

YDL Athlete Satisfaction Survey Analysis

Based on the responses in YDL Athlete Satisfaction Survey_Submissions_2026-09-04, the overall sentiment is positive, with athletes valuing the team atmosphere, club representation and competition opportunities, but raising consistent concerns around travel, competition quality, scheduling and timing systems.

Executive Summary

Strengths

The most commonly praised aspects of YDL were:

1. Team atmosphere and team spirit

- Athletes repeatedly described the team environment as the best part of YDL.
- Many valued representing their club and competing alongside friends.

2. Opportunity to compete

- Athletes appreciate regular competition opportunities.
- Many highlighted the chance to face stronger athletes and achieve PBs.

3. Club identity

- Strong sense of belonging and pride in representing clubs.
- Most respondents reported feeling valued within their team.

4. Athlete development

- Respondents generally rated YDL highly for helping athletes improve and prepare for higher levels of competition.

Key Issues Raised

1. Travel Distance

This is the most consistent barrier.

Common comments:

- "Travel distance"

- Venues too far away.
- Early departures and late returns.
- Requests for more regionalised divisions.

Impact:

- Reduced participation.
- Lower enjoyment.
- Difficulty fielding full teams.

2. Competition Level

There is a split in opinions:

Higher-level athletes say:

- Standard of competition is too low.
- Small race fields.
- Difficult to achieve PBs.
- Premier divisions still not competitive enough.

Developing athletes say:

- Competition level is appropriate.
- Enjoy opportunities against stronger athletes.

Several athletes suggested:

- Ability-based finals.
- Larger fields.
- Combined leagues.
- Better pathways for stronger athletes.

3. Event Scheduling & Timetables

A major frustration.

Common complaints:

- Event clashes.

- Large gaps between events.
- Long competition days.
- Relays very late in the day.
- School holiday clashes.
- Conflicts with:
 - English Schools
 - Diamond League
 - National Championships

Suggested improvements:

- Shorter days.
- Better scheduling.
- Avoid school holidays.
- Improve track/field overlap management.

4. Electronic Timing

One of the strongest recurring themes.

Athletes repeatedly requested:

- Fully electronic timing.
- Elimination of hand timing.
- Immediate result publication.

Many sprint athletes felt:

Hand-timed races reduce the value of performances because times cannot reliably count for PBs. [1](#)

5. Results & Communication

Frequent complaints included:

- Slow results.
- Poor communication.

- Lack of live scoring.
- Unclear promotion/relegation rules.
- Difficult scoring system.

Athletes requested:

- Live results apps.
- Faster uploads.
- Better online communication.
- More transparent scoring.

Most Requested Improvements

Top Themes

Improvement	Frequency
Electronic timing	Very High
Less travel	Very High
More matches	High
Stronger competition	High
Better organisation/communication	High
More opportunities to compete	High
Better scheduling	High
More events available	Medium-High

Team Atmosphere Findings

This is clearly YDL's biggest strength.

Many responses mentioned:

- Team spirit
- Team bonding
- Club pride
- Social aspect
- Supporting teammates

The team environment appears to be the feature athletes most want preserved. [1](#)

Strategic Recommendations

Priority 1

Introduce electronic timing at all matches.

Benefits

- Increased athlete satisfaction.
- Better sprint participation.
- More credible performances.
- Faster results publication.

Priority 2

Review fixture schedule.

Focus areas

- Avoid school holidays where possible.
- Avoid clashes with major athletics events.
- Improve spacing between fixtures.

Priority 3

Reduce travel burden.

Options:

- More regional divisions.
- Rotating venues.
- Centralised finals location.
- Review division boundaries.

Priority 4

Increase competitive opportunities.

Ideas from respondents:

- More matches.
- Larger race fields.
- Ability-based finals.
- More non-scoring opportunities.
- Additional event options (e.g. Triple Jump U16, Steeplechase, 200mH).

Priority 5

Improve communication.

Athletes requested:

- Live scoring.
- Faster results.
- Better explanations of league rules.
- More engagement through social media and apps.

Overall Conclusion

The survey suggests that athletes **strongly support the YDL concept** and particularly value the team-based competition model. However, satisfaction can be significantly improved by addressing four recurring concerns:

1. **Travel distance**
2. **Competition quality**
3. **Scheduling and timetables**
4. **Electronic timing and faster results**

If these areas are improved while maintaining the strong team atmosphere, overall athlete satisfaction is likely to increase substantially. [1](#)

Top 3 Insights

1. Travel distance is by far the most consistent pain point

Travel appears repeatedly throughout the survey as both:

- A major barrier to participation.
- A key reason athletes may not return next season.
- A common suggestion for improvement.

Athletes frequently mention:

- Long journeys reducing enjoyment.
- Venues being too far away.
- Difficulty travelling during school holidays.
- Preference for shorter journeys, even among otherwise satisfied athletes.

