

2025–26 Childrens Athletics Annual Report

1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026 | Prepared for the Athletics Waikato Bay of Plenty Annual General Meeting

Executive Summary

Children’s athletics in Waikato Bay of Plenty remained stable and resilient during the 2025–26 season. Total registered children were effectively unchanged at 3,209 athletes, compared with 3,212 in 2024–25, showing that the sport continues to hold its place despite strong competition from other youth sports. The region’s success continues to depend heavily on club volunteers, officials, referees and parent helpers, whose commitment enabled club nights, ribbon days, representative competition and championship events to proceed.

A key operational theme for the year was event improvement. Seven ribbon days were delivered across the region, although attendance was not consistently recorded, limiting the ability to assess demand by location and age group. The Auckland G10/11 and G12/13 Challenge provided strong representative opportunities, with WBOP athletes achieving multiple personal bests and podium results, and the G10/11 team winning its age-group trophy. The combined Children’s Individual and Relay Championships also represented a significant change, moving to a two-day format with online entry and digital results through AthleticNet; early feedback suggests the new format did not discourage participation.

The main opportunities for 2026–27 are to reconnect with non-affiliated children’s athletics providers, improve attendance and participation data collection, continue refining digital event delivery, and strengthen the pathway for parent volunteers to become trained officials. Uniform compliance also remains an area requiring clearer club-level communication and consistent expectations ahead of championship events.

Measure	2024–25	2025–26	Movement / insight
Total registered children	3,212	3,209	Stable overall participation; down by 3 athletes
6 & under registrations	1,570	1,585	Slight growth in younger age group
7 to 14 registrations	1,642	1,623	Slight decline in older children’s age group
Ribbon days delivered	Not stated	7	Grassroots competition remains active; attendance tracking should improve
Championship format	One-day championship and separate relay approach	Two-day combined Individual and Relay Championships	Positive early feedback; repeat in 2026–27 before final decision

Childrens Committee Chairpersons Report

I'd like to start this report with a round of thank-yous, as a sport run by volunteers we rely on the generosity of a few committed individuals who are prepared to give their time for the benefit of our region's children – to all of you who keep the Children's clubs running, who turn up each week, who put in the hours, who ride out the frustrations with a smile, and who celebrate the big and small successes with our athletes – THANK YOU!

Additionally, I'd like to thank our Referees and other Officials who ensure the events run safely, and teach our athletes how compete within the rules of their sport. A small but committed group of people who continue to turn up season after season – again THANK YOU!

Finally, a special mention to the BOP clubs for putting on a fantastic NI Colgate Games. Congratulations, and thank you for the many hours you put on to achieve a seamless event.

Overall numbers for children registered is consistent with last year, 3209 young athletes across the region for 2025/2026, compared to 3212 for the 2024/2025 season. A breakdown of numbers by affiliated club is below. We do have a few clubs in the region delivering athletics for children but choosing not to affiliate. Re-connecting with those clubs is a work on.

Club	2025			2026		
	6&under	7 to 14	total	6&under	7 to 14	total
Athletics Tauranga	0	19	19	0	30	30
Bellevue	106	162	268	110	155	265
Cambridge	176	193	369	253	201	454
Fairfield	152	186	338	129	198	327
Frankton	22	26	48	27	23	50
Greerton	47	96	143	37	67	104
Hawks	0	33	33	4	48	52
Hinemoa	75	84	159	94	93	187
Kawerau	0	5	5	1	10	11
Lake City	169	119	288	155	92	248
Mercury Bay	58	52	110	37	29	66
Morrinsville	96	56	152	104	48	152
Omokoroa	57	46	103	65	41	106
Paeroa	30	27	57	22	34	56
Papamoa	214	127	341	148	132	280
Putaruru	0	3	3	0	0	0
Taupo	90	112	202	103	113	216
Te Aroha	50	73	123	49	69	118
Te Awamutu	87	88	175	98	97	195
Te Puke	0	12	12	0	8	8
Thames	40	45	85	64	66	130
Tokoroa	18	10	28	6	4	10
Waihi	23	25	48	0	0	0
Whakatane	60	43	103	79	65	144
Total	1570	1642	3212	1585	1623	3209

RIBBON DAYS:

Providing the grass roots competitions for our children, our regions clubs provided 7 ribbon days over the summer season – well done and thank you to Whakatane, Te Awamutu, Fairfield, Taupo, Cambridge, Bellevue / Greerton and Paeroa for providing some great days of athletics competition for the children. Also an acknowledgement to Te Aroha for the work done in having your evening meet ready to go – unfortunately the weather intervened.

