



PROJECT PRECISION 2028

Embracing electronic technology to improve the production and delivery of Northern Track & Field League competition results

Version History

Version 1 published 2nd October 2025
Version 2 published 2nd November 2025

PROJECT PRECISION 2028

Project Plan 2025 – Version 2.0

1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Track & Field League is a regional competition across the north of England providing inter-club matches on a monthly basis, during the outdoor season, to over 50 member clubs and over 1,000 athletes. The League is affiliated to England Athletics and obtains level 1 event licences for all of its matches and is supported by over 430 qualified officials. The teams from the member clubs support the development of young athletes and typically include 23% of athletes from the Under 20 age group and a further 20% of athletes from the Under 17 age group (which is to become Under 18 age group for the 2026 season). In order to improve the quality of the experience for those member clubs, athletes and officials the League would like to increase the use of electronic technology.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goals of the project shall be:-

- a) To have all **results instantly available** on mobile devices during all league matches
- b) To have all league matches using **electronic technology** by the 2028 season, including electronic starting, electronic distance measuring, wind gauges and photo finish equipment.
- c) To have all league matches using **Electronic Distance Measuring** (EDMs) by the 2027 season, including wind gauges for horizontal jumps.
- d) To have more than 30% of league matches using **Photo Finish Equipment** by the 2027 season, including wind gauges for track sprints and hurdles

3. SUMMARY

By increasing the financial support to clubs that host League matches we can increase the use of electronic technology and monitor that increased usage through the submission of claim forms from those host clubs. With more host clubs then using photo finish equipment there are more opportunities to train new technical officials to use photo finish and thereby increasing the overall availability of photo finish across the League.

We can enhance or replace the competition management and results software to better integrate with that technology and produce instantly available results on mobile devices. This will greatly improve the experience of participating athletes, including the 40% that are young athletes who are developing their talent, and all those that support them at League matches.

4. BACKGROUND

The objects of the Northern T&F League are:-

- a) To provide regional competition for Club teams of athletes, primarily in the form of a divisional league structure and Inter-Club Cup Championship.
- b) To generally foster and encourage the development of Track & Field athletics throughout the competition area and to work in conjunction with other similar organisations.
- c) To allow an increasing number of athletes from across the region to experience team-based competition, foster camaraderie and enhance their ability to compete at a regional level.

The Northern T&F League has been operating for more than 50 years, originally as a men's league and a women's league and then combined as one league to provide inter-club competition across the north of England and northern Wales. Over that time it has remained affiliated to England Athletics and followed their guidance on operation, such as age group rules and competition standards. The League has kept a close association with Northern Athletics and the majority of the member clubs are also affiliated with Northern Athletics, but it is in itself an entirely separate organisation, with its own finances.

The vast majority of member clubs are also members of the UK Youth Development League and have expectations that once their athletes are no longer eligible to compete in the UKYDL that they can compete in the Northern T&F League. Many of the U20 and U17 athletes compete in both these leagues. As a result of the overlap of membership the member clubs have an expectation that the Northern T&F League will operate in much the same way as the UKYDL.

Both England Athletics and Northern Athletics have adopted the use of Roster for providing competition and results management to their membership when running track & field competitions. Roster provides competition results almost instantly to the mobile devices of competitors and those who support them. Many athletes now have that experience and expectation that their performances can be measured electronically and shared instantly via the internet. This is currently not the case with the Northern T&F League competition.

Electronic Distance Measuring (EDM) has been provided by member clubs at matches and used by some officials across the League to improve the efficiency and experience of Field Judges. But this usage has not previously been monitored, so it is difficult to say that EDMs are used at every match.

The same is true for the use of Wind Gauges; these have been used at Northern T&F League matches over recent years, but to what extent is not measured or known. Wind Gauges are now critical for the endorsement of performance records in sprints, sprint hurdles and horizontal jumps.

