

# “Watch out for the Trams”



**East District Cross Country League  
Centenary History – 1924 to 2024**

**Alex Jackson**

Cover photo: Senior/Junior Men's race Stirling October 2005

## Forewords

I have some fond memories of the East District XC. Racing in Scotland was always a challenge - freezing temps, hills and lots of mud - true cross country racing! I just loved it!

The races were always so well organised with helpful volunteers dotted around the course. I remember losing one of my spikes one time in the mud and finishing the race without it! But a kind individual dug my spike out so that I didn't lose it!

The best part was being part of a team. We would take a mini bus through from Dundee Hawks and the social element of the sport was what I enjoyed the most. I made the greatest of friends at my club, and so it felt special to be racing with them at the different XC league races and travelling across Scotland together. We were always cheering each other on!

*Eilish McColgan, Dundee Hawkhill Harriers*

I have always observed that a key factor in recent Scottish international medal success (coming, as it does, mostly from middle and long-distance runners) is the strength of the winter competition schedule north of the border. The winter cross-country calendar is progressive, well-organised, well-supported and highly competitive. No other part of the UK has a 4k championship, area and national relays, an inter-district championship and grand prix with prize money through October into the New Year.

A cornerstone of this athlete-friendly format is the East District Cross-Country League, which celebrates its centenary this season. It would have been well beyond its 80th birthday when I first attended but the rotation of host venues from that time will have a familiar ring to it - Kirkcaldy, Broxburn, Deans, Dunfermline, Stirling. All of them send a shiver down my spine, not really for nostalgic reasons. Mostly because they sent a shiver down my spine on race day. They were all absolutely Baltic - frozen puddles, frozen officials, frozen spectators and competitors carrying the same spirit as South Pole explorer, Captain Oates. "I am just going out. I may be some time."

The Jackson family and their expert supporters were the driving force behind the development of the East League during my time at Scottish athletics. Elsewhere in the UK, you would have to go to much larger population clusters to find anything that rivalled the East League for competitiveness - something more like London's Metropolitan League or the Birmingham & District League's Division One or a top end edition of the Gwent League, which encompasses most of South West England as well as Wales (no Gwent Leagues are held in Gwent!)

With the benefit of hindsight, consider this East League result from Kirkcaldy in November of 2007:

Under 17 women: 4<sup>th</sup> Eilish McColgan

8<sup>th</sup> Laura Muir

Under 15 boys: 5<sup>th</sup> Jake Wightman

Whatever happened to them? All of them learning their craft. None of them troubling the leaderboard. All running several East League

matches each winter and enjoying racing with, and against, their club-mates and those from further afield in Scotland.

It has been a wonderful proving ground for Scottish athletes and a key part of their endurance journey. Thank you to everyone who has helped, supported, volunteered, hosted, organised and spectated at East District Cross-Country League events. You make it what it is. Here's to the next 100 years.

*Geoff Wightman former Scottish Athletics Chief Executive*

## The Trailblazers of the East District: My Cross Country Journey.

From the rugged terrains of the East District Cross Country League, as a young athlete I embarked on a journey that shaped not only my athletic career but also my working life. The League, a beacon of cross country running in Scotland, served as my introduction to the sport, beginning with my early years at HELP (Haddington), then soon after as a founding member of Dunbar RC. My passion and dedication to cross country running continued to grow as I joined Edinburgh AC in my teens into early adulthood.

Cross country running, often viewed as the cornerstone of athletics in Scotland and the UK, has been a proving ground for many of the UK's greatest ever athletes. Not limited to endurance runners, the sport also saw the likes of Eilidh Doyle (East District League alumni) and Dina Asher Smith among its cross country ranks.

The East District League stands at the forefront of Scotland's rich athletic heritage, its leaders pioneering the sport in Scotland. Their creativity and innovation in scoring, distances, and formats have significantly contributed to the sport's growth and modernisation.

For myself, cross country remains my favourite discipline, a sentiment fuelled by the inspiration I drew from watching some of Scotland's greats at the time compete. Names like The Robson brothers, Johnny Ross (also HELP member), John Sherban, and Phil Mowbray left lasting impressions on me, as did somewhat controversially, the remarkable racers from the club formerly known as Reebok, Mizuno, and Leslie Deans racing club who we are not supposed to mention!!

