



CLUB INFORMATION

Why conduct an athletic meeting?

An athletic meeting can be a great entertainment addition to a range of functions such as special local events (shows, fairs, carnivals etc), bike racing (wheel races), highland games and mixed sporting carnivals. We highly recommend that if you currently hold or are planning to hold such an event that you strongly consider hosting a Victorian Athletic League meeting. An athletic meeting can also be a great entertainment spectacle on its own. Think about joining forces with the local schools, hospitals or local charities to increase the scale, scope and appeal of your athletic meeting.

An athletic meeting can bring a large influx of people into your town. Typically each meeting receives over 500 entries, many coming from interstate, so things like food, petrol & accommodation are all typical purchases. Athletes also usually bring with them family or friends; this means that you are guaranteed a good crowd of people at your event even if it is on the smaller scale.

An association or club can also make a substantial profit from a successful athletic carnival. Larger athletic meetings such as Ballarat, Bendigo and Stonnington provide good prize money and run excellent meetings. Even smaller athletic events such as Daylesford and Terang attract some great sprinters from across Australia. Their profits can range between \$3,000 and \$15,000 depending on prize money, weather conditions and other attractions including street parties, carnival atmospheres & functions etc.

Revenue is earned from entry fees, gate receipts, sale of programs, raffles, catering and any other fundraising event you can think of. Costs primarily relate to prize money which is usually covered by club sponsors.

The Role of the Victorian Athletic League

- Coordinate the athletic meetings during the course of a season.
- Administer all athlete registrations and race entries for each event.
- Provide all handicaps and heat draws to clubs to include in race programs.
- Provide officials such as handicappers, stewards, starters and timing officials.
- Provide all necessary equipment to successfully conduct an athletics meeting including photo finish cameras, starter's pistols, recording devices, competitor singlets and finish gates.
- Administer the rules relating to the conduct of an athletic meeting.

What is required to conduct a meeting?

While the Victorian Athletic League is able to provide assistance to clubs, other successful clubs are always willing to share their experiences with new clubs to make sure their first event is successful. The Victorian Athletic League office should be the first point of contact for prospective new clubs.

The first step is to establish a committee to run the meeting. Often this may be an existing club such as a sports club or a local Lions or Rotary club. It is usually useful to form a separate incorporated association to conduct the athletic meeting. Naturally, the club should have clear rules and a constitution.

There are four important points to consider before seeking to conduct a Victorian Athletic League meeting:

- Ensure the availability of an appropriate sports ground.
- Ensure there are sufficient sponsors available to make the meeting financially viable.
- Select a suitable date for the meeting that does not clash with traditional Victorian Athletic League meetings.
- Ensure that there are sufficient willing helpers.

Availability of Sports Ground

Ensure that an appropriate ground is available. Victorian Athletic League meetings are generally conducted on a grassed based sports oval. However, there are some events conducted on synthetic athletic tracks. Some special events have been conducted on other surfaces however these will require special approval from the Victorian Athletic League these include harness, dog and horse tracks.

Generally the venue should be well suited to foot running on flat, well-mown grass sports grounds with sufficient room for at least a straight 100 meters track with about 30 meters of run-off area. The ground should also be suitable for circular events with a 400 meter circumference. The run off area and circular circumference can be shorter but will need prior approval and meet minimum safety standards.

Change rooms and toilets are required for the runners. A massage area can be located within a tent or temporary shelter, if change room facilities are not adequate size. Please note: You must provide separate change rooms for male and female competitors. Generally a sports ground should be booked well in advance with the local sports authority, local council or club/s who may own it.

Availability of Sponsors

The success of the meeting is largely dependent on the availability of sponsorship. Some clubs use a Marketing Consultant to arrange sponsorship although most clubs handle their own sponsorship arrangements. It is important to secure major sponsors before applying for a meeting with the Victorian Athletic League. The amount of sponsorship funds obtained will determine the prize money that can be offered by a club. Prize money for major Gift races generally ranges from \$2,500 to \$10,000 with a couple of exceptions. Additionally a meeting will incorporate between four and eight minor races with prize money ranging from \$300 for a restricted race to around \$2,000 for a substantial minor race.

It is a requirement that a sash be provided to the winner of each event and therefore sponsorship should cover the cost of the sash. Trophies are optional although these are greatly appreciated by the athletes and help make the meeting more attractive to athletes.

Other forms of sponsorship can be a donation of goods in kind. This is a great way for sponsors to participate without financially contributing. Sponsor's products however cannot replace prize money so it cannot be your only form of runner remuneration.

As an extra way of raising sponsorship dollars, you could offer heats of your races at \$100 each & semi's at \$250 each. This is just one idea to help raise money, and could form part or all of prize money on offer.

Selecting a Date

The Victorian Athletic League season runs from October through to Easter each year. There are many clubs that have been running over a long period of time and therefore receive precedence for their meeting so it is important to understand dates that are available on the Victorian Athletic League calendar before making decisions or booking venues.

Many athletic meetings are conducted in conjunction with other special events such as cycling, wood-chopping, highland gatherings or special local events. When planning a date for the meeting, it would be advantageous to discuss opportunities with other local clubs to find a date that is mutually beneficial. Also keep in mind dates of amateur athletics', both national events and local club based competitions, as these may affect the numbers you receive.