While numbers in attendance weren't reliably recorded over the season, there was a sense that numbers slightly down – I recommend recording attendance numbers as it does help inform what is well supported, and for which age groups, in relation to what we are delivering, and where (if at all) we need to evolve.

Uniform adherence remains an ongoing challenge – within our center rules of sewn on age flashes and plain club-coloured shorts. I would take this opportunity to encourage clubs to take the lead on this, and ensure your members are aware of our current uniform rules. I'd also put it to clubs that any review of these rules is welcome at the mid-winter forum, but that rules as they stand must be adhered to at championship meets.

AUCKLAND G10/11 AND G12/13 CHALLENGE:

This year Counties hosted the event at Papakura, combining the 2 age groups into one exciting day of competition – the larger numbers really added to the atmosphere and sense of team competition. While the end of day relays are still a work in progress, the event is creating wonderful connections with our neighboring region, as well as offering another level of personal best focused competition for those young athletes who are keen to test themselves. Digital scoring systems really improved the output of results, and we hope to further develop / use technology to continue to improve the delivery of the event.

For the WBOP team, it was a fabulous day of competition. Our young people represented the region with pride and sportsmanship. Our teams were each made up of 31 athletes from across the region, with each athlete competing in 3 individual events, as well as non-competition relays. Multiple PBs were achieved over the day, along with an impressive number of podium finishes. The consistent performances across the board saw the G10/11 team bring home the team trophy for their age group.

Our region is provisionally hosting the Challenge for the 2027 season, and we are looking forward to the continued growth of this event.

CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUAL AND RELAY CHAMPS, COMBINED EVENT:

For the first time in many years, the Championship event was held over a 2-day weekend in March. This decision was on the back of falling relay team entries for Relay Champs, and feedback that the 1-day championship day became quite a heavy load for competitive children, particularly with some heats and finals having quite short turn arounds. The program spread the events over the 2 days, with relays also split over the 2 days. While some tweaks to the program will improve the running of the day, overall feedback was positive. A huge step forward was getting the event digital, with online entry and results through AthleticNet. There must be a shout out here to Sandra, Veronica and Brett for getting this over the line – huge undertaking, thank you to you all!

Before a final decision is made around the format of this event, we will run it again as a 2-day event, this time in Tauranga, so Waikato clubs can feedback on travel, and BOP on hosting.

Overall, Children's athletics continues to hold its own in our region, amongst the plethora of sports on offer to children. The success of our clubs is largely due to the wonderful teams of volunteers who run them – you are champions of our sport, ensuring the foundations of athletics in Waikato Bay of Plenty remain strong. While we continue to search for innovative ways to grow our pool of qualified officials, we are developing a strong group of parent volunteers capable of running events to ensure all but our Championship events can run without issue. Considered scheduling to make the most of our official's time, as well as appropriate recognition of the commitment they make will enable us to run championship events while we find ways to increase our trained official base.

Thank you again for a great year of Children's athletics, we look forward to the 2026/2027 season.

Teresa Mumby, WBOP Athletics Children's Chair.

Children's Track & Field Championships 2026

Participation Report Prepared for the AWBOP Annual General Meeting

Summary

The Children's Track & Field Championships is one of AWBOP's largest annual events for our youngest athletes (Grades 7–14). This report summarises participation at the 2026 Championships, held at Porritt Stadium on 14–15 March 2026, and compares it against the 2025 Championships (15 March 2025) to track trends in engagement across our region.