Behind the scenes, a dedicated group of individuals were (several have sadly passed) were, and in many cases, continue to be the unsung heroes of the League. Figures such as Alex Jackson, Prof Ron Morrison, Marjory Cook, Neil Donachie, the Hockleys, Sandra Hardacre, Bill Gentleman, Fred McLuskie, Barry Craighead, Marion Donachie, and Dave Cairns, among others, worked tirelessly. Their efforts have positively impacted thousands of lives, especially mine, a fact they may not fully realise.

As a former athlete and Scottish Athletics CEO, I reflect on the East District Cross Country League with gratitude and admiration. The League has been, is, and will continue to be a pivotal part of Scottish Athletics' winter calendar for decades to come. Through the muddy paths and challenging courses of the East District (with the original Lornshill course as my favourite), my journey in cross country running is a testament to the enduring spirit and influence of the sport in Scotland.

*Mark Munro former Scottish Athletics Chief Executive*

For Jen

## Introduction

The first East District Cross Country League meeting I ran in was at Wilton Lodge Park in Hawick on 14, October 1978. My club Ferranti AAC had just affiliated to the governing body, the SCCU, and had joined the league. We had 6 runners in the Senior Men's race and I was 5th scorer. It is always good to be a scorer in a league race for your club.

I continued to run at league meetings till a Wednesday in May 1984 when I went along to an East League AGM as the representative of my club. The previous Sunday I had run a marathon PB of 2 hours 53 minutes at the Motherwell Marathon and was feeling good.

Dave Nicholson of Falkirk Victoria Harriers, the league secretary, was standing down and a new secretary was needed. Claude Jones of Edinburgh AC asked me if I would and I agreed. At the end of the meeting, I thought, what have I done! I had just run my Marathon PB and now I'm an official (Blazer)!

Fast forward to May 2024 and I have now been league secretary for 40 years, there have been 117 league meetings in that time and I have attended every one of them.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks to John Mackay for the many league results pages he has sourced from newspaper archives, Sandra Hardacre and Karen Dobbie for Scottish Women's league information, Neil Donachie for stories of running in the league in the 1950s. Photos are from Tony Waterhouse, Lewis Orr and Teviotdale Harriers Centenary book.

Thanks to Eilish McColgan, Geoff Wightman and Mark Munro who have contributed the quality Forewords

Thanks to Peter Jackson for formatting and layout help. Ron Morrison for his proof reading and many suggestions. The Professor Emeritus helping the lad who left school at 15.

While I have tried to be as accurate as possible, there could be errors or omissions, My apologies if anyone finds any.

Alex Jackson, September 2024

## The Early Days

The Paris Olympic games held in 1924 were remembered in Scotland for Eric Liddell winning the Gold Medal in the 400 metres and the Bronze Medal in the 200 metres.

A few months later on the 25th October 1924 the first Edinburgh District Cross Country league meeting took place from Portobello Baths, Edinburgh. The four founding members of the league were Edinburgh Southern Harriers, Edinburgh Northern Harriers, Edinburgh Harriers and Heriots Cross Country Club.

That first race started close to Portobello Baths and included members of Falkirk Victoria Harriers, Kirkcaldy YMCA and Linlithgow Harriers as guests making a total field of 120. According to a newspaper report the race started “at a point where the runners would hopefully not be held up by electric tramway traffic”. Once the main road and the tram traffic was negotiated there was lots of open country for cross country, now land built over with houses.



*Start of an Inter-cub run at Portobello Baths, circa 1930s*

The first season had 4 races with changing and starts being at Public Baths in Edinburgh, 2 at Portobello and 2 at Glenogle Baths.

In the League constitution for the first season there is

“The membership fee to be fixed at the nominal sum of 2/6, any financial deficiency on the season to be made up equally between the various clubs”

It now takes a bit more than 2/6 (12.5p) from each club to operate the league.

The first 2 seasons of the league had 4 fixtures, in season 1926-27 the league changed to 3 fixtures which has remained to the present day.

In 1927 George Sandilands of Kirkcaldy YMCA presented a magnificent shield for annual competition in the league. George was an ex-Edinburgh Harrier, a school teacher who said it was “in slight recognition of the impetus given to athletes in Kirkcaldy by holding league meetings in the town”.

