

**Scottish Cross Country Championships**  
**Callendar Park, Falkirk 23/2/2019**  
**Referees' and Event Convener's Report**  
**Ron Morrison, David Cairns and Alex Jackson**

For the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year Callendar Park, Falkirk played host to the Scottish Cross Country Championships. Located centrally within Scotland the venue provides good parking, a nearby school and a park that facilitates imaginative course design. Athletes, spectators, volunteers, course designers and officials alike are familiar with the environment, promoting efficient racing tactics, viewing strategies and optimum course design. The number of entries this year, 2458, clearly shows the venue is popular with athletes and clubs. The number of finishers at 1874 is again a record since the formation of the SAF/SAL. The Senior Men's race with 978 entries and 722 finishers was the second highest ever recorded in its 122 years in existence being second only to the S.C.C.U. Centenary year 1989-90 at 802. The increase in Senior Women participation continues with a record 406 entries and 319 finishers. Overall the Championships indicate that it is an event in which athletes like to participate. Furthermore the number of spectators is consistently remarkable and enhances the festival atmosphere for the Championships.

The innovations in the Championships' programme were an increase the number of counters in the Senior Women's team from 4 to 5 to count and the running of the U17 and U20 championships. In both the male and female races were run simultaneously in each age group but with different start times for male and female.

We were again blessed with a beautiful day in Falkirk with a little rain towards the end of the event. which may account for the good number of spectators. Generally, the weather was sunny and dry cooled by a sharp but moderate wind with the temperature remaining at about 4-9C. The going was, at the start of the day, hard but turning softer in the latter races as the rain came in. In all it was a great day for cross-country running and the SAL events team, Alasdair Love and Caitlin Watt, along with the host of volunteers have to be congratulated, not for the weather, but for yet another excellent promotion of the Championships.

The RR&CC Commission's approach to promoting all Championships is that of incremental improvement. As with every year there were no major incidents but some surprises in the presentation of the Championships and this report merely concentrates on the highlights to be retained and some aspects that could be investigated to continue the incremental improvement.

## **1 Pre Race Action**

The entries team ensured that all athletes were members of SAL and that all were running in the correct age group as well as entered by their 1<sup>st</sup> claim club under UKA rules and the Scottish clarification. As remarked on for a number of years we continue to use a spreadsheet based system that allows the production of a programme and input into the chip timing system. It uses data from the SAL membership database that has to be set up manually for each Championship. As mentioned last year hopefully we will progress to a web based entry system for season 2019-2020.

Entries for the Championships were again on the rise but with some surprising downs at (2458). The upward trend in the Senior entries is masking the variations in the younger age groups. There were increases in finishers in the U17W, SW, U13B, U15B, U17M, U20M, SM but reductions in the other ages categories. The only records were in the U20M and the SW categories. The entries were put on the SAL website in good time for scrutiny. There was one scrutiny error reported before the event or on the day.

A printed programme was issued to key officials before the race with a full electronic one placed on the RR&CC Archive. There have been programmes for the men's version of this championship since 1886-7 but none are sold now. Using the Archive to record the programme preserves the tradition and records the event for posterity.

The pre(and post)-race publicity was fitting and excellent for the major event of the cross country calendar. Peter Jardine and his team are to be congratulated for this. The expansion of the video presentation both for results backup and separately for web presentation of the event itself is a great addition. Athletes, coaches, parents etc. use the video to study the race. Last year's innovation of drone technology in filming the races for even greater coverage was repeated.

There are two issues that arose pre-event: the entry of an ineligible athlete and the wearing of vests by athletes competing in the team events (Referee's discretion).