With many of our larger athletic meetings, you could consider piggy backing off one of them. Please note that if you do this we strongly recommend that you run your meeting after a large gift as runners will forgo running at a smaller meet to be at optimal level for larger prize money. Another alternative would be a Friday night meeting, or a mid-week (Wednesday meeting). However we recommend that careful consideration is given to these options as VAL staffing for set up can be extremely difficult to arrange, also travel times and finish times of weekday meetings should also be considered.

Sufficient Willing Helpers

Conducting a successful athletic meeting can be time consuming if you don't have sufficient help. The more people that are involved in the meeting, the greater the chance the meeting has of being successful. Willing helpers are required for the following types of activities: Arranging sponsorship, arranging for the ground, liaising with local councils, liaising with the Victorian Athletic League, arranging the program of events for the day including scheduling and printing the program, contacting the media.

Setting up the ground on the day – presentation of the ground can make for an outstanding athletic meeting. Assisting on the day; gatekeeper, canteen and bar attendants, program sellers. Cleaning up the ground after the event. Administration duties after the meeting, completing financial arrangements. Appoint these people and provide each with a short job description. Each committee or individual appointed should develop a management plan to cope with the assigned area of responsibility. In the early stages of the planning each group will need to assess the number of additional volunteers/officials required.

Recognise those helping with the event by involving them in decisions, providing the relevant recognition and giving appropriate thanks. Remember, people are your most valuable resource, whether they are volunteers, club or local body officials. Usually, if you look hard enough and plan in advance, you will have more volunteers than you need. Look after these people if you want to continue to have them as a resource.

Little Athletics

Many clubs include children's events at their meeting to attract parents, friends and other spectators. It is also a great opportunity for children to be introduced to athletics and meet some elite athletes. Some clubs run clinics for children as part of their athletic carnival. Arrangements for children's races can be made through the local little athletics association, Little Athletics Victorian (LAV) or by contacting the Victorian Athletic League office.

Printing of program

Clubs are responsible for printing programs. The Victorian Athletic League will provide details of heat draws via email. The club should also arrange program advertisers as this can be a useful means of offsetting costs as well as providing value to sponsors. Sponsors must be listed in the program and will be announced regularly during the day by the race commentator.

The track

The straight track must be set out to take a maximum of eight lanes at a width of 1.22m. Events up to and including 120 metres are run on a straight track. There must be a minimum run off of 30 metres after the finishing line for straight events.

Circular events are conducted from 200 metres up to 3,200 metres. 200 metre events must be run in lanes with a maximum of eight lanes at a minimum width of 1.22m. Events further than 200 metres are not run in lanes. The distance of circular events is measured 30cm out from the "pole line". The "pole line" must be clearly marked on the track either using white line marking. The finishing line required for circular and straight events comprise a marked line across the track. The Victorian Athletic League provides finishing equipment.

The straight events require handicap grids to be marked at the starting point of each straight race to cater for the handicapping system. Calibrations are generally 25 centimetres apart, however, required markings can be determined from the event program which will show the handicap mark for all athletes.

The Victorian Athletic League supplies finishing gates for straight events, electronic timing devices, a wind gauge, circular event finishing poles, finishing line tent to protect electronic equipment, colour singlet's and numbers for athletes and handicap markers for circular events.

Prize money Distribution

The minimum prize money for any event is determined according to the Victorian Athletic League rules. A club must check the rules to ensure they comply. Victorian Athletic League rules provide for all semi-finalist and finalists who have passed qualifying rounds to be given prizemoney.

Prize money must be available for distribution to athletes on the day of the meeting. A club must provide a

Prize money paying area and official on the day of the meeting so athletes can collect their prizemoney.

Unclaimed prizemoney is to be sent to Victorian Athletic League for disbursement to athletes.

Allowable minimum prizemoney for events:

- Junior races (Under 17 and Under 20) have minimum prize money of \$300
- Combined races (E.g. Women's/Masters) have minimum prize money of \$700
- All other events have a minimum of \$600

Recommended Prizemoney Distribution

- Events which have heats, semis and finals and are over \$1,000 in prizemoney
- 50% to winner
- 20% to second
- 10% to third
- 10% distributed to other finalists
- 10% to other semi-finalists

Recommended Prizemoney Distribution

- Events which have heats and finals or are under \$1,000 in prizemoney
- 60% to winner
- 20% to second
- 10% to third
- 10% distributed to other finalists

Recommended Prizemoney Distribution

- Events which have finals only
- 60% to winner
- 20% to second
- 10% to third
- 10% distributed to fourth to tenth

Any race where heats are not run (E.g. 1600m) prize money not less than the entry fee must be paid down to 10th place.

Other requirements

Arrange sashes – It is mandatory to provide sashes to event winners. Generally sashes cost around \$35 each. The Victorian Athletic League can provide a list of sash manufacturers if required.

Arrange commentator – It is mandatory to have a commentator at an athletic meeting. A good commentator can add considerable atmosphere to a meeting. The Victorian Athletic League can arrange for an experienced commentator for the meeting. Generally, the cost of a commentator is around \$200-\$300 per day. Arrange public address system - It is mandatory to have a public address system.

Arrange for the ground to be marked – usually the local council or ground owner will mark the ground. It is beneficial to have the straight track, circular track and warm up straight mown down to 1.5 centimetres if possible. Marking lanes with ropes makes for a great spectacle and decorating the ground with sponsor's banners and bunting also provides a better looking carnival. The Victorian Athletic League will check measurements of the straight and circular track prior to commencement of the meeting. Athletes supply their own starting blocks. There is no requirement for the club to provide starting blocks.