In the league secretary report at the end of the 1927-28 season it states “While the handsome Sandilands Shield is greatly appreciated by all concerned it is to be regretted to a certain extent that the league will now have something other than the honour of being champions to contend for”.



*Then and Now, The Sandilands Shield with over 90 years of winners*

George Sandilands' Great, Great, Grandson Ben Sandilands of Fife AC has run in many league meetings and was World Para Champion at 1500 metres in Paris in 2023. At the Paralympics in Paris in 2024 Ben won the 1500 metres in a World Record time.

From 1926 to 1928 the league secretary/treasurer was Willie Carmichael. He was a hugely influential figure in cross country and athletics in Scotland over many years. As Director of Organisation for the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in 1970, it was largely down to his meticulous planning that these games were a success.

In 1928 George Aithie Senior became league secretary/treasurer, a post he would hold for 49 years until 1977.

George Aithie worked in the railways; I believe in an influential position which will become clear when it comes to transport to league venues. Before the 2nd World War and indeed after the war it was common for most men to work Saturday mornings, very few people owned cars so travel to cross country meetings was often by train.

Kirkcaldy was a frequent venue for league meetings and the information that went to clubs for a meeting there would often have the train time e.g. "2.15pm train from Edinburgh Waverley".

Saturday morning working, a train journey to Kirkcaldy and races that might well have finished as it was getting dark made it a long day to participate in your favourite sport. Of course, the same is true for the Kirkcaldy runners travelling in the opposite direction for away events. Not using the train meant travelling by road using the Queensferry ferries or the Kincardine Bridge.

Glencorse, near Penicuik was a frequent league venue pre-war, however the train station there closed to passenger trains in 1933. For the January 1934 league meeting at Glencorse the information sheet sent to clubs included "Special Train from Edinburgh 2.40pm" Although closed to passenger trains George Aithie had enough railway influence to arrange special trains up to season 1938-39 from Edinburgh to Glencorse for league meetings. Race information that went to clubs with the officials' names also included names of "Chief Train Stewards"

The league had its own train so needed people to organise getting athletes on the train.

The league had started in 1924 as the Edinburgh and District Cross Country League. With more clubs competing from outside the area, in 1936 there was a name change to East District Cross Country League.

Of the 15 titles from season 1924-25 until 1938-39, Edinburgh Northern Harriers had been the dominant club with 12 wins with Edinburgh Southern Harriers having won the remaining 3 titles. As well as being the dominant club on league titles Northern had been allocated number 1 for its league number which would eventually end up with Edinburgh Athletic Club when 4 capital clubs Edinburgh Northern Harriers, Edinburgh Eastern Harriers, Edinburgh Harriers and Braidburn AC amalgamated in 1961. Annual General League meetings were held at the Edinburgh Northern's own club rooms on Cockburn Street, Edinburgh, a city centre location close to the Royal Mile.

In addition to the 7 clubs who competed in the first meeting the following also took part up to 1939: Canon ASC (became Edinburgh Eastern Harriers in 1934), Cameron Highlanders, Eastbank AC, Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds, Gordon Highlanders, Kirkcaldy Boys Club, Penicuik Harriers, Roslin Harriers and Rover Scouts (became Braidburn AC in 1952).

## Post World War II

With the start of the war in September 1939 league meetings ceased until starting up again for season 1947-48. From then right up to season 1974-5 two clubs were dominant as far as league titles were concerned: Edinburgh Southern Harriers won the Sandilands Shield 17 times while Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds won it 10 times. Prominent athletes with a number of 1<sup>st</sup> places in that period were Adrian Jackson (Edinburgh University H & H) with 11 wins, John Linaker (Pitreavie AC) 8 wins, Craig Douglas (Teviotdale H) 7 wins and Gareth Bryan Jones (Edinburgh Southern H) 6 wins.

The first meeting of the 1955-56 season took place at Doctor Guthrie School at Liberton, Edinburgh when it was open country and fields to the south of it.

I have from Neil Donachie who ran for Braidburn AC "It was the first League race of the season and was 4 miles. Captains Road was only built up on the South Side in these days with bungalows and with very little on its northern side. In 1955 I finished second to Alan Parker of Braidburn with Robbie Henderson Braidburn in 4<sup>th</sup> position. Alan said that had he known it was me behind he "would have waited". I did not know him at the time and that we had such a fine athlete in the team.

