

**Scottish Cross Country Championships**  
**Callendar Park, Falkirk 22/2/2020**  
**Referees' and Event Convener's Report**  
**Ron Morrison, David Cairns and Alex Jackson**

For the 15<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. That is how the Referees' Report often begins. However, the 2019-20 championships presented a major challenge that took a lot of good will, hard work and imagination to overcome.

The major challenge was the weather and in particular rain and flooding. In short most of the course that we have used over the years was either inaccessible or under water. The course designers Andy Stevenson and David Lothian alerted the Events Manager about the state of the course and a meeting was arranged with Claire Menim, Paul Finnie of Falkirk Sports and Recreation, the course designers and Ally Love, Alex Jackson and Ron Morrison on 12<sup>th</sup> February only 10 days before the event. The Parks team could not have been more helpful and a new set of courses were planned and agreed utilising the high ground within the park. This was no small task as it included new design, measurement, maps, marshal instructions etc. Even then as the forecast was for more rain it was not clear that the event would take place at all. A further site meeting was required the following week and Ally Love and Alex Jackson took the decision to proceed with the event.



**Figure 1: At the back of Callendar House on race day**

The weather on the day was not kind either with high winds, occasional showers and at least one flash of lightening. The condition of the park at the end of the day was not pristine and the damage considerable but did not seem to bother the Falkirk Parks representatives too much as they reckoned that the park would recover.

There was little in the way of complaints from athletes about the soft muddy condition of the course and indeed it suited many as it was a true cross country. When you hear athletes proudly saying "I have run in worse" it means that they probably have not but have enjoyed it a lot.

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.

Overall there are two major issues that we should consider:

- At what point during an event can/should it be called off and by whom?
- Should there be a back-up plan at a different venue?

#### **UKA 21 S4**

(7) **Health and Safety:** if the relevant Referee or Medical Officer of a Competition considers that the performance of any athlete may be injurious to their health and safety then that Referee can refuse to allow that athlete to start or continue to compete in a Competition at their sole discretion.

### **1 Pre Race Action**

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. The weather was such that the **drone** technology could not be used this year.

A new style Risk Assessment document was produced by the Events team. A welcome innovation is that it identifies who is responsible for managing the specific risk.

#### **1.1 Entries and Finishers**

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. The new SAL entry system worked well as it has been doing all season. The entries were put on the SAL website in good time for scrutiny. There was one scrutiny objection reported before the event or on the day.

This is a case worth noting as it involved an athlete who was 1<sup>st</sup> claim for an English Club and had successfully applied for a change of the 1<sup>st</sup> claim club to another English club. However he was still eligible to compete for Scottish club as 1<sup>st</sup> claim within Scotland. He resigned from that club and joined another Scottish club (Edinburgh AC -> Corstorphine AAC). That is where the objection came from. At some time the athlete had been told of the Scottish transfer rule and applied and was cleared for competition from the 1<sup>st</sup> February.

Entries for the Championships were very slightly on the rise at (2463) but with some age groups surprising down. The upward trend in the Senior entries is masking the variations in the younger age groups. It is better to look at these trends in a 10 year range to measure drift **See** However to understand the variation correctly we would have to look at demographic information to gauge population peaks and troughs.

In comparison with last year there were only minor increases in race finishers in the U17W (47-56), U20W (36-37) and U20M (67-73) but reductions in the other age categories. Given the weather it is remarkable the total field was only down by 80.

Entries												
Year	Venue	U13G	U15G	U17W	U20W	Senior Women	U13B	U15B	U17M	U20M	Senior Men	Total
2010-1	Falkirk	140	122	82	45	281	164	141	103	89	632	1799
2011-2	Falkirk	154	115	68	55	323	148	144	95	78	725	1905
2012-3	Falkirk	172	128	69	44	301	173	153	112	85	719	1956
2013-4	Falkirk	179	149	66	46	329	190	159	112	79	793	2102
2014-5	Falkirk	216	149	73	44	330	214	157	130	78	823	2214
2015-6	Falkirk	197	140	88	60	378	193	188	122	89	840	2295
2016-7	Falkirk	171	159	74	45	382	202	196	130	89	887	2335
2017-8	Falkirk	196	164	70	63	365	226	168	120	83	819	2274
2018-9	Falkirk	187	135	76	50	406	233	179	120	94	978	2458
2019-20	Falkirk	179	136	76	48	434	202	193	117	114	964	2463

