

Aberdeen Are Pushed All The Way

THE 46th annual Edinburgh to Glasgow Road Relay, sponsored this year by Barr's Irn Bru on November 16th, saw a well balanced Aberdeen team, consisting of four of the original team of 1983 — Graham Laing, Fraser Clyne, Mike Murray and Colin Youngson — and supported by Ray Creswell, Jim Doig and the Welsh pair of Simon Axon and Chris Hall, repeat their victory of that year. However, the team from the north of Scotland was pushed all the way by Cambuslang and Spango Valley until the final leg, when 39-year-old Youngson, competing in his 20th Edinburgh to Glasgow, put the issue beyond any doubt. Cambuslang, who were never out of the frame during the race, had to settle for second spot for the third time in six years, while the valiant and luckless Spango Valley had third placed medals snatched from them on the final stage by a strangely stuttering Edinburgh Southern outfit. This year's American guests, Massachusetts Striders, did not make the same impact as last year's victorious star-studded 'Kangaroos', but nonetheless finished a creditable sixth, supplying two of the fastest stages.

David Cooney Reporting

Stage One

Given the windy conditions, the field of 22 stayed together for much longer than usual until an injection of pace by 'super-Vet' Adrian Weatherhead broke up the main pack, taking Paul Dugdale, Jim Orr and promising Junior Mark Wallace with him, while, unexpectedly, track stars Tom Hanlon and Brian Scalley dropped back. On the final uphill drag to the finish Motherwell's Dugdale (28:06) used his hill running experience to good advantage to prise open a four seconds lead over Edinburgh AC's Weatherhead, with Cambuslang only two seconds adrift and Victoria Park a further five seconds behind.

Fastest: P. Dugdale (Moth) 28:06; A. Weatherhead (EAC) 28:10; J. Orr (Cam) 28:12; M. Wallace (VP) 28:17; J. Murphy (US) 28:25; C. Ross (Dund) 28:30.

Stage Two

Stevie Marshall (31:10) ran a lonely leg to keep Motherwell to the fore, with Cambuslang's Eddie Stewart (31:11), who had been equally isolated, just being pipped on the run-in by Dundee's Richie Barrie (30:51); while Springburn's Graham Crawford was only a second in arrears having posted the fastest stage time of 30:44. Meanwhile Simon Axon (31:00)



Four of the fastest five men on the second stage of the Edinburgh-Glasgow Road Relay. From left: Simon Axon, Graham Crawford, Peter Conaghan and Richie Barrie.

Photo: Graham MacIndoe

had slotted Aberdeen into a menacing fifth spot ahead of Spango Valley, who likewise had edged forward through the maturing Peter Conaghan (30:58).

Fastest: G. Crawford (S'burn) 30:44; T. Murray (G. G'park) 30:50; R. Barrie (Dund) 30:51; P. Conaghan (SV) 30:58; S. Axon (A'deen) 31:00; S. Marshall (Moth) 31:10.

Stage Three

On the shortest but hilliest section of the course, Jim Doig (26:42) underlined Aberdeen's resolve to reclaim the title as he swept them into first place, but not without a fight from Cambuslang's Tom Ulliott (27:01), who finished a close second 40 seconds ahead of Spango Valley, for whom Terry Wilkie had contributed a useful 27:24 stint. Edinburgh AC were

handily placed in fourth thanks to David Marr (27:17), followed by Dundee Hawkhill, while Richard Ovian, with the fastest clocking of 26:38, eased the Americans into sixth in front of Springburn and Edinburgh Southern, whose cause had been advanced four places by former Cambuslang runner Rod Stone (27:26).

Fastest: R. Ovian (US) 26:38; J. Doig (A'deen) 26:42; T. Ulliott (Cam) 27:01; D. Marr (EAC) 27:17; T. Wilkie (SV) 27:24; R. Stone (ESH) 27:26.

Stage Four

The lead was to change hands once more as Spango Valley played their ace card in Chris Robison. In spite of earlier injury problems, the Royal Navy runner (28:25) drew upon his considerable experience to gain a 30 seconds advantage at the halfway stage over Cambuslang's RAF athlete Callum Murray (29:37), who in turn had overhauled Ray Creswell (29:57), with Southern now fourth and seemingly on the comeback trail due to an inspired Craig Hunter (28:15).

Fastest: C. Hunter (ESH) 28:15; C. Robison (SV) 28:25; J. Dingwall (FVH) 29:14; K. Mortimer (EAC) 29:36; G. Bell (Dund) & D. Donnet (S'burn) 29:39.

Stage Five

At the changeover just outside the popular Forestfield Inn, Spango still had their nose in front, but by only two seconds from Aberdeen, with Cambuslang a further 21 seconds down. The experienced Graham Laing (29:33) had used Charlie Thomson (30:07) as a stepping stone to reel in Stephen Conaghan (30:14), but although ultimately dropping his Cambuslang opponent, he could not shake off his persistent Spango Valley rival who just managed to oust him at the finish. Unfortunately for the defending champions their counter attack was again in jeopardy with new recruit from Falkirk, Gary Grindlay (30:38), 'dying' in the latter stages having tried to pull back the deficit much too quickly.

