

Scottish Cross Country Relay Championships

Cumbernauld 27/10/2012

Referee's Report

Ron Morrison

Overall

- 1 Again the 2012 National Cross Country Relay Championships provided another great day of cross-country running. There were record entries in the Young Athletes' fields and near record entries in the other races. Almost everything worked well with the experienced team 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 13th 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 over 1200 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 rain later in the day with wind. Indeed it turned to be a most reasonable autumn day.
- 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. Bob Reid, the Clark of the Course, is to be congratulated again on his careful layout of the course.
- 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. There was however, a lack of spare tape and stakes at the starting/finish area and some clever re-organisation had to be devised.
- 6 Again most difficult part of these Championships is the take-overs. Andy Law (Changeover Chief) continued the method he devised two years ago. With the help of David Cairns this worked as well as can be expected given the numbers. 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.
- 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.
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. Team managers seem to have got the message.

There was 1 first leg drop out in the YAF race and 3 in the YAM race and a few others in the later legs.

On the field I allowed Dundee Hawkhill's Men's team to be re-ordered due to their first leg runner being caught in traffic. I also allowed Kilbarchan's YAF medal winning team to substitute Sarah Dempsey for Gwen Gillham who had become ill after declaration but before the start of the race. I allowed one athlete in Greenock Glenpark's women's team to run without her Club vest as she reported to me before the start of the race.

- 8 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. The dark red number background of the 3rd leg runners should be replaced by a lighter shade/colour as it is difficult to read.
- 9 The on-course catering was again very good and served cheerfully.
- 10 The first-aid team were well placed for action and easily contactable. They reported a few minor injuries that they dealt with.
- 11 With the retirement of Peter Jackson, taking of entries and the production of the programme and results has become a major problem caused by the volume of data that has to be entered into a computer.

There were about 2000 entries that had to be entered and checked against the SAL Membership database. At the East District Relay Championships, when we checked entries for change of club and for current membership we found the database to be about 85% accurate. With 2000 entries that means about 300 entries are not accurate. Thus this year we did not check for current membership. The entries were processed by Jen on a spreadsheet provided by myself. We have to find a different solution (automatic) solution to this that also makes it easier for SAL and Club Secretaries.

The results system required about 2500 pieces of data – finishing order and times – to be entered. Jen and Alex Jackson did the YAF and Women's entry, I did the YAM and Nigel, Holl, Mark Munro and Ross Cunningham the men's race. I then processed the results for the website. Again this is not sustainable and another method will have to be found. Fortunately in the Relays the results can be spotted on the field before the detail is calculated thereby allowing the presentations to be made. The problem is that we have a clientele that expects the high standards that Peter provided over the last 17 years.

I sense we are victims of our own success.

- 12 The announcers were again provided with a running order of the athletes. The speakers for the announcers were still placed in front and to the side of the officials at the start area this year and this reduced the interference with the recorders.
- 13 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.
- 14 The place recorders were located in a sterile area built around them to stop interference with finishing runners.

- 15 The break down of the course and the removal of litter was excellent this year. It is down to a fine art.
- 16 As I suggested last year in my report all presentations were made on the field as soon as possible. This included the new championships for over 50s. There were 11 over 50 men's teams but none finished in the women's race.
- 17 At least one team, Portobello AAC, did not understand that the O50 championships was over 3 legs and ran 4 athletes in the team. They were re-classified as a senior team in the results.

18

RACE OFFICIALS	
Referee	Ron Morrison
Assistant Referee	Dave Cairns
Clerk of Course	Bob Reid
Course Builders	Bob Reid, Jim Young, Kevin Martin, Bob Nicol, Members of Kirkintilloch Oly and Cumbernauld AC
Officials Reception	John McDonald
Judges/ Funnel Control	Bob McSwein (Chief), Marion Donachie
Change over	Andy Law (Chief), Sandy Cameron
Timekeepers	Sheila McDougall (Chief), Anna Poulton, Graham Sword
Recorders (Places)	Bill McDougall (Chief), Ian Hislop, Jean Youden, Bill Gentleman, Neil Donachie (tape)
Recorders (Time)	Molly Wilmoth, Margaret Daly
Starter	Mike Belch
Marksman	Fred McCluskie
Declarations	Jen Jackson, Phyllis Law, Sheila Smart
Results	Alex & Jen Jackson, Ron Morrison, Nigel Holl, Mark Munro, Ross Cunningham
Announcers	John Wands, Jim McInnes
Press	Peter Jardine
Course Stewards	Bob Reid (Chief) Members of Kirkintilloch Oly and Cumbernauld AC
Presentations	Alan Potts, Marjory Cook
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