

Scottish Cross Country Relay Championships

Cumbernauld 22/10/2011

Referee's Report

Ron Morrison

Overall

- 1 The 2011 National Cross Country Championships provided yet another great day of cross country running. There were record entries in the Women's field and near record fields in the other races. Almost everything worked well with the experienced teams of officials co-ordinating in the manner that they have done for years. There are always a few problems in such a complex set of races but I was pleased with the manner in which the officials dealt with them. This was a very smooth running of the championships that merits congratulations to all concerned.
- 2 The success of these championships is, in no small way, due to the continued support of North Lanarkshire Council now in its 12th year. We return every year to the same challenging course that is familiar to athletes, spectators and officials alike allowing efficient racing tactics, viewing strategies and optimum course design respectively. The popularity of the event is demonstrated by the fact that nearly 1100 athletes took part in the races.
- 3 As I keep saying, one of the most important aspects at Cumbernauld is the weather and in this respect we were very lucky again. The forecast was for a major rainstorm with wind. Indeed it turned to be a most reasonable autumn day with a strong wind that the athletes had to run into on the uphill sections.
- 4 The course was soft but fair and well marked and walked before the race by the Assistant Referee, David Cairns, who made a few minor adjustments. The finish area was well constructed with the usual funnels and a flexible start area set out to be shared with the outgoing funnel. **This is an excellent course that should be retained if possible.**
- 5 All races started on time as advertised on the programme. The announcers, marksmen and starter combined well. The starts themselves caused no problems as the starting grid was large enough to cope with the numbers.
- 6 Again most difficult part of these Championships is the take-overs. Andy Law (Changeover Chief) tried a variation of the method he devised last year. With the help of Angus Cameron and David Cairns this worked as well as I have ever seen it. Some of the success is down to the athletes concentrating better. I did not get one report of a runner missing the takeover.
In the Men's race where there was an overlap outgoing 3 leg teams were separated from the outgoing 4 leg teams and started by a separate official from the main start area. This again worked well and avoided confusion.
There was however almost an incident in the Senior Men's race as 2nd and 3rd placers Shettleston H and Central AC approached the finish at the same time as Portobello AC's 3rd leg runner.
- 7 Over the years we have adopted a mechanism to allow athletes who are entered but for one reason or another cannot run in a complete team to take part without counting in the race. This year we put up notices at the declaration point to announce this and it seemed to work well.

The procedure is that the athlete reports to the Referee who instructs them to remove their number and to report to the start official who will set them off in a position that does not interfere with the race. They are instructed to drop out before the finish. A number of athletes (less than 10) were allowed to run on this basis.

In the YAF race one U13 athlete, No 82 Shettleston H, dropped. The U15 and U17 athletes in her team were allowed to run in the manner described above.

- 8 There was only one incident of a runner not running in a Club vest. This was dealt with by David Cairns who outlined the correct procedure to the athlete involved. I did the same for one athlete who ran without a number. Women's team 197, Edinburgh University H&H, also declared 2 runner who were not entered. I allowed them to run on the basis that the Club had entered enough teams and that they be taken out of the results. Given the narrow window of time for University entries I thought this a reasonable procedure.
- 9 The recording of results was excellent both in times and places and coped well with the overlap at the end of the Men's and Women's races. One very late leg 3 runner (Gala H) was recorded as a leg 4 recorder by the place recorders but not the time recorders. One of the advantages of placing the results on the Web is that everyone gets involved in scrutinising them. Within a short period of time the error was reported and the results corrected.
- 10 The on-course catering was again very good and served cheerfully.
- 11 The first-aid team were well placed for action and easily contactable. They reported a few minor injuries that they dealt with.
- 12 The results were produced efficiently and available on the SAL website early in the evening.
- 13 This year the announcers were again provided with a running order of the athletes.
- 14 I think the message of not running more than once has got through to Clubs. However the substitution of unentered athletes seems to still take place especially in minor place teams.

Last Year's Issues

- 15 The identification of Masters teams for presentations, who for some reason run with a "V" on their number, was done by the presentation official Alan Potts and work well this year. The identification of them for the competitors during the race is unsatisfactory but they do all know one another. **I still think we could present the Men's trophies and medals on the field.**
- 16 The place recorders requested that in future a sterile area is built around them to stop interference with finishing runners. This was done by Ian Hislop upon arrival.
- 17 Last year the Men's declaration sheet contained only 3 spaces instead of 4 for athletes. Corrected.
- 18 The speakers for the announcers were still placed behind the officials. However the volume was turned down and the announcer more aware of the needs of the officials.

19 There was a lot less litter this year.

Finally

The spirit of the day was captured for me by two delightful and enthusiastic young ladies from VP City of Glasgow who had been directed to me by the SAL Past President, Alan Potts. They wished in their words to “register a complaint”. They had just lost 3rd place by 6 secs and claimed that one of the teams ahead had been allowed to go early while their runner had been made to wait until the correct takeover. I explained to them how we did the takeover and how difficult it was for the officials and athletes to get it exactly correct. I also explained to them how to make a protest. While still disappointed they accepted the result and I was pleased to see their combination of determination, fairness and enthusiasm. The future of our sport is safe.

RACE OFFICIALS	
Referee	Ron Morrison
Assistant Referee	Dave Cairns
Clerk of Course	Bob Reid
Course Builders	Bob Reid, Jim Young, Alan Robinson Members of Kirkintilloch Oly and Cumbernauld AC
Officials Reception	John McDonald
Judges/ Funnel Control	Ian Clifton (Chief), Sandy Cameron, Jim Semple
Change over	Andy Law (Chief), Angus Cameron
Timekeepers	Joe Bruce (Chief), Duncan McLaren, Graham Sword, Anna Poulton
Recorders (Places)	Ian Hislop (Chief), Ian Mann, Jean Youden, Allan Smith, Neil Donachie (Tape)
Recorders (Time)	Molly Wilmoth, Margaret Daly
Starter	Barry Craighead
Marksman	Fred McCluskie
Declarations	Jen Jackson, Phyllis Law
Results	Peter Jackson (Chief), Marion Donachie, Sheila Smart, Marjory Cook
Announcers	John Wands, Alan Potts
Press	
Course Stewards	Bob Reid (Chief) Members of Kirkintilloch Oly and Cumbernauld AC
Presentations	Alan Potts
Jury of Appeal	Alan Potts, Ian Clifton, Alex Jackson
Medical Officer	
Medical Services	St Andrews Ambulance
Events Manager	Ross Cunningham
Conveners:	Alex Jackson, Jim Young