Photo finish equipment usage is now a must for competitions that receive a level 2 (or above) licence and is used at all Northern Athletics track & field competitions. The photo finish technology is integrated with the Roster results software to provide that instant sharing of the race results. A feature that has greatly improved the engagement of supporters and appreciated by the athletes, many of whom also compete in the Northern T&F League. The availability of equipment and technical officials (to operate photo finish) across the north of England and northern Wales is very limited, so it is not widely used for Northern T&F League matches. In the 2025 season it was used 8 times over the 32 matches – at the most at two matches on each matchday.

The current competition management and results software for the Northern T&F League is provided by OnTrack. It is based upon Microsoft Excel technology and has had numerous issues with the recording of performances and production of the results. It does have an integration with photo finish equipment but this has not been used at any Northern T&F League matches. It cannot directly provide results to mobile devices, but it has been used at some matches to produce results on a website, which can be regularly refreshed. This feature was not provided by the OnTrack software and relied upon a third-party to produce the results.

The Roster competition management and results software has been evaluated for use by the Northern T&F League. Although the software does provide the integration with photo finish and can produce race results instantly to mobile devices, it does not support the team scoring algorithms and officials scoring that are in use by the League. Roster would require some software modifications to support league scoring before it can be used by the Northern T&F League.

In order to meet the goals of Project Precision 2028 the competition management and results software will need to be improved or replaced, the monitoring and usage of EDMs and Wind Gauges needs to be improved and the provision of photo finish equipment made more available. There is a need to train more technical officials to operate photo finish and to integrate with the results software, in order to provide race results to mobile devices. All of these requirements will need funding to support their implementation.

5. WELFARE

The safeguarding and welfare of athletes and officials, whilst participating in the Divisional League competition, is determined by the League Welfare Policy as agreed to by the League Management Committee. Clubs are responsible for their own duty of care for their members and the League will only accept clubs as members if they are affiliated to England Athletics or Welsh Athletics. On competition days it is the responsibility of the event organiser from the host club to brief the volunteer workforce on health and safety at the event and to evaluate the risk assessment for the venue being used.

Should any participant have a safeguarding concern then their first point of contact should be their club's Secretary or Welfare Officer, who can advise on next steps. Should they not be available then the participant may raise the concern with the League Secretary, who's details are made available on the League's website.

6. ED&I AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Northern T&F League competition is free and open to all athletes, regardless of sex and ethnicity. The only requirements are that they are over 16 years of age and a registered member of a club affiliated to England Athletics or Welsh Athletics.

The Northern T&F League does not exclude athletes with particular disabilities, but does not hold specific para competitions within the League. Where possible, the officials at a meeting will do what they can to accommodate an athlete who is taking part on behalf of their club and has a particular disability.

There are no specific requirements for clubs to join the League and they come from the largest cities across the North of England down to the most rural of towns. The entry fee is kept at a minimum to ensure it is affordable and no specific attire or equipment is needed, only that club colours must be worn during the competition. Bib numbers are provided by the League at no cost to the clubs.

The rules of the competition and the formulation of the constitution are taken from proposals made by members clubs and voted upon at an Annual General Meeting. The ideas, opinions and desires of all member clubs are therefore taken into consideration from the diverse makeup of the club membership.

Once Project Precision 2028 has been funded for 3 seasons it is expected that more clubs from across the North of England will have joined the League. With more clubs and inflationary increases in the entry fees, the ongoing finances of the League should be able to support the ongoing costs of hosting matches, including the use of electronic technology.

7. MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for the management of the League is vested in a Management Committee consisting of a Chairperson, Finance Officer and Secretary. These Officers are elected at the Annual General Meeting from nominations made by Member Clubs. There are Divisional Secretaries, appointed by the clubs in each division, who oversee the running of the event on match days. Each match has a host club that is responsible for the provision of resources and adequate officials to run the meeting.