Alan Parker had been working in Edinburgh at the time but he had run in the final of the 5000 metres at the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki. The race was won by Emil Zatopek with Gordon Pirie 4<sup>th</sup> and Chris Chataway 5<sup>th</sup>. Alan was 11<sup>th</sup> after finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in his heat.

From the start of the league 1924 there had been one race at each meeting for Men. With the growth of young athletes coming into the sport races were added in 1954-55, Youths (Under 17 Men), 1959-60 Senior Boys (Under 15 Boys), 1965-66 Junior Boys (Under 13 Boys) and 1976-77 Colts (Under 11 Boys).

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the 1975-76 season at Dalkeith the Aberdeen AAC team's scoring 6 were Graham Milne 3<sup>rd</sup>, Graham Laing 10<sup>th</sup>, Mel Edwards 11<sup>th</sup>, Donald Ritchie 14<sup>th</sup> Fraser Clyne 19<sup>th</sup> and Alastair Wood 23<sup>rd</sup>, some of the best marathon runners Scotland have ever seen. Such was the quality of the athletes who ran in the league they finished 4<sup>th</sup> team on the day behind Edinburgh AC, Edinburgh Southern Harriers and Falkirk Victoria Harriers. Fraser Clyne comments "It was my first outing for Aberdeen AAC and I was taken there by the great Alastair Wood! A hair-raising journey as Ally left it late in leaving Aberdeen and he wasn't the best of drivers!"

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the 1978-79 was at the frequently used venue of Hawick. Senior Men's winner was Alastair Hutton (ESH) and a feature of the 116 finishers was that 26 of them were Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds (later known as the Haries) led by the club captain Robin Thomas, later to be a founding member in 1980 of the athletes in brown, Hunters Bog Trotters. For all Trotters Robin is YP (Young Penicuik) a name given to him when he was a young Edinburgh University fresher by Jim Dingwall who was then Haries club Secretary. Initially the then governing body for athletics the Scottish Amateur Athletics Association (SAAA) rejected the new club's name as they felt it had lavatorial connections. When they were told Hunters Bog was in fact an area in Holyrood Park the club's name was accepted.

At the conclusion of the final meeting of the 1979-80 season the Sandilands Shield was presented to Falkirk Victoria Harriers, Senior winners over the season. This was the first time that the Shield had not been won by an Edinburgh club since the league started in 1924.

Such was the strength of the club at that time, at the first league meeting of the 1983-84 season at Hawick they packed 14 runners in the first 35 home which resulted in the teams on the day being 1<sup>st</sup> Falkirk Victoria Harriers 2<sup>nd</sup> Falkirk Victoria Harriers "B".

Falkirk led by Jim Dingwall had 8 Sandilands Shield wins in 12 years.

Hawick, Wilton Lodge Park was frequently the venue for the 1<sup>st</sup> league meeting of the season. Between 1965 and 1992 the first meeting was there 18 times. With a home fixture this got Teviotdale Harriers Seniors off to a good start and the club were 3 times winners of the Sandilands Shield in that period.



*Teviotdale Harriers Senior Champions 1986/87*

In season 1986/87 a Trophy for Overall Champions was introduced, the first winners were Edinburgh AC. In season 1992/93 Sandy Cameron of Edinburgh Southern Harriers donated a trophy for the winning Masters Team the first winners being Teviotdale Harriers.

In the late 1980s there were a number of league meetings at Alloa based at Lornshill Academy, this was on a tough course, very hilly and technical, acknowledged as one for the cross country connoisseur. In 2013 league meetings were again held at Alloa but there was now a rebuilt Lornshill Academy several 100 metres from the original school. The school canteen was now where we used to start the races at the top of the hill on the site

The venue for a number of league meetings in the late 1990s was Gore Glen Park in Gorebridge using what was then the paths of the Borders Railway that had closed in 1969. In 2015 the Borders Railway returned using that path. By then Lasswade AC were holding Open Cross Country races at the venue so they lost part of their cross country course, a muddy stretch on the old railway line path.

At the conclusion of the final meeting of the 1998-99 season the Sandilands Shield was presented to Fife AC, Senior winners over the season. This was the first time that the Shield had been won by a club north of the Firth of Forth since the league started in 1924 and was the first of 3 wins in a row for Fife AC.

