



A Solution to Late Starts (and Finishes)

Imagine an organisation where:

- Events are held weekly for around 300 competitors
- More than 80 separate events are scheduled on every competition day
- Each and every staff member at these events is a volunteer

...That is what we have here at Collingwood Little Athletics.

We all know the frustrations of having Little Athletics events run late. Too often the reason for this is not enough volunteers ready to go at the start of an event. Our Committee has been thinking long and hard about how to help everyone compete on time and enjoy their experience at Little Aths.

To be viable, we need one parent from every family to help once every two weeks.

If we have a full roster at the end of each session ready for next week, we can start on time. And no-one need run around the yard wasting precious time 'begging' for helpers.

What needs to be done?

Set-up helpers – unpacking equipment, unlocking the facilities

Packing-up helpers – fetching, carrying, locking up

Track marshals and judges to start and time races.

Track crossing marshals to keep our athletes safe while competing

Field event marshals, pit rakers, measurers, recorders

People to answer queries at the registration desk.

Helpers serving in the canteen

Sausage turners and servers at the BBQ

Roving officials to relieve others for a time

First aiders (got a certificate?)

Results writers of track and field events on tickets

Ticket distributors at the collection table.

What if I can't stand for long periods?

Our ticket writers can always do with another pair of hands – and it's a sit-down job.

What if I muck up the paperwork?

There are instructions to follow for the more complex tasks – and there's always someone to ask.

What if I can't physically help at the event?

Speak to our committee members as there are a variety of administrative tasks to be done during the week, as well as shopping and things to be collected. You may be able to help in another way. Or is there another family member who can help on your behalf?

What if I have little ones to look after?

Come to the ticket-writing table and collect a set of results to write up. You will have one task and one task only to focus on – and you will help your athletes get their results that much faster.

We worked out that if we were to replace our volunteers with paid junior helpers, our staff bill would run to over \$2,500 per session. That's a lot of value our kids get by everyone putting in a small amount of effort.

The Committee are discussing ways to make sure the workload is fairly shared around. We are trialling the self-selection method for now – families need to list themselves for a spot on the roster a week in advance. So each family will have a week where they help, and a week's break where they put themselves on the list to help out the following week. Doesn't sound too hard, does it?

If this doesn't work, (and we are still scraping for helpers) we will have a go at rostering all families on and emailing people to let them know what they will be doing. And on the positive side, if we get enough support it could be possible to look at changing to a three-weekly roster in the future.

When everyone helps out, our kids learn that the best sense of community is created by everyone doing their bit. You can't teach that from a book.

Got good ideas about how to help at Little Athletics? Then our committee needs you. As with all community organizations, our committee is constantly changing. We would love for new members to become involved in a small way now, to keep our Club vibrant and active into the future.

Thanks in advance for helping – see you at the track!

CLAC Committee
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