Entries and Results Management 101
From the Secretariat Seat

There seems to be an air of mystery around what it is the Meet Secretariat actually does for each track and field meet. I hope to unveil this shadow of secrecy to give some perspective and increase understanding of the Meet Secretariat role.

Pre-Meet:
The success of the meet weighs very heavily on the work that is done prior to the start of the track meet. Well before the meet, I will discuss the meet's needs with the meet organizers and get as much information about the meet as possible. Armed with the meet package, technical documents and the schedule, I will create the TrackieReg meet site. This platform is used to collect registrations and payments for the meet up until the entry deadline, typically 3-4 days before the meet. I'll keep an eye on the TrackieReg site, fix any errors or omissions, scratch people from events, and gain an understanding of how big the meet will be. To learn more about the TrackieReg process, see my manual *TrackieReg: Creating a Track Meet Registration Site*.

In the meantime, I will create the MeetPro database. Meetpro is a results management software program that can be bought and downloaded online. I again use the meet package, tech docs, and schedules to create a unique database for each meet, with a unique event for every event offered at the meet. I do this chronologically according to the schedule (the first track event on the first day is event #1 through to the last track event, and then I create all of the field events). Each age group and each gender needs their own unique event/event #. All events must be set-up with the proper amount of positions in each heat (you can't have more than 8 people in a 100m heat, but this number jumps to 12-15 for a 1500m). How the lanes are assigned and who ends up in which heats according to their seed times depends on how many rounds there are; some events will be only one round (straight to final), while others have a heat and a final. Advancement criteria must be set: is advancement from the heat based on time or place, maybe time and place? Competition numbers must be set: do the numbers start at 1 or do

they start at 362 because we're using leftovers from last year? Age groups and divisions must be set, determining what date of births will be in which division. The meet schedule must be entered, ensuring that the track events in particular have somewhat accurate times on their event sheets. In the Notes field, I enter the heights of the hurdles and the weights of the throwing implements for each hurdle and throwing event, as this information needs to be on the eventual results sheet for the result to be rendered official by BC Athletics and Athletics Canada.

Once the database is created, I sit back and wait for the entry deadline. And probably do other meets in the meantime.

The day after the entry deadline passes, I'll go into TrackieReg and export the entry data. Data is exported in the form of an intense CSV file that I import into Meetpro, thus populating all of those events that I have waiting for entries. If there are any inconsistencies between the Meetpro database and the export file (like say I forgot to create a Meetpro event for the U20 Men's 400m) I will have a PDF of "exceptions" because there are entries with nowhere to go.

With athletes and entries imported, I will go through each event and seed the event. Meetpro typically does a good job in doing this automatically, but it still needs a human eye to make sure that the heat make-ups are correct and even. This is time consuming, but necessary. Once everyone is in, I will create reports for the meet organizers: the athlete list (broken down by team so they can put together team packages with numbers) and the start list (in case they want to publicize the start lists in advance). I don't create heat sheets and score sheets ahead of time because inevitably there will be late entries, scratches or general changes and they'll have to be redone.

Over the next couple of days, I will enter any late entries that the meet policies may allow (the less the better), take out any scratches, and answer any inquiries from meet directors. Depending on the scale of the meet, meet directors may be more or less squirmy about heat and lane assignments, and we may spend some time on the phone moving athletes depending on the reality of their seed times (Spoiler alert: people lie on their seed times to get into faster heats, I know, it's shocking!)

Right before the meet, I will resend those previous reports to the meet organizer so they have the most up to date start lists and athlete lists. I then pack my track bag with pens, staplers, snacks and a blanket. I dress warmly because even if it looks like a nice day, it will be cold under the tent.

The pre-meet prep is now complete. If it was all done correctly, the meet should theoretically go well, at least from my end.

