

SOUTH-WEST DISTRICT CROSS-COUNTRY RELAY CHAMPIONSHIP
DAM PARK, AYR, 3 NOVEMBER, 1973
(REPORT BY DEREK PARKER)

HISTORY WAS MADE at Dam Park, Ayr, when Paisley Harriers won the South-West District cross-country relay championship for the first time since the contest's inception almost half a century ago.

The race itself was one of the most exciting in recent years, and the lead changed several times as each of the 16 teams forward at the start strove for positions of vantage at the end of every lap. The trail, which lay through the wooded policies and grounds of the park, provided an interesting challenge for the competitors, and right from the beginning, it was clear that the pace for the 2½ miles course was going to be fast. Straight out into the front went Irvine's Brian Morrison, and he proceeded to open up a big gap between himself and the other athletes as he sped round the circuit in a determined fashion. When Morrison clocked in at the first changeover, his time was a remarkable 12 minutes 28 seconds, and this was to give the Ayrshire lad the honour of recording the fastest lap of the day. Nearly half a minute elapsed before the main body of the contestants came into view, and the leaders of this group were Jim Golder of Beith (12.55); former Scottish half mile champion Dick Hodelet of Glenpark (12.57); Matt Pollard of Wellpark (13.11); Andy Law of IBM (13.14); and David Harvey of Paisley (13.16).

The race was now on in earnest as the favourites set about reducing the leeway between themselves and the Irvine man, who was, at that stage, well out in front. This they were not long in doing, and at the end of the second lap it was young Danny Gormley of Greenock Glenpark who handed over in first place to John Hoyer in the creditable time of 13 minutes 24 seconds. He was followed home by Paisley skipper Brian Gardner, whose clocking of 13 minutes 9 seconds had carried his team from sixth to second position, while not far behind was Jim Swindell of Beith.

At that point it seemed that the race for the honours lay among these three clubs, but Cameron Spence of IBM had other ideas. Setting himself manfully to what looked like an impossible task, the Greenock man threaded his way right through the field, overhauled everybody, and came storming in at the finish to give his side a comfortable lead. What Brian Morrison had done for Irvine, Spence had done for IBM, and his time of 12 minutes 39 seconds was the third fastest of the afternoon. Willie Stoddart of Wellpark had also put in a sterling performance, and he handed over in second place, a short distance ahead of Jim Sloss of Beith and Robert Collins of Paisley, to put yet another Greenock club in contention for the title.

Everything now hinged on the anchor runners of each team, and as the leading quartette vanished out of sight and into the trees, it was anyone's guess who would be the first to emerge on the path that brought competitors back to the end of the trail. There was plenty of excitement out on the course, however, for the Beith and Paisley contestants, A.McMaster and Charlie McAlinden, had passed the IBM and Wellpark pair and were battling it out for the lead. Twice McAlinden went into the front, only to lose vital ground by overshooting the turning points and having to return and fight his way back into the front. At the finish, there was just two seconds between both athletes, but it was the Paisley man, who is a former Irish 880 yards champion and an ex-holder of the Scottish marathon title, who managed to summon the burst necessary to give his side their historic victory. Third were Greenock Wellpark, and they were followed home by IBM and Glenpark; Ayr Seaforth, who had held the title for the past two seasons,

finished a disappointing sixth, though they did have a little consolation when their fourth-lap runner, John Ferguson clocked 12 minutes 38 seconds for his circuit, thus giving him the second best time of the day.

Results: 1. Paisley Harriers 52.55 (D.Harvey 13.16, B.Gardner 13.09, R.Collins 13.24, C.McAlinden 13.06); 2. Beith Harriers 52.57 (J.Golder 12.55, J.Swindell 13.35, J.Sloss, 13.16, A.McMaster 13.11); 3. Wellpark 53.08 (M.Pollard 13.11, G.Gaffney, 13.31, W.Stoddart 12.49, T.Anderson, 13.37); 4. IBM 53.35; 5. Glenpark 53.47; 6. Ayr Seaforth 54.27.

