YDL Athlete Satisfaction Survey Analysis

Based on the responses in YDL Athlete Satisfaction Survery Submissions 2026-09-04 1.csv, 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. 1

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.

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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.

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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.

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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]

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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.

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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.

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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.