Some venues hosted by clubs have been used multiple times for league meetings. In November 2002 Kirkcaldy, Beveridge Park was the venue hosted by Fife AC and replacing the Lita Allan Open Cross Country meeting. That 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was then held for 6 seasons there. In January 2007 Broxburn was the venue for a league meeting, a new venue with a course designed by Martin Hyman a long-time local lead for league meetings at Livingston (Deans). For the next 14 seasons up to 2019 there was a league meeting every winter at Broxburn until the trails became too narrow to continue cross country there. The course included the aptly named Lungbuster Hill a title given by Martin Hyman. In October 2009 Stirling was first used hosted by Central AC. For the next 11 seasons it was the venue for the first league meeting of the season up to October 2019.

## Young Males who started in the league

Athletes that would go on to greater things started in the league. Paul Forbes (Edinburgh AC) as a Junior Boy (Under 13) in season 1969-70 was 1<sup>st</sup> in the opening meeting at Hawick and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the final meeting at Musselburgh. Paul would go on to compete in 3 Commonwealth Games and is setting World records on the track as an M65. Alastair Hutton (Edinburgh SH) first ran in the league as a Youth (Under 17) in season 1970-71, after finishing 9<sup>th</sup> at Hawick at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, he won the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> meetings at Kirkcaldy and Musselburgh. Alastair went on to set a Scottish best time in the Marathon and won the 1990 London Marathon. Kheredine Idessane, BBC Sports Reporter was a scorer in all 3 races for the Edinburgh Southern H team that won the Colts (Under 11) trophy in 1979-80 with 2, 3 and 10 places. Tom Hanlon (Edinburgh SH) who went on to compete in the Olympics in the steeplechase started as a Junior Boy (Under 13) in season 1980-81 with 2<sup>nd</sup> places in the first 2 meetings at Cupar and Dundee.

Under 11 Boys League Champions of season 1987/88 were to give them their full name Haddington East Lothian Pacemakers including Mark Munro who would eventually become Scottish Athletics Chief Executive Officer. The following season 1988/89 the winner of 2 Under 11 Boys races at West Calder and Riccarton was Alasdair Love (Aberdeen AAC) who would eventually become Scottish Athletics Competition Manager.

Jamie McDonald (Central) another member of staff at Scottish Athletics - National Club Manager - first ran in the league in season 1993-94 as an Under 13 Boy finishing 15<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at the 3 meetings that season. Jamie progressed through the age groups winning the Senior Men's race at Alloa in 2004 before running for Scotland East the following week at the Inter Counties Championships at Nottingham.

In the 1990s and 2000s boys who would go on to represent Scotland in the Commonwealth games started their running in the league, Ross Houston (Central AC) first appearance was 3<sup>rd</sup> in an Under 15 Boys race at Edinburgh in October 1993. Andrew Lemoncello (Fife) was 19<sup>th</sup> in an Under 11 Boys race at Livingston in November 1993, Alastair Hay (Central AC) was 27<sup>th</sup> in an Under 13 Boys race at Alloa in January 1998. In season 2002-23 Chris O'Hare (Edinburgh AC) was 2<sup>nd</sup> Under 13 Boys in all 3 league races. A great rivalry developed between Andrew Lemoncello (Fife AC) and Kerr Johnstone (Falkirk Victoria H) right through the age groups from Under 11 to Under 17 both in league races and podium places at National and District Championship, sometimes one would triumph sometimes the other. In the 1998 Inter Counties Cross Country Championship at Cardiff the Under 15 Boys result was 1<sup>st</sup> Mo Farah (Middlesex), 2<sup>nd</sup> Kerr Johnstone (Scotland East) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Andrew Lemoncello (Scotland East).

In the summers of 2022 and 2023 Jake Wightman and Josh Kerr, both members of Edinburgh AC, were World 1500 metres Champions.

Both started in the league. In November 2006 at Kirkcaldy. Jake Wightman running for Linlithgow AC was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Under 13 Boys race with his twin brother Sam in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. In January 2007 at Broxburn Josh Kerr won the Under 11 boys race beating his older brother Jake into 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

## Females in the League

From 1973 and possibly earlier there was a Scottish Women's Cross Country League, the league was incorporated into existing open cross country meetings with typical venues being Pitreavie, Lasswade, Aberdeen, Kirkcaldy and Glasgow. They were for all age groups and near the end of the season athletes were selected to run for Scotland in an Inter League meeting in England.