ALAN SCALLY MEMORIAL RACE

BAILLIESTON, GLASGOW - 27th OCTOBER, 1973

The Annual Alan Scally memorial race - a road relay of 4 x 5 mile laps was won once again by Shettleston Harriers who, incidentally, have won it every year. Possibly the hero of the race was Lachie Stewart who ran the second leg for Shettleston and brought his team from 13th place to first. They had slipped back to 2nd place at the end of the third leg but there was little danger as Norman Morrison took over in the last leg and, running very strongly, brought his team back into first position.

TEAM RESULT

1. SHETTLESTON HARRIERS	92.34
2. EDINBURGH SOUTHERN HARRIERS	93.20
3. VICTORIA PARK AC.	93.36
4. GLASGOW UNIVERSITY	93.59
5. STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY	95.17
6. EDINBURGH AAC	95.35
7. EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY	96.13

FASTEST LAPS

1. ANDY MCKEAN, ED. AAC	22.06
2. D. LOGUE, STRATHCLYDE	22.11
3. NORMAN MORRISON, SHETTLESTON H.	22.22
4. LACHIE STEWART, SHETTLESTON H.	22.23

NORTH OF SCOTLAND CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE

1st RACE AT FORRES - 27th OCTOBER, 1973 5 MILES
(Report by Duncan Davidson)

1. I.McKenzie (Forres Harriers) 27:02;	2. D.McLean (Forres H) 27:25;	3. D.Parker (RAF Lossiemouth) 28:01;	4. W.Nicholson (RAF Kinloss) 28:12;	5. M.Scott (Forres H) 28:30;	6. B.Rigby (RAF K) 29:05;	7. I.Johnston (RAF K) 29:20;	8. G.Fleming (RAF K) 29:49;	9. A.Pratt (RAF K) 30:09;	10. B.McKenzie (RAF L) 30:09;	11. D.Davidson (Forres H) 30:37;	12. W.Elliott (Forres H) 30:58;	13. J.Lowrey (RAF L) 31:06;	14. C.Jarvie (Lochaber AC) 31:59;	15. D.Bow (RAF K) 32:39;	16. T.Hutton (Lochaber AC) 32:54;	17. Lawson (RAF K) 33:59;	18. R.Tindall (RAF L) 36:16;	19. Irving (RAF L) 37:44.
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5 MILES

TEAM RESULT

1. Forres Harriers	385 pts;
2. RAF Kinloss	379;
3. RAF Lossiemouth	360;
4. Lochaber AC	172.

Four runners counted for the team score.

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SPENCE OF SPANGO IS FASTEST

(Report by DEREK PARKER)

SOUTH WEST CROSS-COUNTRY RELAY CHAMPIONSHIP AT LINWOOD, RENFREWSHIRE, 2 NOVEMBER, 1974

THE soft, green fields of Linwood Moss made a picturesque setting for the South West cross-country relay championships on November 2, and although it had been wet and windy in the morning, the weather cleared by the afternoon, allowing the races to take place in warm, autumn sunshine. The main event of the day was the senior contest held over four laps of approximately two miles, and right from the start it was obvious that competition was going to be keen. Before long, the representatives of some twenty teams were strung widely out across the countryside as the fast, flat course began to take its toll, and excitement was heightened by the fact that spectators were able to watch the entire race from several points of vantage. The man who made the early running was Dick Hodel of Greenock Glenpark, and the former Scottish half-mile champion showed that he has lost none of his zest for the sport by recording the third best time of the afternoon and giving his club a good lead at the end of the first stage. Next to hand was young Alan Gourlay of Belth Harriers, whose 11.17 clocking was only nine seconds slower than Hodel's, and he was followed by Gerry Gaffney of Wellpark, and Jim Swindle of Ayrshire AAC, who both stopped the watches at 11.38. Belth's Tom Cochran quickly set about overhauling John Hoey, and the former Scottish cross-country international revealed some of the form which earned him seven South West district championships between 1960 and 1969 by passing his Greenock rival and building up a big lead for his club. Meanwhile, further back, Ayrshire's Jim Hodel was also gaining ground on athletes ahead of him, and by the end of the second lap the first four past the post were Cochran (11.12), Golder (11.40), Cameron Spence of Spango Valley (10.40), and David Stoddart of Wellpark (11.15). Spence's time, in particular, was one for the connoisseur, and proved to be easily the fastest of the day. From front, the race was really coming to the boil, with a mighty tussle developing between Belth's Jim Sloss and Ayrshire's Ian Kerr. At one stage, it seemed certain that Sloss would have to give way to his younger opponent, but gamely he resisted the challenge and drew steadily away over the last 100 yards to hand over a slight lead to colleague Kenny Phillips. Former Scottish marathon champion Willie Stoddart had brought Wellpark back into contention with a good lap lasting 11 minutes 24 seconds while further back Spango Valley and Glenpark were fighting it out for fourth place. With only one lap to go the race was building up to an exciting climax, but with former South West junior champion John Ferguson running the last stage for Ayrshire, the outcome of the contest was never in doubt. It took the Ayrshire man only 10 minutes 57 seconds to complete his circuit and anchor his team to a well-deserved victory in 45 minutes 3 seconds, giving them the South West relay title at their very first attempt. A fine Wellpark in 46 minutes 19 seconds while Belth, who had two former members competing for the newly-founded victorious Ayrshire squad, had to be content with third place in 46 minutes 50 seconds. Fourth were Ayrshire's 'B' team, fifth Paisley, the holders of the title, and sixth and seventh respectively Spango Valley and Glenpark. Ayrshire's youths' side won the 3 by 1½-miles' championship, while Greenock Glenpark provided the winners of both the senior boys' and junior boys' team titles.