Fastest: A. Walker (Tev) 29:22; G. Laing (A'deen) 29:33; F. Ritchie (US) 30:06; C. Thomson (Cam) 30:07; S. Conaghan (SV) 30:14; C. Wallace (Kilb) 30:18.

Stage Six

If Southern were to have any chance of winning, nothing short of a superlative run from John Robson was required on the longest stage, into Airdrie. Although Robson duly returned the day's fastest time of 34:43, the capital's team were still only fourth, 49 seconds behind the leaders, Aberdeen (Fraser Clyne 35:08), with Cambuslang once more second and only eight seconds adrift thanks to an excellent 34:55 from Alec Gilmour. Other noteworthy sub-36 minutes contributions, apart from Nat Muir (35:59), who seemed to be only going through the motions, came from Charlie Haskett, Hammy Cox, Peter Fleming (35:36) and Robert Hawkins (35:51).

Fastest: J. Robson (ESH) 34:43; A. Gilmour (Cam) 34:55; F. Clyne (A'deen) 35:08; C. Haskett (Dund) 35:17; H. Cox (G. G'park) 35:20; L. Spence (SV) 35:29.

Stage Seven

Mike Murray (27:17) gained Aberdeen further valuable ground, while Cambuslang (Dave Lang) 27:42) and Spango (Eddie McKee 27:20) exchanged positions yet again; but Southern surprisingly lost their forward momentum (Alec Robertson 27:27). An eye-catching 26:37 from Jack Marinilli nudged the Americans into fifth position, with Ian Johnstone (27:12) providing the best domestic effort to gain two places for Falkirk.

Fastest: J. Marinilli (US) 26:37; I. Johnstone (FVH) 27:12; M. Murray (A'deen) 27:17; D. Cavers (Tev) 27:19; E. McKee (SV) 27:20; C. Armstrong (North Select) 27:34.

Stage Eight

At last the colour and distribution of medals would be decided. Although Aberdeen were in the driving seat 22 and 33 seconds ahead of Spango and Cambuslang, there was still a possibility that the stage record holder, Andy Beattie, could snatch the race for the Lanarkshire club. However, as events turned out, former Scottish marathon champion Colin Youngson, true to his normal Edinburgh to Glasgow form, promptly settled the matter by serving up the day's fastest clocking of 27:37 to anchor Aberdeen to a clear cut victory over Cambuslang (Beattie 28:10), with Southern, through Alan Robson (28:04), depriving the Renfrewshire side of the 'bronze' medals. John McGarva (28:44) secured fifth spot for Falkirk from the Americans in the race to the line ahead of the consistent Dundee and Edinburgh AC squads, while ninth placed Teviotdale gained the award for the most meritorious performance.

Fastest: C. Youngson (A'deen) 27:37; A. Robson (ESH) 28:04; A. Beattie (Cam) 28:10; R. Arbuckle (North Select) 28:37; J. McGarva (FVH) 28:44; K. Newberry (Moth) 29:03.

1. Aberdeen.....3:55:49
(C. Hall 28:35; S. Axon 31:00, J. Doig 26:42, R. Creswell 29:57, G. Laing 29:33, F. Clyne 35:08, M. Murray 27:17, C. Youngson 27:37)

2. Cambuslang.....3:56:55
(J. Orr 28:12, E. Stewart 31:11, T. Ulliott 27:01, C. Murray 29:37, C. Thomson 30:07, A. Gilmour 34:55, D. Lang 27:42, A. Beattie 28:10)

3. Edinburgh Southern.....3:57:45
(T. Hanlon 28:33, I. Steel 32:09, R. Stone 27:26, C. Hunter 28:15, G. Grindlay 30:38, J. Robson 34:43, A. Robertson 27:57, A. Robson 28:04)

4. Spango Valley 3:59:15 (C. Leck 28:44, P. Conaghan 30:58, T. Wilkie 27:24, C. Robison 28:25, S. Conaghan 30:14, L. Spence 35:29, E. McKee 27:20, J. Brown 30:41);

5. Falkirk Victoria 4:00:38 (P. Faulds 28:57, J. Pentecost 31:36, M. Coyne 27:47, J. Dingwall 29:14, D. Gibson 31:02, D. Bain 36:06, I. Johnstone 27:12, J. McGarva 28:44); 6,

Massachusetts Striders (US) 4:00:46 (J. Murphy 28:25, R. Stirrat 32:12, R. Ovian 26:38, C. Fleischman 30:47, F. Ritchie 30:06, R. Doiron 36:28, J. Marinilli 26:37, S. Hulme 29:33); 7, Dundee Hh. 4:02:06; 8, Edinburgh AC 4:03:22; 9, Teviotdale 4:03:49; 10, Bellahouston 4:04:09; 11, Kilbarchan 4:04:40; 12, Greenock Glenpark 4:05:20; 13, Springburn 4:05:32; 14, Shettleston 4:05:57; 15, Motherwell YMCA 4:06:30; 16, North Select 4:07:51; 17, Victoria Park 4:08:51; 18, E. Kilbride 4:09:28; 19, Clydesdale 4:13:14; 20, Ayr Seaforth 4:14:27; 21, Calderglen 4:17:56; 22, Glasgow Univ. 4:19:57.