**Paul Bannister General Secretary Salford Harriers**

Thanks for your time on the call on Monday, it was very useful and good to share views on the subject.

I wanted to put down my views so they can be shared with the members of the MACCL but also wanted to note that these views do not represent the view of Salford Harriers as this letter has not been reviewed by others in the club.

The question MACCL has asked the club to vote on will be going out to the members of the club to respond to.

As I mentioned on the call, I have had some lengthy discussions with a friend who is for RunEqual and she has shone more light on the campaign for me.

The RunEqual campaign wants women's races to be seen as having the same pedigree and given the same respect as the men's races. Whether we agree that women's races are seen as inferior or not is irrelevant - they are looking at this as many others will. The fact that people within the league probably don't feel this way is not explicit enough to those outside of it. For RunEqual having race distances the same is the silver bullet as they believe that will achieve their aim. For now though I want to continue without discussing distance.

How can the league represent women's races in such a way so they aren't seen as inferior? So that they aren't seen as the undercard? So they aren't just dismissed as something that happens in between men's races? Why are there differences in age categories in some leagues?

Something that in my opinion that can showcase the women's races is to flip the running order. Currently women's races are the undercard, with the main event being the men's race. Why can't women be the main event - the highest billing on the card? This may seem like a small gesture, but in the mixed relay event at triathlon, the glory leg is swapped between men and women giving both the opportunity to be the first to break the tape and not just the footnote. It was received extremely well by commentators, supporters and athletes. This was also the case in the recent Mixed Cross Country Relays at the 2024 World Cross Country Championships.

Alongside this, in what order are presentations made (I haven't been to a presentation evening so don't know)? My assumption would be that the men's awards are left till last, being the equivalent of the 'Best Picture' at the Oscars. Can this not be reviewed?

To me small changes like these and the ongoing efforts to ensure that women running for the first time in a competitive race are not intimidated, that mothers returning to running and ensuring there are safe spaces at the events far outweigh running the same distance.

To write this I have taken off my "I don't want to run a shorter distance hat" to try to not be influenced by distance as much as possible, but it will be put back on at some point.

My friend runs in various cross country leagues in the south and said herself and several other members of her club refuse to run in leagues that aren't equal. These leagues seem to be about 8k for seniors. But she says there aren't many who take such a stance. Her view around the distance being an issue is that she feels it sets an early precedent for young girls and women that they can not achieve what men can because they are not strong enough.

If you've made it this far, well done, I'll finish by saying that working in a business that prides itself on diversity, equity and inclusion, that treating people differently is not always discrimination in a negative context. Treating people differently to make sure they have the same opportunities as others is very important. For instance women's teams are smaller which is relative to participation levels to allow as many clubs as possible to have full teams.

In my opinion things like this help keep the league moving forward - the distance of the races just become a distraction.

It would be great to hear back on any of these points and am more than happy for this to be shared.