

NATIONAL NOVICE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The National Novice Cross-Country Championships were held at Pollok Estate, on November 23rd, over a five-mile course.

The worst possible weather prevailed, but even the heavy rain and sodden greasy conditions could not damp the ardour of runners and spectators who were rewarded by a most engrossing race over a two-lap course.

There was a magnificent entry of 35 clubs, comprising 280 runners, and they made a grand array lined up for the start.

Though it was a Novice race, the runners were not all entirely inexperienced. Many of them were well-known and had won honours in the past, in track races and youths' events.

Prior to the start J. Stuart (Shettleston Harriers) and J. Fleming (Motherwell Y.M.C.A.) were joint favourites, but while the runners were stripping a meeting was held and it was announced that James Fleming would not be allowed to compete. The announcement came as a great surprise to everyone, but to none more so than Fleming, who had been unaware of any irregularity in his entry. James Fleming, then, won honours for which he did not need to compete, for despite his great disappointment he displayed himself with character and forbearance in the tradition of a true sportsman. We admired his ability to be affable with all present, under the circumstances, for his heart had been set on putting up a great show in the race.

In the early stages of the race Mathieson (Maryhill H.) took the lead and at half-distance was about 20 yds. in front of a group of runners which included Stuart.

Mathieson really looked good but so did the bunch at his back. The leaders weathered the first lap well and it was obvious that the last lap would be a "killer."

Stuart, who seemed to be running to plan, and with judgement and confidence closed up on Mathieson, taking J. Smart (Edinburgh Southern H.), P. Donnachie (Dundee Thistle H.), J. Adams (Victoria Park) and R. Smith (Garscube) with him.

Stuart and Smart eventually got out in front. With half-a-mile to go Smart forced a two-yard lead and it was "anybody's" race. Stuart, approaching the uphill finish and still running in confident style despite his struggle with Smart, then started a real romping finish in classic style and was warmly greeted by the spectators as he broke the tape.

Smart, tired out after a very game race, was runner-up. Those "Siamese Twins," Adams and Smith finished third and fourth, respectively, having passed Phil Donnachie in the run-in. Mathieson was sixth though, if he had taken an easier first lap, it is possible he would have been farther up.

The race must have been one of the closest ever—a mere 17 secs. covering

Stuart, the winner, from Mathieson in sixth place.

In the team race, Vale of Leven A.A.C., very wisely had their counting four running as a unit, and they well deserved victory with the low count of 51 points, beating the Eastern challenge of Edinburgh Southern Harriers by 17 points. Always a force in team races, Shettleston were third with 78 points.

A special mention of R. G. Strachan (Edinburgh Rover Scouts) who running as an individual finished eighth.

It was grand to witness such enthusiasm for the race. The sport is certainly flourishing when one considers the entry of clubs that travelled far distances, such as Aberdeen University Hares and Hounds, Doon Harriers, Dundee Thistle Harriers, the Edinburgh clubs, and new and revived clubs as Johnstone Y.M.C.A. Harriers, West Kilbride A.A.C., and Kirkcaldy Y.M.C.A. Harriers.

The intense exuberance of the 280 runners was matched by the lusty enthusiasm of a large number of supporters and it was most pleasing to see the reappearance of many well-known faces in cross-country circles.

Detailed results:—

Individual placings—1, J. Stuart Shettleston H.) 25min., 53 sec.; 2, J. Smart (Edinburgh Southern H.); 3, J. Adams (Victoria Park); 4, R. Smith (Garscube H.); 5, P. Donnachie (Dundee This.); 6, R. Mathieson (Maryhill H.)

First 15 team placings—1, Vale of Leven (Getty 11, Cole 12, Campbell 13, Gallacher 15) 51 pts.; 2, Edinburgh Southern H. (Smart 2, Smith 18, Mitchell 22, Pearson 26) 68 pts.; Shettleston H. (Stuart 1, Agnew 17, Burns 24, McLaren 36) 78 pts.; 4th and 5th equal, Greenock Wellpark (10, 32, 38, 75) 155 pts.; St. Modan's H.S.F.P. (14, 18, 60, 63) 155 pts.; 6, Victoria Park A.A.C. (3, 23, 52, 78) 156 pts.; 7, Garscube Harriers (4, 20, 54, 86) 164 pts.; 8, Maryhill H. (6, 19, 51, 89) 165 pts.; 9, Bellahouston H. (8, 16, 70, 84) 178 pts.; 10, West Kilbride A.A.C. (34, 41, 43, 72) 190 pts.; 11, Glasgow University H. & H. (28, 53, 56, 57) 194 pts.; 12, Clydesdale H. (9, 49, 59, 79) 196 pts.; 13, Kirkcaldy Y.M.C.A. H. (25, 35, 37, 113) 210 pts.; 14, Edinburgh University H. & H. (29, 48, 81, 100) 258 pts.; 15, Doon H. (46, 82, 85, 106).

Team Contest for Vale of Leven

J. Stuart (Shettleston Harriers) won the national novice five miles cross-country championship at Pollok Estate, Glasgow, on Saturday by 40 yards in the fine time of 25min. 53sec. He was followed home by J. Smart (Edinburgh Southern) and J. Adam (Victoria Park), in that order.

At the half-distance Stuart was running second at the heels of R. Matheson (Maryhill), followed by R. Smith (Garscube). Over the last couple of miles the Shettleston runner went to the front, although once or twice he was seriously challenged by Smart. In the end Stuart's superior stamina over the sodden course prevailed.

The team race was won by Vale of Leven. They packed extremely well and beat Edinburgh Southern by a margin of 17 points, with Shettleston Harriers third. Thirty-five clubs were represented. Details:—

Individual championship—1. J. Stuart (Shettleston), 25min. 53sec.; 2. J. Smart (Edinburgh Southern), 26min. 1sec.; 3. J. Adam (Victoria Park), 26min. 2sec.; 4. R. Smith (Garscube), 26min. 3sec.; 5. P. Donnachie (Dundee Thistle), 26min. 8sec.; 6. R. Matheson (Maryhill), 26min. 10sec.

Team contest—1. Vale of Leven 11. R. Coll 12. A. Campbell 13. W. Gallacher 15; 51 points; 2. Edinburgh Southern, 68; 3. Shettleston, 78; 4. (equal), Greenock Cleapark and St. Modans, 155; 6. Victoria Park, 186.