

# Stewart follows in father's footsteps

Athletics

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THE hair was a bit more grey, his pace slower, but the familiar grin was unchanged, and the relaxed, fluid stride spoke of one who once graced the running game with style and class. It seemed as if Lachie Stewart had hardly been gone. In fact it is some 13 years since the former Commonwealth 10,000 metres champion hung up his racing shoes, but on Saturday, he was back.

As his son Glen helped Mizuno Racing Club to an overwhelming victory in the twenty-ninth Allan Scally Relay at Bailieston, father, now a self-styled "young 54," was showing that old habits die hard.

From 1969 to '73, as the Shettleston hosts monopolised the event, Stewart was a key member of their team, but on a snowy winter's day in a veteran event 13 years ago, "I suddenly wondered why I was doing it all, and dropped out."

Not even his son's emergence as an outstanding track-and-road internationalist has persuaded him to return, even though he is to be seen on the sidelines most weekends. Until Saturday, Mizuno are threatening to field a team in the national veteran relay championships, and Lachie might just get sucked back in. He ran in the club's third team, though he insists: "I don't intend to get really fit again."

Mizuno, led off by Ian Brown, were never headed from the start of the four-stage race in which the circuit is a bit under five miles. On a balmy day, but with an unhelpful breeze, they finished in 91min 01sec, 43 seconds outside the record set by Shettleston two years ago.

The hosts were runners-up, but third by Mizuno's B squad suggests the eight-stage Barrs Edinburgh-Glasgow relay in a fortnight could be a one-horse affair.

Shettleston, fourth after the opening leg, were brought back into contention by Adrian Callan, and there were just three seconds between the rivals at half distance, but after Frank McGowan had taken half a minute out of John Mackay, the younger Stewart was under no pressure. Shettleston did, however, have the satisfaction of winning the women's three-stage race, led home by Elaine McBrinn, who recorded the fastest time, 27-57.

Ron Hill Cambuslang, still smarting from the injustice of being balked in the national relay championships the previous weekend, again suffered disaster, but this time it was self-inflicted. Third after the opening two stages, they managed to get their runners' numbers confused, and failed to finish.

Among the more encouraging performances was that by Clydesdale's Billy Jenkins, second on the opening stage, and the anchor leg by Phil Mowbray, which brought Hunters Bog Trotters from seventh to fourth. Mowbray, a Commonwealth contender at 5000m, is just days out of plaster after an ankle injury sustained in a fall. Having removed the stookie prematurely with a kitchen knife, his 22-58 suggests he could achieve his goal.

Yet there was little to suggest there was anyone in the field to match the aforementioned elder Stewart, or Fifer Donald Macgregor, who finished seventh in the 1972 Olympic marathon.

Macgregor, who quit the sport after a heart scare in 1986, has also put his racing shoes back on this year, aged 58. The Madras College languages teacher had the better of Stewart in the battle of the veterans, clocking 27-33 to the younger man's 30-32.

But in his hey-day the 1970 Commonwealth gold medallist clocked 22-23 for this Shettleston course. The closest anyone got on Saturday was son Glen, who with team-mate Brown, both recorded 22-30. Even more ominous, there was a 25% reduction in the number of starters. Details:

Men: 1, Mizuno Racing Club (I Brown 22-30, J Ross 23-11, F McGowan 22-50, G Stewart 22-30) 91min 01sec; 2, Shettleston (D Cameron 23-06, A Callan 22-38, J Mackay 23-20, G Wright 22-59) 92-03; 3, Mizuno B (I Veitch 25-29, S Cohen 22-59, A Robson 24-25, D Ross 22-57) 95-50; 4, Hunters Bog Trotters 96-03; 5, Falkirk Victoria 96-18; 6, Edinburgh University 98-19, Veterans: Falkirk 103-02. Fastest laps: 1 equal, Brown and Stewart 22-30; 3, W Jenkins (Clydesdale) 22-35; 4, Callan 2-38; 5, McGowan 22-50; 6, D Ross (Mizuno B) 22-57.

Women: 1, Shettleston (E McBrinn 27-57, H Min-Chung 29-43, F Florence 29-19) 86-59; 2, Shettleston B 98-48; 3, Strathclyde University 96-18. Fastest: 1, McBrinn 27-57; 2, E Cochrane (City of Glasgow) 28-16; 3, Florence 29-19.