

Lindsays scottishathletics National Cross Country Championships
Callendar Park, Falkirk FK1 1YR
Saturday 21st February 2026
Referees' Report

1. Introduction:

- Following the success of our 2025 Championships, with course redesign to address environmental impact concerns on the historic *Antonine Wall*, we made a welcome return to Callendar Park. Apart from the 2020-21 COVID season this has been our home since 2006 and our 20th consecutive staging of our National Cross-Country Championships at Falkirk.
- Our thanks therefore to Historic Environment Scotland, Falkirk Council and our event sponsors Lindsays for their continued support and **scottishathletics** Events Team along with host club Falkirk Victoria Harries, who work tirelessly throughout the year to facilitate the event.

2. Event Information:

- Competition and Final Information, course map, tent & gazebo guidelines were posted on **scottishathletics** Events Calendar, along with pre-race links to "Race Entries" and "Live Results".
- **Entries:** On-line Entries only. Entries closed Thursday 05 February 2025.
- **Parking:** Parking, including coach parking, at Graeme High School, with overflow parking at the business centre to the east of Callendar Park and at the west end of Callendar Park as shown on course map, with a request to car share if possible.
- **Officials Parking:** Graeme High School.
- **Staff and VIP Parking:** To the west of Callendar Park.
- **Declarations:** Declarations and chip distribution opened at 09.30am for all races in the registration marquee by Callendar House.
- **Bib Numbers:** Chip timed races with chip in bib. U17W and U20 Women wore yellow numbers; all other athletes wore white numbers.

3. On-site Event Facilities:

- Race start and finish located in the grassed "D" area behind Callendar Park House. Historically this area was subject to high flooding risk but now mitigated by ground drainage improvement.



Pre-Event Inspection



On Race Day

Regular pre-race inspections of the area were made, provided reassurance on ground conditions and finish siting went ahead as planned, but excluding traffic on the grass.

- Club "Tented Village" area spread around the north and west of the start / finish.



Club "Tented Village"



Course Through "Tented Village"

- Two on-site catering outlets, where officials/Marshalls could redeem their meal vouchers for "Doughnuts & Tea" (near the start) and "Breakfast Roll" (beside Staff and VIP car park).

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- On site Portaloos were located to the east of Callendar Park House.



Portaloos

- Declarations, officials and marshals report were in large Marquee to the east of the start with Medal Presentations made from a gazebo adjacent to the finish.



Declarations and Officials Report Marquee



Medal Presentations

4. Weather:

- Weather preceding the event was generally wet. Although rain forecast, conditions on the day were generally mild, with only light wind and a couple of light showers.

5. Medical & First Aid:

- First Aid cover with defibrillator provided by Amvale Medical. Vehicle at the start/finish area with 3 teams; one at the First Aid vehicle, one at the Finish and a third positioned around marshal point 7, from where they could view the whole of the "golf course" section.
- Event radios and marshal location map provided to facilitate prompt course communication, incident location and response.
- Provision for medical and emergency contact details on the back of runners' bib numbers.
- First Aid reported treatment given to a total of eight casualties of varying ages: spiking (4), hand abrasion (1), knee injury (1), wrist strain (1) and fainting (1).
- Considering potential risk severity, UKA Accident Report forms were submitted on:
 - Fainting: Might have resulted in blocked airways.
 - Sprained wrist: The result of a runner in front of the patient falling at the finish and the patient tripping over him, might have had a more serious fracture outcome.

6. Transponder Timing:

- "Chip in bib" Transponder timing was provided by FR Systems.
- Finish line back-up video provided, together with manual back-up place and time recording.
- Finish Line Judge checked and adjudicated on leading runners finishing positions.
- Assistant Finish Referee checked that pre-race transponder recording checks had been completed, cross-checked manual place and time results against chip timing results and signed off on results ensuring that team results were not released early, before releasing to presentations team.

7. Officials:

- Officials reported to marquee in Callendar Park where they received final duty allocations, meal tickets and radios, as appropriate.

8. Radio Allocations:

- Key personnel and First Aid were allocated Radios, with briefing on radio protocol and operation.
- There were no reported radio reception blackspots.