## 2 On the Day

### 2.1 The Course

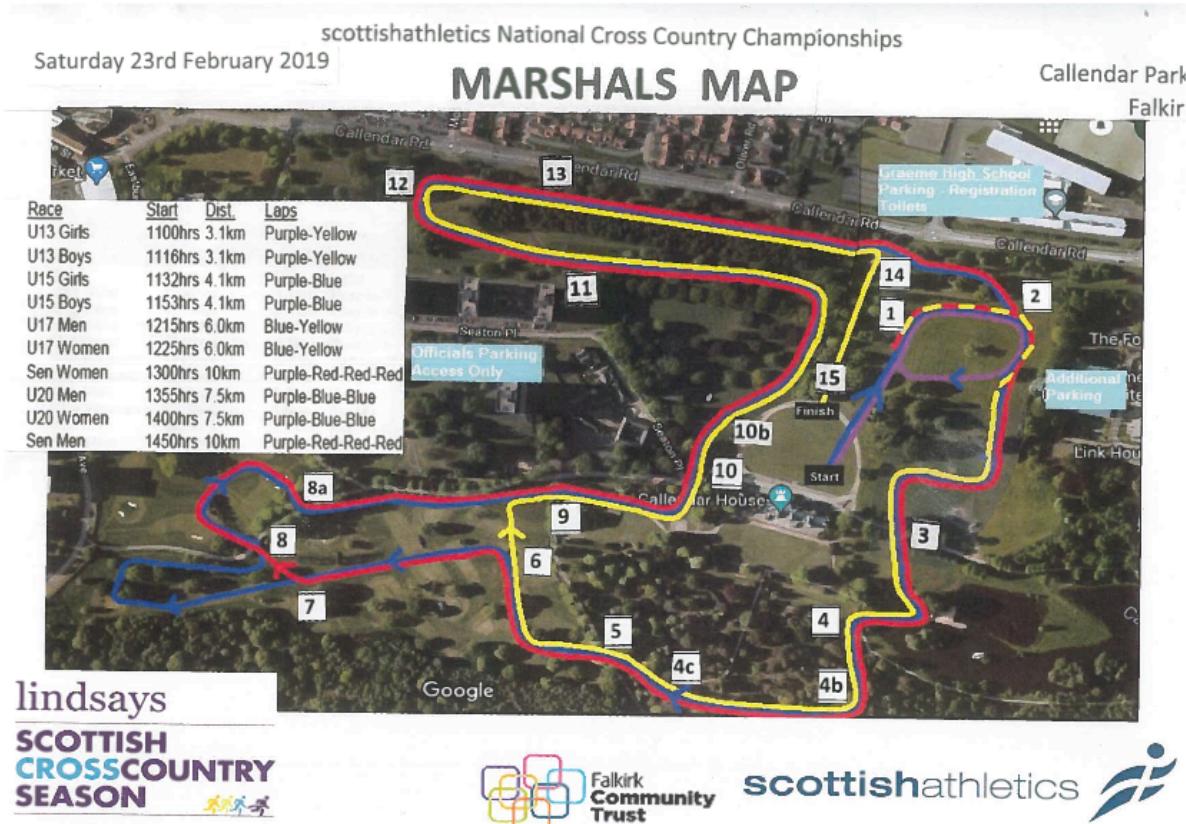


Figure 1: Course Map and Marshal points

Andy Stevenson and Dave Lothian together with their Falkirk Victoria H team are experts in setting up the Falkirk course and are to be congratulated for the slickness of this operation. The design of the course was particularly challenging this year due to restrictions being placed on the racing line by Falkirk Community Trust.

The Assistant Referee walked the course before the event and ensured that the course marking was first class and there were no issues or adjustments. He questioned the location of the turn at the west end of the Antonine Wall (marshal point 12) and discussed it with Andy Stevenson before the first race.

A number of senior athletes mentioned that their garmins were reporting the course distance to be long. However there were no complaints received.

Andy Ronald set up "back-up" funnel equipment in the finish area comprising barrier mesh fencing on stakes that could have easily been pulled forward to form a funnel if we had experienced a repeat of last year's chip timing failure.

The U17 men and women ran as one race but with separate starts. The same applied to the U20 men and women ran. The aim of the separate starts was to ensure that the 2 loops in each race did not cause congestion by overlapping at any point in the course and that the start and finishes were non-interfering. Some congestion was reported in the U17 race but the starts and finishes were non-interfering. The referee instructed the starter to start the U17W two mins early to avoid the fast approaching U17M race. This may have caused some overlap at a later point in the races. The joint races resulted in a shortening of the timetable and left a gap of about 15 mins between that last U20W finisher and the start of the Senior men's race. The race timings for the U17s and the senior men could be revised for next year.

## **2.2 Marshals**

Through pre-race publicity and direct approaches to Clubs volunteered marshals the following Club volunteered to work with Chiefs, Linden Nicholson and Ken Morris:

Bellahouston H, Calderglen H, Cambuslang H, Carnegie H, East Kilbride AAC, Edinburgh AC, Edinburgh University H & H, Garioch Road Runners, Garscube H, Giffnock North AAC, Inverclyde AC, Irvine AC, Kinross Road Runners, Lasswade AAC, Linlithgow AAC, Lothian RC, Moorfoot Runners, Motherwell AC, Perth Strathtay H, Perth Road Runners, Shettleston H, Springburn H, Strathearn H, West End Runners, Westerlands CCC, Edinburgh Frontrunners. There were also volunteers from Falkirk Community Trust.

The Event Convener organised the marshals into two shifts giving adequate cover according to the marshal's map shown in Figure 1.

The marshals were briefed and given written instructions as to their duties before taking up position. The instructions are given below.