Finishers												
Year	Venue	U13G	U15G	U17W	U20W	Senior Women	U13B	U15B	U17M	U20M	Senior Men	Total
2010-1	Falkirk	91	76	50	33	201	108	107	68	58	451	1243
2011-2	Falkirk	111	71	47	37	234	99	108	72	59	505	1343
2012-3	Falkirk	127	93	49	24	214	130	112	79	55	503	1386
2013-4	Falkirk	123	106	47	28	246	150	120	85	49	566	1520
2014-5	Falkirk	168	111	55	28	226	166	130	95	49	571	1599
2015-6	Falkirk	150	101	64	49	265	155	137	94	62	633	1710
2016-7	Falkirk	140	119	48	31	269	164	150	89	62	647	1719
2017-8	Falkirk	160	133	44	44	271	181	127	87	63	623	1733
2018-9	Falkirk	146	114	47	36	319	185	146	92	67	722	1874
2019-20	Falkirk	142	108	56	37	315	157	146	86	73	675	1795

Figure 2: Entries and finishers

## 2 On the Day

### 2.1 The Course

Lindsays scottishathletics National Cross Country Championships  
 Saturday 22nd February 2020  
 MARSHALS MAP  
 Callendar Park, Falkirk

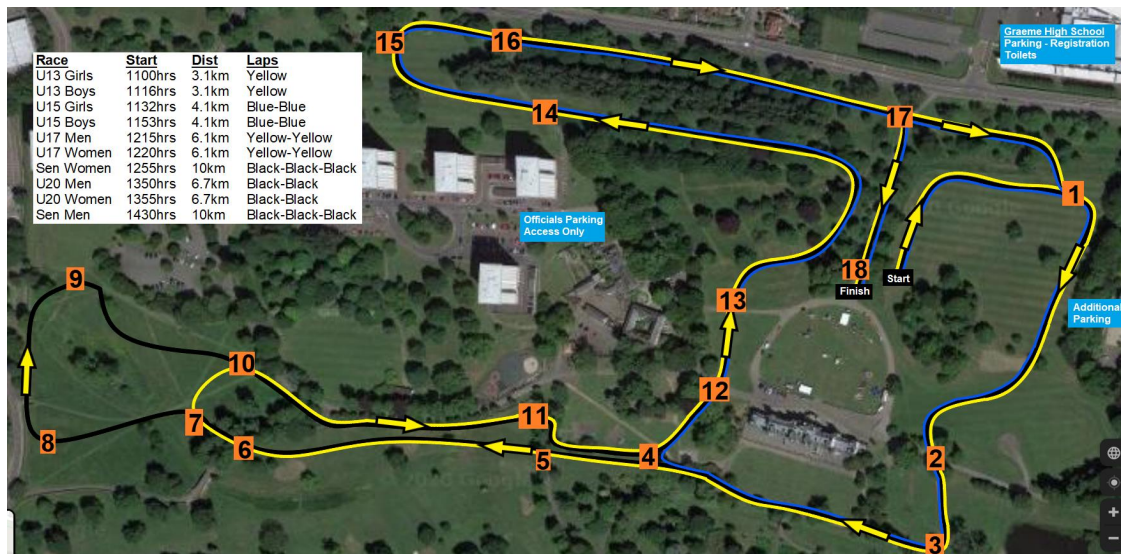


Figure 3: Course Map and Marshal points

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 especially given that the courses were changed at a late date and incorporated new fields. The design of the course was particularly challenging this year to avoid the flooding.

- The Assistant Referee walked the course before the event and ensured that the course marking was accurate. There was a course change due to flooding at the SE of Calendar House. At marshal point 16 on the steep climb the course was adjusted after the U15B race.

The FRS video camera was in operation this year and was necessary to resolve some lost chips and some chip misplacement at the finish. This last point is where the chips record using the second mat for an athlete where the video shows that the reverse order was true. This was true of Dougie Selman and Thomas Wilson in 30<sup>th</sup> place in the Senior Men's race. In such a close team race this could have caused an invalid result. The issue was reported to the Referee and resolved using the FRS video.