Around 1998 the league stopped, leaving a gap in competitive cross country for females in the East District.

In season 1999-2000 a Senior Women's open race took place at the 2<sup>nd</sup> East League meeting at Hawick (Stirches) and 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at Gorebridge (Gore Glen). Karen Newman (Edinburgh AC) won both races. There were 19 and 16 finishers respectively in the 2 races.

In 2000-2001 at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting at Alloa and 3<sup>rd</sup> at Gorebridge there were races for females in all age groups. Finish numbers were small in the younger age groups ranging from 3 to 9 finishers in races. From small acorns.....

Season 2001-2002 we had female age groups races for all at the 3 meetings with Female league champions at the end of the season. For this first season with lowish numbers, it was 2 to score for a club in each meeting.

Inaugural league champions were Under 11 Girls Lothian RC, Under 13 Girls Lothian RC, Under 15/U17 Girls Pitreavie AAC, Senior Women's City of Edinburgh AC and Overall Females Pitreavie AAC.

Female athletes who went on to greater things had early competition with cross country in the East League. Lynsey Sharp (Edinburgh Woollen Mill) Under 13 Girl at Dunfermline in December 2001, Sarah Inglis (Lothian RC) Under 11 Girl at Gorebridge in October 2001, Eilish McColgan (Dundee Hawkhill H) Under 13 Girl at Hawick in October 2002.

In season 2003-04 Liz McColgan (Dundee Hawkhill H) ran in all 3 Senior Women races in the league. With an impressive Cross Country, Road and Track and Field record behind her she had retired from competitive competition in 2001. However, at the age of 39 she came back for one last season's cross country and won all 3 races in the league at Livingston, Kirkcaldy and Stirling. For good measure she also won the National Cross County Championships at Perth and the East District Cross Country Championships at Falkirk. At the same 3 league meetings her daughter Eilish won the Under 13 Girls races and finished off her cross country season by winning the Inter Counties Cross Country Championships at Nottingham.in February 2004.

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the 2007-08 season at Kirkcaldy in November 2007. The Under17 Women/ Under 15 Girls race had 1<sup>st</sup> Sarah Inglis (Lothian RC), 4<sup>th</sup> Elish McColgan (Dundee Hawkhill H), 8<sup>th</sup> Laura Muir (Dunfermline/West Fife) and 21<sup>st</sup> Jenny Tan (Fife AC) all 4 would complete for Scotland at the 2022 Commonwealth Games at Birmingham.

## Olympians

Previously mentioned was Alan Parker who ran in the 5000 metres at the Olympics in Helsinki in 1952. Other Olympians who have run in the league are Laura Muir, Eilish McColgan and Josh Kerr at Paris in 2024. Laura Muir, Eilish McColgan, Josh Kerr and Jake Wightman at Tokyo in 2021. Laura Muir, Eilish McColgan, Lynsey Sharp, Eilidh Doyle and Andrew Buchart at Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Eilish McColgan, Eilidh Doyle and Lynsey Sharp at London in 2012, Andrew Lemoncello at Beijing in 2008, Tom Hanlon at Barcelona in 1992, Liz McColgan at Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992 and Atlanta 1996, Donald Macgregor at Munich in 1972, Gareth Bryan Jones at Mexico in 1968 and Fergus Murray at Tokyo in 1964.

At the Tokyo Olympics of 2021 Laura Muir won a Silver Medal at the 1500 metres. Josh Kerr won a Bronze medal at Tokyo 1500metres and followed that up with a Silver over the same distance at Paris 2024.

## North and West District Cross Country Leagues

The North District Cross Country League started in 1972 set up by Walter Banks of Inverness Harriers who did not have to look far for guidance as his father in law was George Aithie who had been Secretary of the East District Cross Country League for nearly 50 years.

With there being no West District Cross Country League, over the years there were numerous requests from West club athletes to run as guests in the East League. The league constitution has that athletes need to be a First Claim member of an East Club so these requests were politely declined. In 2011 there was a request from Derek Hawkins of Kilbarchan AAC the then National Cross Country Champion to complete in the league if he joined an East club as a 2<sup>nd</sup> claim member, there was a sorry no can do, even for the National Cross Country Champion. Eventually in 2022 a West District Cross Country League did come about mainly thanks to the work of Richard Leyton of Bellahouston Road Runners.