The reported problems from had year were successfully addressed and the Marshals reported very little other than what a fun day it had been. There were no major problems.

## **2.3 The Start**

The UKA rules (UKA 240, 6 and 162.2) are quite clear and are the ones that we have always followed – National, Short Course, Relays, ED League etc. When the Referees are deployed they cover the starts and the finishes. A satellite watch (iPhome) is used to determine the start time and the athletes are held about 3m from the line (this year we used a tape but that broke – we used a rope last year). The starter calls the athletes to their marks with the command "On your marks", synchronises with the electronic timing and the gun is fired. This year due to lack of space the Senior men were called forward to the line immediately.

The start position remained the same as per the successful change last year with a straight run up the hill as in Figure 1. This adjustment again worked successfully and although there was 1 faller in the 10 races there were no major incidents or collisions observed.

Pre 2016 the UKA rule on race announcing the start of a race is to have a 5 mins call up followed by a 2 min call up. Since 2016-7 the UKA rule 250 (5) has "In races which include a large number of athletes, five-minute, three-minute and one-minute warnings should be given". The problem is that this rule does not define large and we used the pre-2016 rule this year. This was adhered to by the race announcer but often not by the athletes who tended to gather well before the start of their race.

There are two persistent problems with the start. In the younger age groups we do have the problem of clubs with large numbers of inexperienced and excited entrants dominating the start line. The marksmen sort these out manually. In the senior age groups the athletes are well behaved. We have discussed many times the use of starting pens and always rejected them.

#### **2.4 The Finish**

The FRS chip timing system used disposable chips again. A back up finish funnel to be used in an emergency was set up but was not needed. The video system was live.

#### **2.5 The School**

The school is now as a car park and declaration point with all presentations being on the field.

#### **2.6 Timing, Recording & Results**

The FRS chip timing system worked perfectly and there were no results issues.

As per UKA rules, every individual and team result was checked and approved by one of the Referees in the presence of the Event Convenor before presentation.

At the end of the day the results were produced by FRS on a usb stick and were on the SAL website by 6.00pm. The results, programme and championships' analysis are now on the Archive.

Neither the AT Mays Trophy for the Aggregate men's team nor the Pat Spence Trophy for the Aggregate women's team was awarded on the day. The results are now available on the Archive.

#### **2.7 Announcing & Presentation**

Over the years we have refined the announcing duties in the Championships. As of the last few years there was one announcer, Bryan Burnett, for the on-course commentary and finish, another, Graham Bennison on the race introduction and the start and a third, Connor Henderson, on the presentations. This worked extremely well again this year.

#### **2.8 Medical Issues**

The First Aid team produced a detailed anonymised report that showed that there were no major accidents or incidents.

#### **2.9 Race Timetable**

The new race timetable accommodates the new race distances and simultaneously avoids the announcers competing with one another for air space.

### **3 Post Race**

#### **3.1 Results**

All the results and analyses are now available on the RR&CC Archive. The AT Mays and Pat Spence Trophies for team aggregates will be announced at an appropriate time and venue. The Lindsays Trophy for the largest number of finishers per club will also be presented when a time and venue can be arranged.



## 2019 National Cross Country Marshal Points

Position	Place	Radio	Description of Duties	Name
1	On Plateau at top of hill after start.	No	Ensure runners take inside lap for Purple route & Outside lap for other laps. Assist FVH marshals at gate once all runners are in the inside lap. Reset gate for next race.	Early Julie Jenkins (Perth Strathay H) Late Nicola Redgwell (Garioch Road Runners)
2	On Plateau where runners come up slope on completion of first lap	No	Guide runners on to route heading down to lake.	Early Kathleen McLachlan (Garscube H) Late Helen Kirk (Garioch Road Runners)
3	Road Crossing on to Red Ash path	No	Keep crowds off the course and guide runners across path on to Ash path. (at least 2 required here)	Early Keith Jones & Annette Jones (Falkirk Community Trust) Late 4 Police Cadets
4	Foot of Nature Trail	No	Keep crowds of the course and point to your right sending runners up the nature trail hill.	David Searil (Falkirk Community Trust) Late 2 Police cadets
4b	Top of Nature Trail	RADIO	Guide runners to your left across the path, runners head towards Golf Course. Where possible radio back leading athlete's number and position.	Early Robin Livingston (Perth Road Runners) Late Patrick Docherty (Shuttleston H)
4c	Top of Nature Trail at Golf Course end	No	Guide runners down slope towards gate at Golf Course	Early Neil Anderson (Linlithgow AAC) Late Ann Francis Mason (Shuttleston H)
5	Nature Trail path as it turns to cross path into GC	No	Keep crowds of the path. Send runners into the golf course through the gate.	Early Brian Hughes (Cambuslang H) Late Alice Goodall (Edinburgh AC)
6	Control Gate for Yellow Lap	RADIO	For those doing Yellow lap guide runners down gully. For those doing Red and Blue laps guide runners Left. Beware 2 race have Blue (Long Lap) before Yellow (Short Lap)	Early Kenny Mearns (Lothian RC) Late Colin Feechan (Cambuslang H)
7	Control gate for Red Laps	RADIO	Guide runners to your left sending them to gate exiting large Golf Course for Red lap. Where possible radio back leading athlete's number and position	Early Andrea Gavin (JogScotland) Late Charles Deehan (Westerlands CCC)
8	Path at gate exiting Golf course	No	Keep crowds off the path. Guide runners on to small grass area.	Early Gordon Morrison (Strathearn H) Late John Quinn (Westerlands CCC)
8a	Path at opening in hedge entering into Golf Course	No	Keep crowds off the path. Guide runners towards into Golf course.	Early Iain Thomson (Strathearn H) Late Hannah Waugh (Edinburgh AC)
9	Path at Golf course gate	No	Keep crowds off the path. Guide runners towards Crazy Golf area.	Early Kirsty Mooney (Edinburgh AC) Late Maureen Soar (VAMOS 14)