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9. Race Timetable:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| • U13G | 11:00 | U15G | 11:32 | U17M | 12:13 | SW | 12:50 | U20W | 13:55 |
| U13B | 11:16 | U15B | 11:53 | U17W | 12:18 | U20M | 13:50 | SM/NB | 14:40 |

- The leading U17W overtook the last U17M at the finish, creating some difficulty for Officials to deploy the finish ribbon.
- A discrepancy on the Course Map timetable, noted U20M starting at 13:45, which lead to some confusion:
 - U20M started at 13:50 and U20W at 13:59.
 - The delayed U20W start resulted in the U20M catching the U20W as the men completed their first long lap and women completed their first short lap, an issue that had been addressed in the official 2026 timetable.
 - U20W race was completed well ahead of the SM completed their first lap.
 - From subsequent review of timetable, had the U20W started at 13:55, the leading U20W would have caught the U20M backmarkers.

10. Race Starts:

- Ground conditions either side of the Start area restricted the Start line width to approximately 23m, start area branding either side clearly defined the start area and excluded spectators.
- Following consultation with the Chief Starter, the following modifications were made to the start:
 - To accommodate the SM race start, it was agreed that the start line should be pulled forward to increase the space between the start and the terrace wall to the rear of Callendar Park House, with installed branding either side retained to create start are exclusion.
 - The start team was limited to the Chief Starter and one Assistant Starter, leaving them short in number for implementing the preferred assembly line 2m behind the start line. It was alternatively agreed that the start area be taped off between the ends of the side branding, which also served to exclude athletes from warming up on the course.



Start Set-up

- Athletes completed final warm-up on the adjoining grassed area between the start and finish.



Athletes Final Warm-up Area Between Start and Finish

- 5m, 3m and 1m race pre-start warnings were given.
- The Assistant Referee assisted Starters with removal of the Start line exclusion zone taping on the 3-minute warning whistle.
- Starter checked with both chip timing and manual back-up timekeeper that they were prepared for the start.
- Starts were signalled using electronic audible/visual start system. Race starts went off without any major reported incidents.

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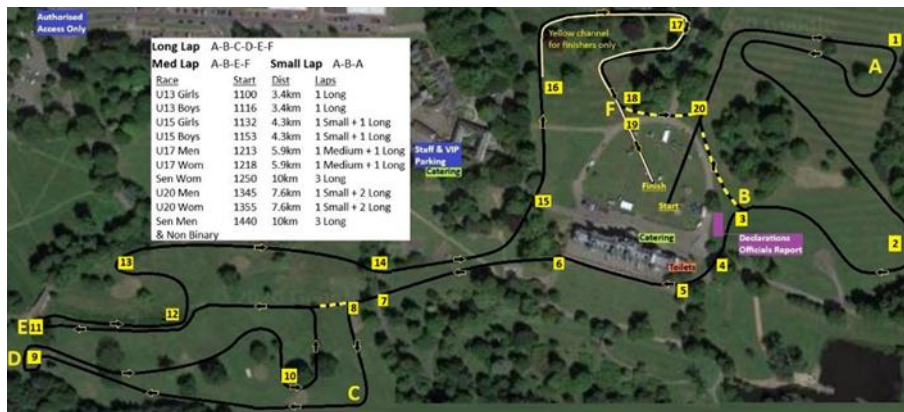
- All generally worked well, although a few extra start area Stewards would have been beneficial.



The Senior Men's Race Start

11. The Course:

- The course generally followed the 2025 redesign to exclude the *Antonine Wall* sections and incorporated extended use of the former *golf course* to the SW.



Course/ Marshals Map

- In 2025 some issues were experienced, where finishers and lapped runners setting out on their last lap both chose the same running line around the “final” bend and lapped runners being sent out on their last lap obstructed finishers who were being directed into the finish.

This was successfully addressed by the addition of a double channel system, some 350m from the finish, with lapping/lapped runners directed into the outer LH channel and finishers into a “Finishers only” channel, as outlined below.

Photo opposite shows Advance warning signage with “Lapping” (left) and “Finishers Only” (right) channel split in the distance at marshal point 16, each manned by Lap Scoring officials.

Photos below show:

- Lapping Runners as they approach the split point, directed left into outer race lap channel.
- Last lap finishers in “finishers only” channel approaching the finish.
- Direction signage above head height.