ATHLETICS IN SCOTLAND

A Handsome male athlete, Rocky Smash, may become the first man to contest the Scottish Women's Amateur Athletic Association 100 metres hurdles at Meadowbank next year. It will be the first time that "a mere male" has invaded this traditional women's preserve. Rocky, a rugged shot putter/pole vaulter, whose Grecian features have graced many athletics meetings up and down his native South Ronaldsay, told our society editor (during a TV press conference) that he can scarcely contain himself until the great day. He stresses however that he will only compete if he can shed the few extra stones he has put on since becoming addicted to Mistress Brown's home baked bannocks last year. He said "I wrote to the race organiser, Hilda Hurdle, enclosing a recent Daguerreotype to ask if I might compete. To my intense delight she replied that, after considering the publicity potential, the answer was in the affirmative". When informed of Rocky's intentions, current champion Racquel English who is way out in front of the others said, "What a lovely surprise for the girls. We will give Rocky a real Meadowbank welcome. He can certainly share my soap in the showers afterwards". A top official of Meadowbank Shamrock Football Club said that his players had no objections for the race taking place, as long as it is run in a month without an 'R' in it and before 6 a.m. on a Friday. Rocky, whose great-grandmother won the "Throwing the Donal Dinnie Stone over the River Dee" at the Aboyne Games two years ago, plans to intensify his already rigorous training schedule. In addition to running up and down hills with a sheep under each arm he will add hurdles to the ten mile route. Yes, here is a remarkable man who will add lustre to the SWAA Championships.

THE SILLY SEASON

(Following a recent all-eclipsing report in the national press and television that an attractive young lady from Australia has entered the New Year Professional Sprint at Meadowbank in January we report another first - this time in women's athletics) Results: Senior 4 x 2½ Miles 1. Ayrshire AAC 45.03 (J. Swindle 11.38, J. Golder 11.10, I. Kerr 11.18, J. Ferguson 10.57, 2. Wellpark 46.19 (G. Gaffney 11.38, D. Stoddart 11.15, W. Stoddart 11.24, T. Anderson 12.02); 3. Belth Harriers 46.50 (A. Gourlay 11.17, T. Cochran 11.12, J. Sloss 11.33, K. Phillips 12.48). Youths 3 x 1½ Miles 1. Ayrshire AAC 28.33 (R. Thomson 9.34, G. Grant 9.24, B. Aird 9.35; 2. Eastwood High School; 3. Greenock Glenpark. Senior Boys 3 x 1½ Miles 1. Greenock Glenpark 30.43 (A. Black 9.58, T. Black 10.33, E. McDonald 10.12); 2. Paisley Harriers; 3. Eastwood High School. Junior Boys 3 x 1½ Miles 1. Greenock Glenpark 35.53 (J. Reddie 12.27, R. McDonald 11.19, G. Wohl Gemuth 12.77) 2. Ayrshire AAC.

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