## Leading up to the Centenary Season

After the final meeting of season 2007-2008 Central AC won the Senior Men's league trophy the Sandilands Shield for the first time, for the next 16 years they dominated the Senior title winning the Shield 13 times, only interrupted by wins for Hunter Bog Trotters, Corstorphine AAC and Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds. In recent years Edinburgh AC have been the dominant winners of the Senior Women's league with 5 wins since 2016-2017. Hunters Bog Trotters and Fife AC are the only clubs to interrupt their dominance.

If we look at which clubs won League Trophies in the decade 2000-2010, we find that on the Male side Edinburgh AC have an impressive 28 league titles next best are Central AC with 13 then Fife AC with 9. On the Female side for that decade again Edinburgh AC lead with 11 followed by Central AC and Pitreavie AAC both with 8.

Moving on to between 2010-2020 on the Male side Central AC, Edinburgh AC and Team Borders all have 12 team titles followed by

Corstorphine with 10. On the Female side it's Edinburgh AC with 26, Central AC next with 7.

For season 2022-23 Gala Harriers won both the Masters Women's and Masters Men's League trophies. This was the first time the club had won a league trophy since joining the league in season 1960-1961. In recent years Harmeny AC have become a force in the league with good participation numbers of young athletes. In season 2021-22 they won 5 young athletes league trophies.

There is no pre entry or declarations in the league. Athletes wear their club league number in races. All Young athlete's races are 3 to score. Senior Women 4 to score and Senior Men 6. Team Managers email athlete's names after each meeting to the league secretary. Subscriptions are paid on how many athletes run for a club over the 3 meetings of the season.

The league website was started by Peter Jackson in 2000. In 2014 Ron Morrison took over the website. There are results for almost every meeting of the 100 years of the league on the website as well as a host of other information.

<http://www.salroadrunningandcrosscountrymedalists.co.uk/Archive/East District League/ED League Home.html>

Coming into the league's Centenary season 2024-25 it continues to provide cross country team competition for males and females in all age groups.

13 league trophies to be won by clubs with a total of over 2000 athletes finishing in the 3 meetings over the season.

The constitution of the league was drawn up in the first season 1924-25 and included

“The object of the League is to encourage competition running by means of a League Championship”

100 years later this still rings true.



*Livingston October 2006*



*Kirkcaldy November 2006*



*Stirling October 2017*



*Stirling October 2014*



*Broxburn January 2014*



*Broxburn January 2013*



*Livingston January 2020*



*Edinburgh AC Women 5 times league champions 2019-2024*

## Clubs that joined the league after Season 1947-48

- 1953 Aberdeen University Hare and Hounds
- 1957 Teviotdale H
- 1958 Pitreavie AAC
- 1959 Lewisvale Spartans, George Heriots School
- 1960 Gala Harriers
- 1963 Octavians AC, Fauldhouse Victoria AC
- 1966 Bathgate Miners Welfare, Heriot Watt University, Forth Valley AC, Blackburn AAC
- 1967 Bathgate AAC
- 1968 Berwickshire High School
- 1969 Melrose AAC
- 1970 Glenrothes AC, Perth Strathtay H, Perth Railway AC
- 1972 Polbeth H & AC, Cupar & District AC, Fettes College, Glenfarg AC, Bathgate St Marys, Dundee Hawkhill H, Livingston & District, Newbattle High School AC
- 1973 Gracemount School, St Andrews University
- 1974 Aberdeen AC, Lothian AC
- 1975 Fife AC, Central Region AC, Fife Institute Athletics Union
- 1977 Harmeny AC, Fife Southern H, Forth AC, Tayside AC, Blackhill AC
- 1978 Ferranti AAC, St Marys Academy, Stirling University
- 1979 Fauldhouse Miners, Banchory AC, Edinburgh Western H, Bo'ness H, Peterhead AC
- 1980 Hunters Bog Trotters, Linlithgow AAC
- 1981 Lasswade AC, North Merchiston AC, Dollar Academy, Lothian & Borders Police
- 1983 Lochgelly AC, Haddington ELP
- 1984 Carnethy HRC, Dundee YMCA Road Runners, Stoneyburn AC
- 1985 Peebleshire AAC
- 1986 Blairgowrie RR, Queen Victoria School
- 1988 Edinburgh Spartans, Dunbar RC, Arbroath & D AC
- 1989 Portobello RC
- 1990 Harlequins AC, Merchiston Castle School, Lomond Hill R, Whitburn AC
- 1991 Metro Aberdeen RC