“Finishers Only” Channel Split

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Lapping Runners Approaching Split directed left



"Finishers Only" Channel at Marshal Point 19

- Feedback on "Finishers Only" channel split:
 - All went well generally, only minor issues reported were the challenge of ensuring sight and hearing-impaired runners followed directed into the appropriate channel.
 - It was suggested that Marshal 15 be asked to provide additional advance warning of the approaching split.
 - A long day for the officials, with no opportunity for a comfort break.
- Course clearing and grass cutting, with increased width in some areas of the golf course, were completed by Falkirk Council ahead of the event.
- The Referee and Assistant Referees walked the course with the Clerk of Course ahead of final course sign-off.
- The course was fully double-taped each side, addressing the risk of runners misreading the course marking and heading off-course.
- Course marking along the ash path in front of Callander Park House between marshal points 5 and 6 allowed runners the option of running on the ash path or the adjoining grass verge.
- The course walk-round identified:
 - A few instances of dog fouling on the course, which were duly removed.
 - A substantial increased prevalence of mole hills was noted, particularly at the foot of the climb up to the plateau after the start, around the plateau, lower loop after the plateau approaching Callendar Park House and isolated areas around the course generally. These represented significant trip hazards which were duly addressed.
- Following recent rain underfoot conditions were soft in places. However, the course appeared to stand up well to the footfall and there has been no adverse feedback from the Parks department.
- Last SM was substantially behind the rest of the field. The Referee monitored his progress and issued general radio warnings giving the runners bib number and advising that course marking should not be taken in until he had passed each Marshalling point. Unfortunately, course derigging had already commenced around the top plateau but the route around this area was clearly defined by earlier footfall, the Referee monitored last runners progress through this area.

12. Course Marshalling:

- Marshals reported to the Chief Marshal(s) at the marquee, where they received meal tickets and detailed briefing on their roles, along with cowbells to enhance the race experience.
- Marshalling positions are shown on item 11 Course/Marshals' map.
- Radios were allocated to both early and late shift marshals at strategic points, with marshals' feedback on leaders and backmarkers requested.
- Marshalling points noted:
 - Responses included 17 who marshalled in 2025, 13 from SAL appeal on 17/02/2026 and 6 Officials who agreed to Marshal, a total of 36. Operating an early/late two shift system required 20 marshals /shift, with resulting shortfall. The decision taken to prioritise the more remote areas of the course to ensure prompt response to any emergency medical situation resulted in positions 5, 14 & 16 not allocated.

Points 5 & 14: The course is staked and taped both sides making it difficult for any runners to leave the course at these points.

Point 16: Two Lap Scoring officials had been allocated to point 16 with an additional official 50m in advance of the "finishers only" channel split to provide early warning.

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- Competition Information Important Note (3) requested that “Clubs entering are asked to provide two marshals to assist on the course”. It was disappointing that there were no offers received. This has been reviewed with the Event Manager and an alternative marshal volunteer sourcing method from clubs for 2027 will be investigated.
- After the start of the M20 race the Line Judge noted that point 20 “gate” had not been opened to allow the M20’s to complete their first short lap before heading out on their long lap. The Line Judge was proactive in making the required adjustment and should be applauded for doing so.
- Referee asked point 20 Early Shift marshal to ensure that spectators were behind course marking tape at race starts.
- Marshalls feed-back in summary as follows:
 - Marshals positive experience generally reflected.
 - Position 1 Early Shift: *Athletes walking the course whilst multi-lap races were in progress, but they were happy enough to be moved off. The message is often put out by the commentators but occasional reminders throughout the day might be good.*
 - Position 3 Early Shift: *Able to use the map to figure out the tape movement required for each race. If the marshal posted to point 3 was a first timer then there could be potential problems with the repeat of the small loop etc. in certain races as they may not realise what was involved.*
 - Position 4 Late Shift: *Trying to read map on phone is awkward, should have picked up a paper copy of course map on arrival.*
 - Position 11 Late Shift: *There was one very slow runner in the Senior Men’s Race. We were reluctant to dismantle the course until he passed through, but we did start to remove the tapes before he arrived at the marshalling points. Should there be a cut-off time for a Championship event? NB Similar Cut-off feedback suggestion was received by the Referee.*
 - Position 19 Early Shift (Finish straight course crossing point: *Tape stretched and concerned it would break. Reduce “gate” width and consider fixed barrier each side of path.*
 - Position 19 Late Shift: *Taping off a separate lane for the run down to the finish was a great improvement on last year and appeared to work well.*

13. The Finish:

- Spectator exclusion zone set up around the finish with officials’ zones to each side.