Many open-text responses specifically request:

- More local leagues.
- Better regionalisation.
- Less travel to finals.
- More balanced venue selection. [1](#)

Takeaway: Location strategy may have a larger impact on participation than almost any operational change.

2. Athletes love the team atmosphere, but want stronger competition

The strongest positive theme is the social and team environment.

Commonly cited "best things about YDL":

- Team spirit.
- Representing their club.
- Supporting teammates.
- Meeting athletes from other clubs.
- Feeling part of something bigger than individual competition. [1](#)

However, a second major theme emerges:

Many athletes, especially U16-U20 competitors, feel:

- Competition isn't deep enough.
- Some races have too few athletes.
- Large ability gaps reduce performance opportunities.
- Composite teams distort competitiveness.
- Strong athletes aren't sufficiently challenged. [1](#)

Takeaway: The league is succeeding socially but may be underperforming competitively for higher-performing athletes.

3. Operational issues are hurting the athlete experience

Several improvement themes appear repeatedly:

Electronic timing

Athletes frequently complain about:

- Hand timing.
- Inaccurate sprint times.
- PBs not being recognised.
- Reduced credibility of results. [1](#)

Scheduling and timetables

Common frustrations include:

- Long waits between events.
- Event clashes (track vs field).
- Late finishes.
- Holiday-date conflicts.
- Clashes with major competitions and championships. [1](#)

Results and communication

Athletes often mention:

- Delayed results.
- Poor communication.

- Lack of live scoring.
- Difficulty understanding standings and rankings. [1](#)

Takeaway: Many improvements athletes request are operational rather than structural and may be easier to address than league-format changes.

Other Interesting Findings

Strong sense of belonging

Most respondents report feeling valued by their YDL team, with many selecting the highest possible ratings. [1](#)

Demand for more opportunities

Repeated requests include:

- More matches.
- More events.
- More non-scoring opportunities.
- Additional age-group events.
- Greater flexibility in participation. [1](#)

League structure is divisive

Responses are split between:

- Keeping Upper and Lower leagues separate.
- Combining leagues to create stronger competition and reduce complexity. [1](#)

Athletes largely intend to return

1. A substantial proportion of athletes indicate they expect to compete again next season, suggesting overall satisfaction remains relatively strong despite the criticisms.

U14 Athletes: Social, positive, and development-focused

U14 respondents tend to be the most enthusiastic about YDL overall.

Common themes:

- Strong enjoyment of team competition.
- High ratings for feeling valued by their club.
- Excitement about representing their team.
- Interest in trying new events and gaining experience.
- Requests for **more opportunities** rather than criticism of the competition itself. [1](#)

Typical concerns:

- Travel distance.
- Event clashes (e.g., hurdles vs long jump).
- Desire for more events and non-scoring opportunities.
- Better scheduling for younger athletes. [1](#)

Summary: U14s see YDL primarily as a fun team experience and development opportunity.

U16 Athletes: Most divided group

U16 athletes show the widest range of opinions.

Positive themes:

- Team atmosphere remains highly valued.
- Many see YDL as useful preparation for bigger competitions.
- Strong appreciation for representing their club. [1](#)

Negative themes become more common:

- Competition standard not always high enough.
- Poor timing accuracy.
- Long travel.
- Long competition days.
- Frustrating timetables and event overlaps. [1](#)

Many U16 athletes start balancing YDL against:

- English Schools.

- Regional championships.
- PB-focused competitions. [1](#)

Summary: U16s still enjoy the format but begin judging it more critically as competitive athletes rather than just participants.

U18 Athletes: Most concerned about competition quality

U18 athletes repeatedly raise concerns about:

- Weak fields.
- Small race sizes.
- Hand timing.
- Lack of high-level competition.
- Composite teams affecting fairness.
- Clashes with major competitions. [1](#)

At the same time, they continue to praise:

- Team spirit.
- Club identity.
- Opportunities to compete with friends. [1](#)

Interesting pattern: Many U18 athletes want YDL to be **more serious and performance-oriented**, with suggestions such as:

- Stronger divisions.
- Individual qualification systems.
- Better electronic timing.
- Larger and more competitive fields. [1](#)

Summary: U18s are transitioning from developmental athletes to performance athletes and therefore focus heavily on competition quality.

U20 Athletes: Lowest enthusiasm overall

Among U20 athletes, several responses suggest growing disengagement.

Common themes:

- Prefer other competitions.
- Competition level not high enough.
- Travel not worth the benefit.
- Limited incentive to participate.
- Moving out of age groups and transitioning to senior athletics. [1](#)

Positive comments still focus on:

- Team atmosphere.
- Representing the club.
- Social side of competition. [1](#)

However, U20 athletes are the most likely to question:

- The purpose of the competition.
- Whether the standard is high enough.
- Whether a full-day commitment is worthwhile. [1](#)

Summary: Retention appears hardest among U20s, who increasingly compare YDL against higher-level individual competitions.