These include:

- All Match Fees
- Electronic Equipment, including EDMs, Wing Gauges and Photo-Finish
- Chief Starter
- Marksman / Starter's Assistant
- Photo-Finish Technician (when photo-finish in use)
- Chief Timekeeper
- Track Referee
- Field Referee
- Match Recorders (Two per match)
- Announcer
- First Aid Cover
- Officials' refreshments
- Preparing the Field Cards

All participating clubs (usually 6 per match), provide at least one Track Judge , one Timekeeper and five Field Judges of whom 2 must be qualified (with one of them being at Level 2 {Field} as a minimum) who must remain present for the full duration of their duties.

8. STAKEHOLDERS

- a) Athletes** across the north of England : the athletes will need to be prepared to download and use the results software on their mobile devices. They will benefit from the improved experience and ability to instantly share their results with their supporters.
- b) Officials** across the north of England : the officials must be able to use the electronic technology for measuring and recording of results at league matches. They will benefit from additional experience of using the technology and improved efficiency during league matches.
- c) Affiliated Member Clubs** : the clubs will need to monitor the progress of the project and provide the required electronic technology when hosting league matches. They will benefit from financial support when hosting matches and an improved experience for their own supporters.
- d) League Management Committee** : the committee will need to approve the project plan and monitor the success of the plan at league committee meetings.
- e) England Athletics** : the national governing body needs to provide financial support for the project and monitor the success of plan. England Athletics will benefit from an improved competition for their members that supports the recruitment and retention of athletes and their long-term development.

9. WORKFORCE

The volunteer workforce is provided by the member clubs that are attending the competition on match days. In previous years the league has been supported by over 430 graded officials and over 230 ungraded volunteers from across the members clubs.

The officials and volunteers from each club report to the Chief Officials at the meeting. The teams of field officials from each club are allocated field events in advance, in a rotation so that they cover different events at each match. It is the responsibility of the Field Referee, in co-ordination with the Divisional Secretary, to

ensure that competent graded officials shall be in charge of each event.

Ungraded volunteers or lower graded officials are placed with the higher graded officials to ensure they gain some level of experience on each match day and are adequately mentored by a lead official.

The volunteer workforce is provided with refreshments during the day, which is one of the responsibilities of the host club. The timetable is constructed so that the officiating day does not exceed 7 hours in total and no official is expected to officiate for more than 4 hours at a time.

10. RISKS

- a) Availability of **electronic equipment** : not all member clubs have EDMs and wind gauges, so hiring of equipment by host clubs may present a challenge if there are not enough providers across the north of England. The use of photo finish equipment may also be restricted at certain stadia, which may present challenges when selecting host venues.
- b) Availability of **technical officials** : not all graded officials have experience using electronic technology, in particular photo finish equipment, EDMs and results entry software. Training of officials will be required to mitigate this risk.
- c) Usage of **results software** : the results software will need to be upgraded or replaced to allow integration with the electronic technology and real time entry of results. To mitigate this risk the League has engaged with Roster as an alternative results software provider.
- d) **Funding** : the financial reserves of the league will become very depleted during the execution of the project and could fall below the minimum threshold of sustainability for the League. To mitigate this risk the League is seeking grant funding from England Athletics to support the implementation of the project.
- e) **Approval** from member clubs : the League is governed by its membership, so requires a majority vote at a General Meeting (Annual or Extraordinary) to make changes to the running of the competition. The project may not gain approval at the 2025 AGM, so require further EGMs to obtain approval, so delaying the start of the project.

11. BUDGET AND FINANCE

The Northern T&F League is a not-for-profit organisation and all funds relating to the operation of the League are managed by the Finance Officer with appropriate records being maintained. The League endeavours to maintain a positive account balance of at least one year's budgeted operating costs, but no more than two year's budgeted operating costs. Clubs are required to pay an annual entry fee to the League. An Inspector of Accounts is appointed by the League Management Committee, to review the accounts annually.