At the Meet:
The first morning of the meet is inevitably the busiest with the most people needing things at the same time. What I need to do is:
- Help set up my computer and printer station if it's not already done.
- Print out the start lists to be posted on a wall somewhere.
- Print out the Finish Line sheets (3 sets-one for Marshalling, one for the Announcer, and one for the Finish Line Chief) for the track events. I typically only do the first morning worth of events to save time and limit squawking in the immediate; the rest can be printed as the day progresses especially if the meet is taking late entries.
- Print out the Horizontal Field events Score sheets, again typically just for the morning (normally two sets, especially for long jump and triple jump as one official will record the results and one will record the wind reading).
- Print out the Vertical Field event score sheets (again, typically two sets), for the whole day so Carol doesn't have to make another trip for more sheets later.
- Without fail, officials/meet organizers will ask me to print out meet schedules because they did not bring their own.

Depending on which events start when, I'll prioritize which of these tasks I do first to last. If the field doesn't start for another hour, but track is marshalling now, track clearly will take priority. I will try to get a tea and go to the bathroom before events actually commence because who knows when I'll next get a break.

At the start of the day is when most of the late entries and/or scratches will come in, which is another good reason to not print off

all of the event sheets for the full day at that time. In between printing, I will input late entries, assign numbers, and update heats.

At some point the meet will start and I'll start processing results, for both the track and field events.

I try to process results as soon after the event as possible, and send the results sheets off to typically 4 places: one to the announcer, one to be posted, one to the awards table, and one that stays with me and goes into my binder. For field events, my binder copy gets attached to the original score sheet from the field official. If there was a DQ in an event, that form also gets attached to the results sheet in my binder. I keep this binder(s) full of results for at least a month after the meet in case I need to go back.

Results should ideally be posted no later than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event.

Throughout the day, I will print off the finish line sheets and score sheets for upcoming events, and get them to event officials before they need them, probably 30 minutes before the start of those events.

Tasks that come up during the day can be various, and will depend on how well everything is working. I may have to combine events, and move people into different lanes. I may have to reseed events on the fly. I may need to chase down lost score sheets. Who knows?! At the end of the day, I will put the current Meetpro database on a flash drive to take home and I help the photo timers pack up all of the equipment. Often, I am among one of the last to leave the venue.

The next day, I do the whole thing again, but with less chaos around me because people are always calmer and less stressy on the second day of the meet.

At the end of the meet, I make sure I get my binders of all of the official results sheets and put the now very full MeetPro database on my flash drive. I typically also abscond with leftover hotdogs or donuts from the concession stand.

Post-Meet

Once I get home, I create the following reports and send them to BC Athletics and the Meet Director for their records:
 • PDF of complete results
 • Text file of complete results
 • Excel file of Athlete list broken up by gender
 • The Meetpro database backup file

Key Tips for Success:
 • Regardless of the weather, dress warmly. The wind can whip through the finish line tent and it can get very cold under there regardless of how sunny it may be.
 • Always bring the office supplies you will need: stapler, hole punch, pens, highlighter, tape, etc. I request a box of printer paper from the meet so I don't have to haul it.
 • I designate a recycling box or bag that I keep under my feet to put scrap paper into. I then make sure there is a garbage bin somewhere close by so rogue banana peels do not make their way into my recycling and contaminate it. Some officials believe my recycling style is forceful. I consider it effective.
 • I typically arrive an hour before the first event starts each morning. This gives me enough time to get settled and get everything printed out. Without fail, someone will ask me for their score sheets before I even sit down, classic.
 • Take breaks and food when you can. I have been at meets where I did not move from my chair from 8am until 3pm.
 • Let meet organizers know when they can expect updates. I work a full time day job, so they will not be getting hourly revisions in the days leading up to a meet. Boundaries are healthy for everyone.
 • I always request a devoted volunteer to work with me to handle the paper flow and make sure sheets go where they need to go. Runners are also crucial and should be assigned by the meet volunteer coordinator.
 • The most important relationship I have during the meet is with the photo timer, so I'm really lucky to get to regularly work with two guys who are not only awesome humans but who are extraordinarily competent at their jobs.
 • Depending on your personality, don't be shy about telling people to leave the tent or at least give you some space to work quietly. This job is not a complex one, but it does require focus and

having people chattering in my ear or to each other does not help with my efficiency, accuracy, or charming demeanor.