## 2019 National Cross Country Marshal Points

Position	Place	Radio	Description of Duties	Name
10	Road Crossing beside the Mound and House	No	Keep the crowds and any traffic off the course and guide the athletes towards the tented area (at least 2 required here)	Early Alan Bothwell & Sue Bothwell (Perth Road Runners) Late Margaret McLeod, Fiona Bogle (VAMOS 14) & David Hannah (Falkirk Community Trust)
10b	Crossing point in tented area	No	Ensure people crossing over course are not impeding runners in races (2 required here)	Early Matt Newton & Ann Malcolm (Kinross Road Runners) Late Ken Walker & Sue Walker (Carnegie H)
11	Path at High Flats crossing to grass area.	No	Keep crowds off the path at crossing at High Flats. Guide runners Left after crossing path.	Early Lorraine (Springburn H.) Late Graham Snipe (Lasswade AAC)
12	Furthest out point at grass next to Callendar Road	RADIO	Keep eye on runners. Where possible radio back leading athlete's number and position.	Early Jill Rymer (Springburn H) Late Stuart Meikle (Lasswade AAC)
13	Path from Callendar Road heading to High Flats	No	Keep crowds off the path at crossing to grass area at Callendar Road side of trees. Guide runners up hill.	Early Gemma Walsh (Springburn H) Late Sarah Berry (West End Runners)
14	Gate at start of Red Blaze	RADIO	Keep crowds and people entering the park off the course. Either guide athletes to your left down the Red Blaze or continue lap to Plateau. (2 required here)	Early Dave Campbell (Irvine AC) & Mark Wallace (Bellahouston H) Late Tom Gillespie (Ex many clubs) & Lynne Bruce (Bellahouston H)
15	Crossing point approx. 30m from finish line	No	Keep crowds back behind stakes and tapes to allow for wide finish straight (minimum 2 required here)	Early Phyllis Hand (Motherwell AC) & Mairi Francis (Perth Strathtay H) Late Arianne Holland & Abi Plowman (Edin Univ H & H )and 2 Police Cadets

**First Race 11.00am  
Marshals Instructions**

- (1) Ensure runners keep to the course**
- (2) Ensure spectators do not impede runners.**
- (3) Wear bib whilst on duty, and endeavour to answer questions from runners/spectators from the course map you will be provided with.**
- (4) Call for First-Aid on radio if required. All Marshalls will also be supplied with a foil blanket for us if required.  
If you have a radio instructions will be given as to how to use it.**

If you don't have a radio but have a mobile phone call the  
Chief Marshals      Ken Morris on 07975 855654  
Linden Nicholson 07985 430741

**First Aid Points – Point 3 / Point 9 / Point 15**

**Marshals with radios should do a radio check with one of the Chief Marshals when collecting their radio, followed by another check once in position.**

- (5) Drone footage will be taking place, if any marshal spots an issue with the drone they should report it immediately to the Chief Marshals.**
- (6) Late Shift Marshalls will be provided with a pair of scissors to remove tape and strip down course, please neatly pile stakes removing as much tape as possible for collection.**

Thank you for volunteering to be a Marshall today, without your help we wouldn't be able to deliver a successful championship. We hope you enjoyed the experience. Don't forget to exchange your tea ticket for a hot snack and drink.

Best Regards



Alasdair Love  
National Events Manager  
Scottish Athletics Ltd