

OFFICIALS PROFILE: JACK LAMBERT

England Athletics

Level 3 Field Official



Do you have an athletics background?

I joined Kidderminster and Stourport AC as a nine-year old. My family were involved in the club, helping out wherever possible. As a family we are very competitive with my sister and I both being hammer throwers. I was a national champion for Hammer under 15 and ranked number one in the UK for an under 13 and under 15. My sister still competes and was also national champion, before me.

One of the main reasons I wanted to be official was because I have seen from my time as an athlete how important their role is and how from their volunteering I was able to train and compete.

I am now studying Business Management at the University of Worcester and took the decision to concentrate on the officiating rather than the training and competing to allow more time to study and have a social life!

Where are you in your officiating journey?

I have been officiating unofficially since I was 10 or 11 years old when I would rake the long jump pit or help where I could. I went on my first course aged 14 and qualified at 16. So, I have done about three years officiating as a field judge. I have done the basic level also for track and endurance just so I can see how that works as well.

I have been a field judge at the Loughborough International and the Manchester International in 2021 which were great experiences for me to see how the protocols work at that level of meeting. I have also been a field judge at the English Schools over three days along with being the Field Referee at a number of events in Nuneaton.

The most challenging event where I was a field referee was a Vets Challenge Final meeting in Nuneaton where there were around 14 teams so a complicated organisation. The programme included 26 field events all in one day. The day also involved a large number of Vets who were trying new events. Like many league meetings across the country there was also a lack of officials. This meeting was a very good learning experience to have worked through and I had a supportive meeting manager.

I am very interested in the competitions and management side of athletics as well which links very well with my degree. I like to see how it is all organised from start to finish including all the finances.

What is your favourite moment as an official?

My dad passed away suddenly earlier in 2021 and, at the time, he and a colleague were organising an open meeting at Kidderminster and Stourport AC. I had been helping a little so I decided to keep going with it for my dad. The turnout was amazing and the support from other officials and the club was fantastic. I did a big social media push. We had more than 700 entries and 400 athletes. It was named the KSAC Mike Lambert Open which was, of course, a lovely touch. This was one of the first meetings I have experienced to have so many officials all offer to help. Their help was brilliant and made for a great day of competition.

This made me realise how much was involved in organising an event. I was working until 2am in the morning most nights in the run-up to the meeting but it was worthwhile. To be so young and have organised something like this is a highlight.

Generally I do really enjoy seeing up and coming athletes get a PB or a medal in a grassroots level meeting especially if it is that athlete, who may not be the most talented, but works really hard and is absolutely thrilled to get a bronze.

What do you love most about officiating?

I really enjoy working with the other officials who are so friendly, and I have made a great group of friends from it. I have a great mentor in Fiona Hancock.

I love the problem-solving element of it and often have to fix something at the track or in the field. An official who retired has passed on his tools to me so I have a great set of gauges to help with technical roles!

I love it when an athlete gets a PB as it means we have done our job well.

I am really interested in new technology and new entry systems coming through. These are helping to improve the sport especially during competitions for athletes and spectators. As a young person I often get put on the EDMs (electronic distance measuring machine) which has the laser to measure for throws and jumps. I always like to challenge myself with the time of the spike being in the ground when marking a distance.

What are your ambitions in officiating?

I am working towards my level 4 in the field and then start my levels at track and endurance, so I have a good understanding of the full programme of disciplines.

Then I would be keen to do the modules on competition and management so I can see the full elements involved.

In the long run I would be keen to work in the management team at bigger meetings.

I was one of the field referees at the Welsh Indoor Senior Champs in January. I am an athlete steward at the British Indoor Champs and I love that role – working with the athletes and the call-room.

I have applied to be a volunteer technical official at the Commonwealth Games which would be an absolute dream if I was successful.

I like to represent young officials and encourage more younger people to have a go at it.

What would you tell others about becoming an official?

Give it a go!

There are so many disciplines there is something for everyone; be it track, field, endurance, timekeeping and so on. This means there is a wide range of people as officials, and everyone is always very welcoming.

Using just three words describe what officiating means to you.

- Enjoyable
- Challenging
- Rewarding