The Finish

- FR Systems and event sound system set up in the west enclosure under partially screened gazebos as recommended in 2025 Referees’ Report, to avoid facing into the sun. No traffic allowed on the grass therefore all equipment manually installed.
- Finish Referee allocated to check Chip timing setup and operational checks, observe finishes, check chip timed results with Manual back-up place and timing results and release of team results to Presentations.
- FR Systems confirmed that they would not be at the start line to start their timing system but would start it remotely from their finish line gazebo, from where they had a good sight line. Timekeepers were asked to cross-check their manual race start timing with FR Systems to ensure agreement.
- FR Systems provided video back-up.
- The Referee received feedback of finish ribbon edges curling.

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14. Place & Time Recording:

- Finish Referee noted the first three finishers in each race, cross-checked with line judge, manual position back-up and chip timing team.
- There were no discrepancies identified.

15. Results:

- Live results were posted on FR Systems website.
- Only one non-binary runner entered in the SM/NB race therefore no medal awarded. For the purposes of SM team results, non-binary runner was excluded.
- Overall Club Trophy winners: AT Mays Trophy (Male - Cambuslang Harriers) and Pat Spence Memorial Trophy (Female - Giffnock North).
- Only one provisional results club feedback change requested (runner had worn incorrect number). Referee agreed change and subsequently signed off final results.

16. Prizegiving:

- Individual and team medal winners were identified from the chip-timed results following cross-checking against manual back-up results.

17. Entries and Finishers:

| Race | Entered | | Finished | | Race | Entered | | Finished | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2025 | 2026 | 2025 | 2026 | | 2025 | 2026 | 2025 | 2026 |
| • U13G | 179 | 162 | 155 | 132 | • U17M | 118 | 97 | 93 | 77 |
| • U13B | 140 | 132 | 116 | 116 | • U20W | 68 | 79 | 50 | 56 |
| • U15G | 132 | 145 | 108 | 125 | • U20M | 87 | 86 | 61 | 68 |
| • U15B | 136 | 113 | 111 | 99 | • SW | 399 | 389 | 286 | 305 |
| • U17W | 90 | 67 | 66 | 58 | • SM+NB | 858 | 744 | 639 | 577 |
| Sub-Total 1 | 677 | 619 | 556 | 530 | Sub-Total 2 | 1,530 | 1,395 | 1,129 | 1,083 |
| Total (1+2) | 2,207 | 2,014 | 1,695 | 1,613 | | | | | |

18. Referees' Closing Comments & Recommendations:

- Thanks to **scottishathletics** Event Management team, the event Conveners, Falkirk Victoria Harriers course build team and not least, to all the officials and volunteers who give freely of their time and expertise for the benefit of our sport, you all made the Referee's role so much easier.
- **Event Timetabling:**
 - There might be scope for further refinement of race Timetabling.
- **The Start:**
 - Additional Strater's support required to facilitate set-up and operation of race starts.
- **Course Crossing Points:**
 - Marshals feedback highlight issues with course crossing point set up. Consideration might be given to restricting the width of course crossing "gates", particularly the "gate" at marshal point 19 on the finishing straight to the width of the track.
- **Finishing / Lapped Runners Split Approaching Finish:**
 - The changes made following 2025 experience with addition of an outer "lapping" and inner "finishers only" channel from around 350m to the finish worked well.
 - Consideration might be given to Marshal 15 briefing including provision of advanced warning of approaching split with lapping runners directed left, and finishers directed to the right.
- It's a long day for the Officials overseeing the split, with no opportunity for a comfort break. Consider additional support to these officials.
- **Course Marshalling:**
 - Responsibility for course gate changes should be clearly defined and most experienced Marshals allocated to these critical points with detailed briefing provided.
 - Introduction of race cut-off times was suggested, this would contravene **scottishathletics** [Equality](#) policy and therefore should not be considered. Consider monitoring of last runner and Marshals/ course derigging team instructed not to start derigging course until clearance provided by delegated Official.

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- **The Finish:**
 - All seemed to work well, no adverse comments received.
- **Course Announcer:**
 - Locating the Course Announcer on the day proved challenging. Some method of identification required.

David Cairns, Referee (Endurance Level 4; License No. 2659560)
Jackie Stewart, Assistant Referee (Endurance Level 3; License No. 2671336)
Isobel Martin, Assistant Referee (Endurance Level 2; License No. 2926855)