Requirements for funding of Project Precision 2028:

<i>Season</i>	<i>2026</i>	<i>2027</i>	<i>2028</i>
<i>EDM + WG</i>	£3,840	£3,840	£3,840
<i>TESS + PF</i>	£3,330	£6,960	£9,280
<i>Officials Courses</i>	£360	£480	£0

Total	£7,600	£11,280	£13,120
-------	---------------	----------------	----------------

Over the 3 years of the project a total sum of **£32,000** will be required to support the implementation of electronic technology.

12. SUCCESS METRICS

Goal a) will require the monitoring of the usage of real time results software. This can only be performed by the third party software provider, most likely by counting the number of users authorized (logged in) to view the results of Northern T&F League matches. For success this number should exceed 1,000 users by the end of the 2028 season.

Goal b) will require the monitoring of the usage of all electronic technology. This can be performed by counting the respective claims made by host clubs after each Northern T&F League match. Each claim form will have specific claims for the usage of TESS, EDM, Field Wind Gauge and Photo finish.

For success the number of claims for TESS should reach 32 matches per season by the end of the 2028 season.

For the success of goal c) the number of claims for the usage of EDM and Field Wind Gauges should reach 32 matches per season by the end of the 2027 season.

For the success of goal d) the number of claims for the usage of Photo finish equipment, with Track Wind Gauges, should reach 10 matches for the 2027 season and then to achieve goal b) it will need to be 32 matches per season for the 2028 season.

13. MILESTONES & DELIVERABLES

Timetable of key dates and metrics:

15 October 2025	Completion of Project Plan and Approval by League Management Committee
20 October 2025	Submission of grant application to England Athletics (<i>Closing date 3 November 2025</i>)
24 October 2025	Publication of Project Plan to League membership
08 November 2025	Approval of plan and 2026 budget at League AGM
30 November 2025	Grant outcome notification from England Athletics
19 January 2026	2026 Venue list published, including where photo finish planned to be used
28 February 2026	Award contract issued and signed for funding of the project
13 April 2026	Completion of changes to results software for 2026 season
27 April 2026	2026 funding received from England Athletics
16 May 2026	Provisional date for start of 2026 season
30 August 2026	Provisional date for end of 2026 season
07 November 2026	Project metrics published for the 2026 season at League AGM
18 January 2027	2027 Venue list published, including where photo finish planned to be used
26 April 2027	2027 funding received from England Athletics
15 May 2027	Provisional date for start of 2027 season
29 August 2027	Provisional date for end of 2027 season
06 November 2027	Project metrics published for the 2027 season at League AGM
17 January 2028	2028 Venue list published, where all venues planned to use photo finish

24 April 2028	2028 funding received from England Athletics
20 May 2028	Provisional date for start of 2028 season
27 August 2028	Provisional date for end of 2028 season
04 November 2028	Project metrics published for the 2028 season at League AGM

14. FEEDBACK & COMMUNICATION

After each matchday meeting, the Divisional Secretary collates all of the officials signing-in sheets and the results and forwards them to the League Secretary. The League Secretary uses the information to record how many graded officials were present at the matches and how many athletes of the different age groups and sexes participated. There is also a section on the forms to record any feedback where there is a lack of graded officials or equipment, so that the host club can say why that was the case.

The host club submits an expenses claim form to the Finance Officer and notes down any costs that relate to use of electronic equipment, stadium hire and officials. This feedback is used to record the overall costs of operating the League.

The post-event feedback is completed for England Athletics so that they can help identify patterns and trends in behaviour, including providing the participation numbers and officials information.

The results are sent to the Power of 10 team for recording on their site.

Over the period of the project a survey will be conducted with non-participating clubs in the North of England to understand why they do not enter the League and how much the provision of electronic equipment will influence their decision to enter the League in the future.

This project plan is to be shared via the League web page on the Northern Athletics website - <https://www.northernathletics.co.uk/track-field-league/>

The plan will also be circulated to member attendees of the 2025 AGM.

The plan will be shared with England Athletics as part of a grant application process.

The success metrics will be published on the League web page at the end of each season.