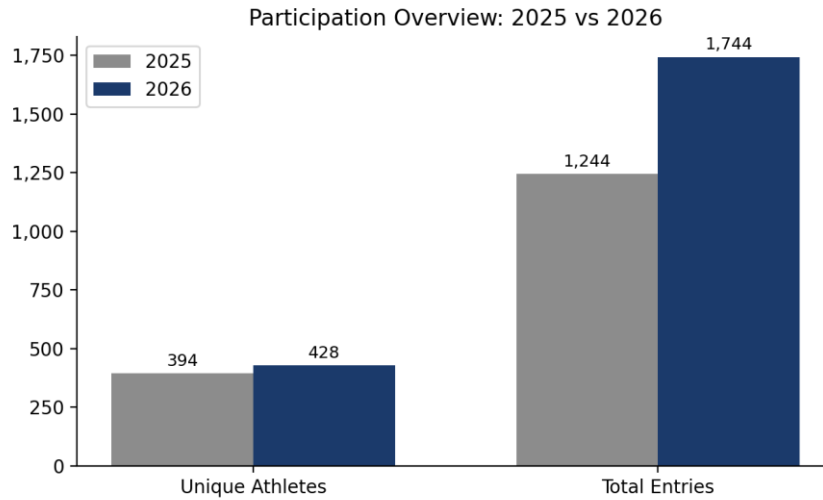
In 2026, 428 unique athletes from 21 member clubs made a combined 1,744 event entries — an increase of 9% in athletes and 40% in entries compared with 2025 (394 athletes, 1,244 entries from 22 clubs). On average, athletes competed in 4.07 events each in 2026, up from 3.16 in 2025.

2026 Championships At a Glance

- 428 unique athletes competed (394 in 2025, +9%)
- 1,744 total event entries recorded (1,244 in 2025, +40%)
- 21 member clubs represented, spanning the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions
- Gender split close to even: 207 boys / 205 girls
- Average of 4 events per athlete, reflecting strong multi-event participation

Participation Overview

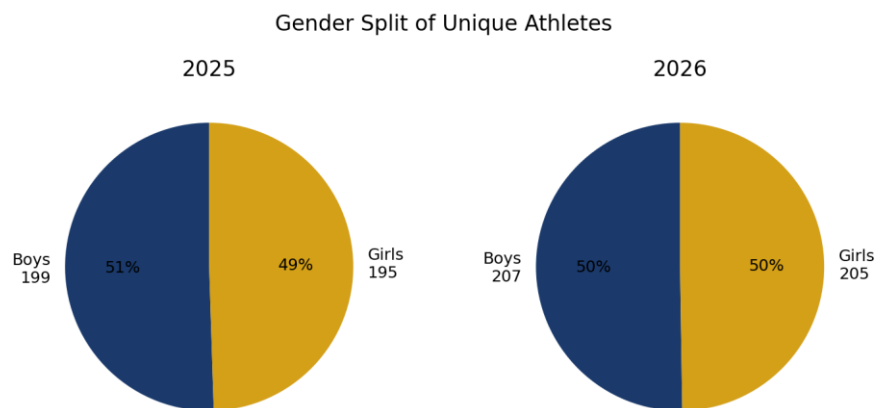
The participation figures below reflect the total number of individual athletes who competed, and the total number of event entries made (an athlete entering multiple events, such as a sprint and a jump, is counted once per event).



Metric	2025	2026	Change
Unique athletes	394	428	+9%
Total event entries	1,244	1,744	+40%
Events contested	108	172	+64
Member clubs represented	22	21	-1
Avg. events per athlete	3.16	4.07	+0.91