1992 Carnegie H, Racing Club Edinburgh  
1996 Kinross RR, Standard Life AC, Firhill High School, Anster Haddies  
1999 Wee Country H, St Marks School, St Augustines School  
2000 Lothian RC, Edinburgh Woollen Mill  
2001 Musselburgh & D AAC  
2002 Perth Road Runners, Moorfoot Runners, Cosmic Hill Bashers,  
Montrose & District  
2004 Alva School, Morrison Academy  
2005 Strathearn H  
2006 Sri Chinmoy AC  
2007 Team East Lothian  
2008 Ochil Hill R  
2010 Dunblane School  
2011 Stirling Tri Club, Team Borders  
2014 Clackmannan School  
2015 Falkland Trail R  
2016 PH Racing Club, St Ninians School  
2017 Squadra Porcini  
2018 Deeside Runners, Scottish Prison Service  
2022 Run Livingston

#### Note

Central Region AC became John Greig (Builders) Central in 1994 and  
Central AC in 1997

North Merchiston AC became Corstorphine AC in 1986

Lochgelly AC became Dunfermline & West Fife in 1997 then  
Dunfermline Track & Field Club in 2016

Dundee YMCA Road Runners became Dundee Road Runners in 1987

## League Secretaries

1924-1926	R.S.Aiken	Heriots CCC
1926-1928	Willie Carmichael	Canon ASC
1928-1977	George K Aithie	Edinburgh Northern H /Edinburgh AC
1977-1982	Mike Barnes	Livingston & District AAC
1982-1984	David Nicolson	Falkirk Victoria H
1984 -	Alex Jackson	Ferranti AAC

## League Presidents

1924-1930	G.M Grant	Edinburgh Northern H
1930-1934	Willie Carmichael	Canon ASC/Edinburgh Eastern H
1934-1937	W. Dempsey	Edinburgh Northern H
1937-1938	D B McKenzie	Heriots Cross Country Club
1938-1949	Paddy Crosbie	Edinburgh Southern H
1949-1950	R.R Royles	Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds
1950-1955	Jimmy Mitchell	Edinburgh Rover Scouts AC/ Braidburn AC
1955-1961	G.K Horsburgh	Edinburgh Northern H
1961-1966	Alistair Falconer	Edinburgh AC
1966-1969	Norman Waldie	Gala Harriers
1969-1970	J.Montgomery	Forth Valley AC
1970-1972	Bill Walker	Heriot Watt University CCC
1972-1975	Alan Knowles	Edinburgh AC
1975-1976	Jim Scott	Tayside AC
1976-1977	Mike Barnes	Livingston & District AC
1977-1983	Mel Edwards	Aberdeen AAC
1983-1984	Jim Dingwall	Falkirk Victoria H
1984-2007	Bob Cherrie	Pitreavie AAC
2007-2020	Fred McCluskie	Livingston and District AC
2020-	Sandra Hardacre	Livingston AAC





# Athletics Trust Scotland

At Athletics Trust Scotland (ATS), we believe in the power of athletics and running to transform lives. Our Transforming Lives Programme reaches out to those who are underrepresented and disadvantaged, including people from ethnically diverse communities, those with disabilities, and individuals living in poverty. We support a wide range of initiatives – from leadership programs in prisons to funding racing wheelchairs and financially supporting the ATS Young People’s Forum to raise awareness of mental health in young people & eating disorders in our sport.



Your donation, no matter the amount, can make a real difference through athletics: £40 can send a child to a free athletics holiday camp. £100 can provide two pairs of running spikes, giving a young athlete the proper footwear to succeed.



A contribution of £210 can cover the cost of a coaching assistant to mentor disadvantaged individuals, and £980 can fund a racing wheelchair, allowing a young person with disabilities to participate fully in athletics.

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