- It may be worth considering appointing someone to check the chip results against the video results.

The U17 men and women ran as one race but with separate starts. The same applied to the U20 men and women. The aim of the separate starts is to reduce the overall timetable while ensuring 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.

Unfortunately this year the two timetables in the Programme were different for the U17s races. The front page of the Programme separated the races by 10 mins and the back page with the map separated them by 5 mins. The 5 minute gap is the correct one and the U17M caught the back of the U17W race. Although there was one complaint about the overlap this was no worse than the overlap last year and did not disrupt the clean finish of the U17M race.

The mistake originates in the 2018-9 Programme where there was planned a 10 minute gaps in the U17 races.

The programme error had been proof read by at least the Referee, Assistant Referee, Event Convenor etc and not spotted. The mistake, of course, was that the Starter and Referee used the 10 minute gap. However last year “The referee instructed the starter to start the U17W two mins early to avoid the fast approaching U17M race. The race timings for the U17s and the senior men could be revised for next year.”

While the first comment in last year's referees' Report did not get implemented the second part did and saved approximately 20 minutes from the overall timetable. The timetable is extremely well optimised now.

## 2.2 Marshals

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

Bellahouston H, Cambuslang H, Carnegie H., Edinburgh AC, Edinburgh University H & H, Gala Harriers, Lasswade AAC, Linlithgow AAC, Penicuik Harriers, Perth Road Runners, Portobello RC, PH Racing Club, Shettleston H, Springburn H, Strathearn H Volunteers via Falkirk Community Trust, Falkirk PSYV and Alloa PSYV.

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

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. The comments from the Marshals are in Appendix 1.

## **2.3 The Start**

The starts worked successfully especially given the poor weather conditions. There were no major incidents or collisions observed.

## **2.4 The Finish**

The FRS chip timing system used disposable chips again. The video system was live and necessary. It was used to resolve place queries.

## **2.5 The School**

The school is now used 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 well and there were no major results issues. There were a few (about 15) issues with missing or misfiring chips but the Events Manager collected these reports and had them resolved by FRS before declaring the Final results. Only one of these issues caused a medal result to be altered and that was resolved on the field using the FRS video.

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 provisional results were produced by FRS and were on the SAL website by 6.00pm. The Final 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 race timetable again accommodated the new race distances and simultaneously avoided 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 have been announced on the SAL website. The Lindsays Trophy for the largest number of finishers per club will also be presented when a time and venue can be arranged.

This season the Women's team race was moved from 5 to count to 6 to count. Last year 24 teams finished with 5 to count and 17 teams finished with 6 or more counters. This year 23 teams finished with 6 or more athletes.

Bellahouston Harriers	17
Fife AC	16
Garscube Harriers	15
Harmeny AC	13
Gala Harriers	12
Hunters Bog Trotters	12
Perth RR	12
Edinburgh AC	11
Giffnock North AC	11
Edinburgh Univ Hare and Hounds	9
Bellahouston RR	8
Glasgow University Hares and Hounds	8
Greenock Glenpark Harriers	8
Shettleston Harriers	8
West End RR	8
Forres Harriers	7
Linlithgow AC	7
Penicuik Harriers	7
Calderglen Harriers	6
Corstorphine AAC	6
Dumbarton AAC	6
Portobello RC	6
VP-Glasgow AC	6
Central AC	5
East Kilbride AC	5
Kirkintilloch Olympians	5
Metro Aberdeen RC	5
Pitreavie AAC	5
Cambuslang Harriers	4
Dundee Hawkhill Harriers	4
Dundee Road Runners	4
Kilmarnock H&AC	4
Maryhill Harriers	4

## **4 Appendix 1**

### **4.1 Marshals' Feedback**

#### **Ken and Sue Walker (Carnegie H) Position 17 Late Shift**

Sue & I really enjoyed the event this afternoon. You guys did a great job in running it with the ground conditions as they were.

We did have one event I wanted to raise with you as it was a bit of a learning experience for us.