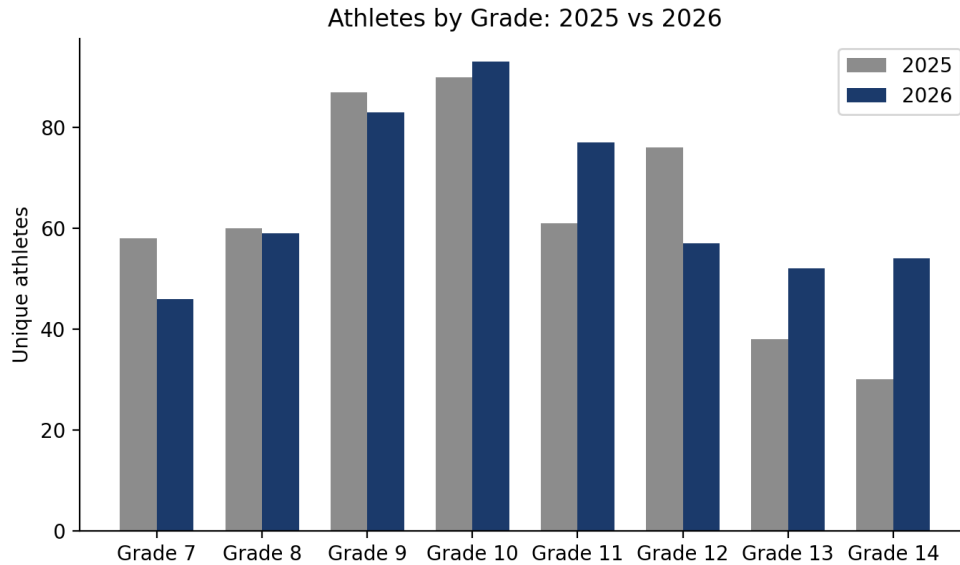
Gender Split

Participation was close to evenly split between boys and girls in both years. In 2026, boys made up 48% of unique athletes and girls 48%, consistent with the 2025 split (51% boys / 49% girls).



Participation by Grade

Athletes compete in age-based grades from Grade 7 (youngest) through to Grade 14 (oldest). Comparing grade-level participation year-on-year helps track how well AWBOP is retaining athletes as they move through the age groups, and identify grades that may need extra encouragement to attend.

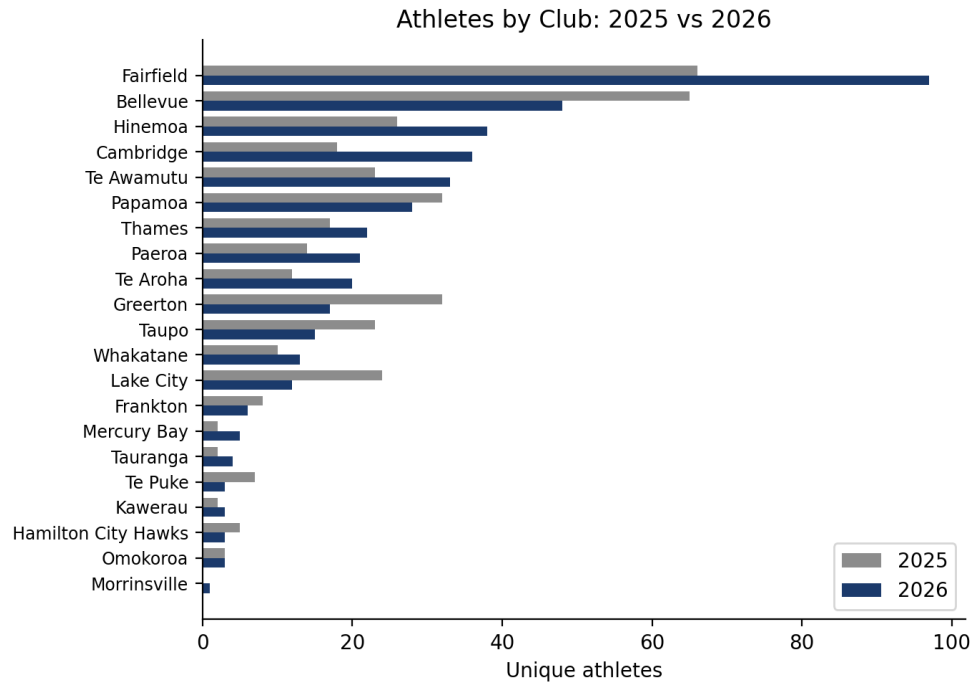


Grade	2025 Athletes	2026 Athletes	Change
Grade 7	58	46	-12
Grade 8	60	59	-1
Grade 9	87	83	-4
Grade 10	90	93	+3
Grade 11	61	77	+16
Grade 12	76	57	-19
Grade 13	38	52	+14
Grade 14	30	54	+24

The largest gains were seen in the older grades (12–14), where 2026 athlete numbers rose noticeably against a relatively small 2025 base — a positive sign for retention of athletes into their teenage years. The younger grades (7–9) remain the largest cohorts by volume in both years, reflecting strong entry-level participation into the sport.

Participation by Club

Athletes from 21 member clubs competed at the 2026 Championships. The table below is ordered by 2026 athlete numbers and shows each club's year-on-year change.



