

Scottish Cross Country Championships

Falkirk 21/2/2010

Referee's Report

Ron Morrison

This year we were blessed with excellent weather for the Championships with the going hard in the first races turning to softish in the later ones. A bright sky with the temperature remaining at about 3C provided a great day for cross country running.

The course set up was excellent as usual as was the branding for the title and Grand Prix sponsor Stewarts.

Pre Race Action

- 1 Aisling McGhee of VP-City of Glasgow requested a late entry as a non-counter to the event through the National Endurance manager. As with all such requests I refused entry on the grounds that, no matter how unintentional, non-counting athletes may interfere with others who are competing in the team race.
- 2 Beth Potter VP-City of Glasgow requested permission to run in the Senior Women's race rather than the U20 event. This I again refused on the grounds that athletes have always as far as I know been made to run in the correct age group. Furthermore UKA Rule 507(v) applies. I did have sympathy with this request in that it is only since 2000 that U20 women have run with the U17s. Prior to that they ran with the Seniors.
- 3 There was a clerical error with the VP-City of Glasgow U17W entry. They sent their entries, including the above, electronically in good time and followed up with paper copies. The paper entry did not have the U17W. I ruled that the electronic version was made in good faith and allowed the entry to be added to the programme. Unfortunately this caused a little problem with the results as they were initially missed out of the team calculation because of the new numbers. The team medals will have to be recovered and re-presented.
- 4 Orlando Edwards, Hunters Bog Trotters, was spotted as an entrant in the team race. Eventually, after much discussion with Mike Johnston and Alex Jackson, we decided that the entry was legal but against the intention of the new set of eligibility rules. These are:

“To compete in Open team competition in Scotland athletes must fulfill at least one of the following:

- (a) (Been born in Scotland or have one parent born in Scotland) and have declared their availability for selection for Scotland, or
- (b) Have continuous residence in Scotland for at least 3 months prior to the competition, or
- (c) Be in full-time education in Scotland, or
- (d) Have represented Scotland in International competition, or
- (e) Have previously competed for a Scottish club in team competition.”

There are 2 loopholes here. Part (b) should have the word “immediately” inserted before “3 months”. Part (e) was intended that the athletes could only compete for the last team that they competed for legally before leaving Scotland. I suggest we add the rider “In which case the athlete may compete for the most recent such club.”

We should also ensure that these rules are now publicised.

On the Day

- 1 With a record entry and such a high quality line up, it was disappointing that the out-going and incoming CEOs were not in attendance, nor was the National Coach and the SAL Chair. It definitely gives the impression that only T&F is taken seriously. We should issue direct invitations next year.
- 2 There was a tie for the AT Mays overall trophy this year and it took some time to establish the winner. These rules would apply to the Pat Spence Trophy as well need some clarification.
- 3 The rule change of having 4 to could in the Senior women' team race had no impact on the result. There were 20 teams finishing this year as opposed to 22 last year with 184 finishers up from 142 last year. Very healthy.
- 4 The funnels operated very efficiently. Indeed despite the record number of finishers only 1 funnel was used in any race.
- 5 One athlete Francis Hooten ran through the finish funnel with no number, despite being requested not to by Alex Jackson. I approached him and ascertained he had no club, had not entered and was not a member of SAL. He became very excited shouting “You cannot stop me running” and “I know Steve Ovett” and at one time I thought he might be violent. It turns out that he is well known for his rants in the SAL office. My main concern is that unauthorised runners may cause accidents for which we have no cover.

Post Race

- 1 Rosie Smith

After the race it was discovered that Rosie Smith’s SAL membership had lapsed in November 2009. If disqualified she would lose her 3rd place medal and HBT would be relegated to 3rd place in the team race. Furthermore she would forfeit her winning score in the Grand Prix Series.

I was on holiday when Mary Anderson alerted me to this asking for advice on how to proceed. Here is what I replied.

“I wanted to get back so that I could consult the UKA Rules for Competition with regard to Rosie Smith. As I suspected it does not cover everything we need so as always I fall back on the UKA “Cross Country Event Organisation Guide”.

The latter states that the Referee shall “Declare the result of the race and winners of team and individual awards.” This I did on Saturday when Jen Jackson presented me with a copy of the results including the U17 team amendment. Since there has been no protest under UKA Rule 23, the result stands. Even if there was a protest I doubt if it could be upheld.

Why so? Well despite the sterling work of the Entries Secretary to ... “design and circulate entry forms; receive and scrutinise entries and tabulate into events;” (organisation guide) we still had some holes in our entry procedures. Jen Jackson sent out many e-mails to alert athletes that were not in our membership database. The problem being that the database is not always up-to-date. Alex Jackson, the co-convenor and myself both knew the following entry statistics.

Senior Men 90(12)677
Senior Women 40(7)280

Under 20 Men 6(1)69
 U20/17 Women N/A(0)113
 Under 17 Men 20 (4)114
 Under 15 Girls 24 (2)142
 Under 15 Boys 20(2)153
 Under 13 Girls 26(7)171
 Under13 Boys 26(3)186

The first figure is the total, either lapsed or non, the figure in () are people who have never been members, the last figure is the number entered.

We discussed these figures and allowed the entries to go forward since we wanted to avoid conflict on the day at declarations and we knew that the database may not be accurate. Furthermore we knew that the majority of the non members do not run, and we make lots of money out of this source. In effect we were complicit, for many good reasons, in allowing non-members to run.

As for the Stewart's CC Grand Prix this is a new problem since all our races have been championships and therefore I assumed, in doing the results, that everyone was an SAL member. The road race series is different and Gary checks who is a member. He has asked the Commission on clarification on exactly this point. Until now we have always received the membership renewal before awarding prizes even although it may have lapsed during the series.

This is where I hope common sense will break out. When Mary Anderson got Rosie's attention to the lack of membership, remember it only lapsed in November 2009, she paid immediately. Dqing her would I think sent the wrong message to the membership in that we want it to be seen as a service to members and not as a TAX.

So my suggestion is that she wins the Stewart's Cross Country Grand Prix as well.

I would suggest that we investigate another service to members and clubs in that we have an electronic only entry to the Championships that is linked to the database so that non/lapsed-members can be spotted immediately. That way we can save much work and have the benefit of only allowing members to enter.
Ron

PS While not a member Rosie also finished 3rd in the 4K Championship and helped HBT to 3rd place in the ED Championships. By chance I coach most of the athletes that would be moved up to medal positions if she was also Dqed from these races, Hester Dix in the 4K and the Fife AC team in the ED. I know that none of these athletes would want this nor consider it fair."

Non SAL Members running in the National Championships

Following the Championships Carol Robison and Jen Jackson compiled a list of non SAL members who completed the race.

Age Group	Entered non members	Ran non-members	Never members	Total Entries
Senior Men	90	14	12	677
Senior Women	40	4	7	280
Under 20 Men	6	0	1	69
U20/17 Women	N/A	0	0	113
Under 17 Men	20	5	4	114

Under 15 Girls	24	4	2	142
Under 15 Boys	20	3	2	153
Under 13 Girls	26	0	7	171
Under 13 Boys	26	10	3	186

The conclusion must be that when asked, athletes joined.