Just after we took over the checkpoint 17 a late young runner with Giffnock AC came through on the U17 men's race. He had completed his 2 laps and we directed him towards the finish, but he didn't seem to understand and ran between us to start another lap. We shouted after him and a runner who was with us ran after him, but he sprinted away from her.

Shortly afterwards his mum came up to our checkpoint and asked if we'd seen him. We explained what happened and she indicated her son was autistic and wouldn't necessarily respond to our direction.

She was obviously worried about him, but I think he was eventually intercepted further on the course.

It would be useful in future if Marshalls could be made aware of runners who may need extra help (that's assuming the parents or clubs advise you guys of that need) or maybe someone he knows might have been able to be at a critical checkpoint.

He ran more of the course than he needed to, but obviously didn't cross the finish line in the normal way.

If it helps give him a finish time, he reached checkpoint 17 about a minute or two before the first senior women's finisher in her final lap so he would have had a similar finishing clock time (not race time) to her.

I think there was one later finisher in the U17 men.

All in all, I think it worked well and that was the only real issue we had at our checkpoint.

I hope that's useful info for you and hopefully we'll see you next year if not before.

**Des Crowe (Penicuik H) Position 18 Late Shift (Senior Men Champ Jamie Crowe's father)**

Thanks to you and all the smashing athletes and marshals, not a grumpy word or negative feel all day. I did have some reservations as to my position re getting a feel for the race and the atmosphere, but you once again proved me wrong. I got it all in spades, still have my tea ticket, can I use it next time or in a pub somewhere.

**Brian Hughes (Cambuslang H) Position 3 Early Shift**

It was my pleasure!

**Stephen Wallace (Cumbernauld AAC) Position 6 Early Shift**

It wasn't bad as I first anticipated and when it was blue sky it was all good.

Regarding the event from an organisation perspective, it was run very well, and I liked the consideration given by your team to come and check I was OK where I was standing - it was much appreciated.

My Shift came and went quickly without any problems.

The only observation I would like to make is that the first aid team located where I was had to deal with a young female athlete from Lasswade in the first race, with a snow shower passing I was surprised to see they didn't have a space blanket to cover her whilst waiting for the ambulance to make its way up to where she was - just a thought!

Well done to you and your team for another great event!

**Frances Wood (Linlithgow AAC) Position 10 Early Shift**

Enjoyed it - and the weather between the showers was quite nice.

One suggestion - I felt we should have had a foil blanket with us. First aiders didn't have one for the young girl who had to get attention and an ambulance ride back to base. She had to stand in her athletic kit for at least 5 minutes.

**Neil Anderson (Linlithgow AAC) Position 5 Early Shift**

Thanks Alex, I enjoyed marshalling and would be happy to do it again.

**Christian Wright (Edinburgh AC) Position 10 Early Shift**

First time for me to be a marshal. Seemed to be well organised. No issues from me

**Ian Bleakley (Falkirk PSYV Leader) Positions 2, 12 and 13 All Crossings on Late Shift**  
(there may not have been a 13 as few people wanted to walk into the lake)

Thanks for having us and well done to all the team for enabling it to go ahead. I think the only feedback we have was regarding the crossings we were marshalling - I had comments stating



that it would have been better if the volunteers had some rope to hold up, to prevent spectators ignoring them and dashing across in between the runners.

**Tom Gillespie (Springburn, HBT, Law etc) Position 4 Early Shift**

Many thanks to you for asking me. I really enjoyed my stint again. The whole event seemed as well organised as ever, even in some potentially hazardous conditions. I should have checked the radio at the tent, as the battery was flat, but didn't really need one at point 4 on the amended course.

**Lorraine Gray (Springburn) Position 14 Early Shift**

Thanks for the email. It was a pleasure helping out on the day. Despite the weather, it was perfect for cross country.

I was placed up beside the high flats and got some unpleasant feedback from a couple of the residents who felt aggrieved at having to wait a few seconds to cross the path. I didn't respond to any of their comments but thanked them for their patience when they were able to cross. I don't think any action is needed but wanted to pass on to you what happened.

Thanks to everyone who made it another successful event. I hope to be able to help out again next year.

**Jo Whyte (Garioch Road Runners) Position 14 Late Shift**

A lady told me that she couldn't walk her dog as the ground had become so muddy!!