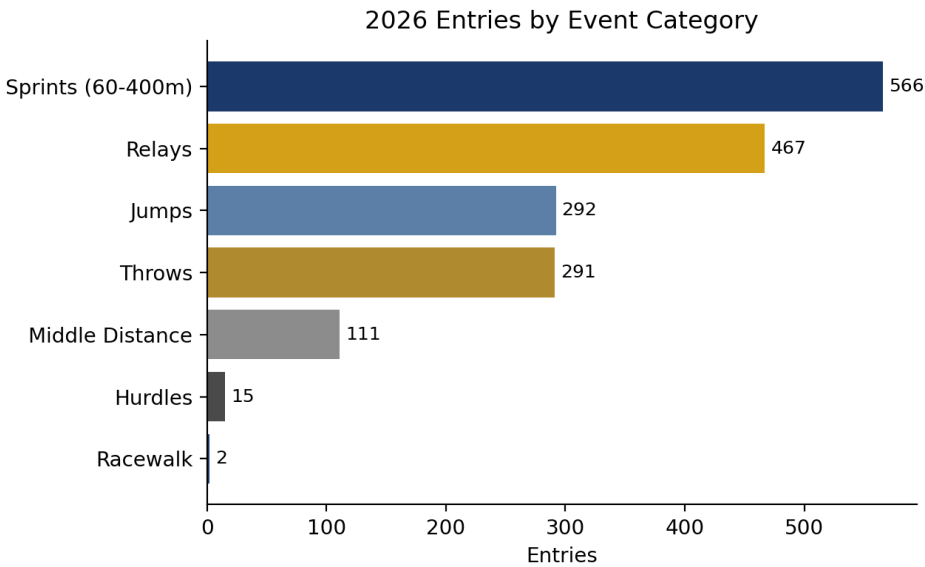
Club	2025 Athletes	2026 Athletes	Change	2026 Entries
Fairfield	66	97	+31	468
Bellevue	65	48	-17	240
Hinemoa	26	38	+12	57
Cambridge	18	36	+18	153
Te Awamutu	23	33	+10	150
Papamoa	32	28	-4	116
Thames	17	22	+5	102
Paeroa	14	21	+7	118
Te Aroha	12	20	+8	72
Greerton	32	17	-15	59
Taupo	23	15	-8	53
Whakatane	10	13	+3	44
Lake City	24	12	-12	34
Frankton	8	6	-2	14
Mercury Bay	2	5	+3	15
Tauranga	2	4	+2	10
Te Puke	7	3	-4	7
Kawerau	2	3	+1	12
Hamilton City Hawks	5	3	-2	6

Club	2025 Athletes	2026 Athletes	Change	2026 Entries
Omokoroa	3	3	+0	11
Morrinsville	0	1	+1	3

Fairfield and Bellevue were the two largest contributing clubs by athlete numbers in both years. Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Te Aroha each showed strong growth in 2026. Morrinsville athletes are recorded competing at the 2026 Championships for the first time in this dataset, while Ngatea and Tokoroa, represented in 2025, do not appear in the 2026 results — clubs may wish to follow up directly with these communities to understand any barriers to attendance.

Participation by Event Category

Entries span five core disciplines — sprints, middle distance, hurdles, jumps and throws — plus relay events. The 2026 results include 4x100m and Sprint Medley Relay (SMR) events; the 2025 results used for this report did not include relay results, so relay entries cannot be compared year-on-year.



Category	2025 Entries	2026 Entries
Sprints (60-400m)	527	566
Middle Distance	129	111
Hurdles	29	15
Racewalk	0	2
Jumps	253	292
Throws	306	291
Relays	0	467

Sprints remain the most popular category by entries in both years, followed by throws and jumps. Relays were a significant contributor to overall entry growth in 2026, accounting for 467 entries across 39 grade/gender events, introducing a valuable team-based, whole-club experience alongside individual event.

Conclusion

The 2026 Children's Track & Field Championships showed strong growth against 2025, with more athletes, more entries per athlete, and the introduction of relay events adding a new team dimension to the Championships. Club representation remained broad across the region, and gender participation continues to be well balanced. Continued engagement with clubs on the fringe of attendance — including those who competed in 2025 but not 2026 — may help sustain this growth into 2027.