

Email him at melvynwatman@gmail.com for list.

Let's Hear About Your Publication !

Got a publication you want to appear in the next Bulletin, then either send a copy to the Secretary or email with the text you wish to have printed along with a graphic of the front of the publication.

ATFS EXECUTIVE 2016 - 2020

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