

Lindsays scottishathletics National Cross Country Championships
Callendar Park, Falkirk FK1 1YR
Saturday 22nd February 2025
Referees' Report

1. Introduction:

- Thanks to the endeavours of **scottishathletics** Events Team and host club Falkirk Victoria Harries, working closely with Historic Environment Scotland and Falkirk Council, the course was redesigned to address environmental impact concerns on the historic *Antonine Wall* and the venue secured.

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 06 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:** At 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. Team managers with lots of chipped numbers to collect were asked to consider bringing a bag to carry them in.
- **Bib Numbers:** Chip timed races with chip in bib. Under 17 and Under 20 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 posed high flooding risk, which has now been mitigated by ground drainage works.
- Club "*Tented Village*" area spread around the north and west of the start / finish.
- Two on-site catering outlets, one near the start and one beside the Staff and VIP car park. It is understood that confusion with 10am and then 11am stop resulted in the latter outlet not accepting meal tickets, this will be all day next year.
- Portaloos were available at the course, located to the east of Callendar Park House.
- A large Marquee to the east of the start housed declarations plus officials and marshals report.
- Medal Presentations were made from a gazebo adjacent to the finish.

4. Weather:

- Weather preceding the event was closely monitored. Although wet and windy in the lead up to the event, conditions on the day were generally mild and dry with only light wind.

5. Medical & First Aid:

- First Aid cover with defibrillator provided by Amvale Medical, 6 first aiders and a vehicle at the start / finish area, with one team at the First Aid vehicle, one team at the Finish and a third team positioned around position 6 on the course, from where they could view the whole of the old pitch and putt area.
- Event radios and marshal location map were provided to facilitate prompt course communication and response.
- Runners bib numbers had provision for medical and emergency contact details on the back.
- First Aid reported treatment given to a total of seven casualties, one 82-year-old spectator and six junior / senior runners of varying ages for sprains, strains, spiking and cyanosis, all relatively minor and none requiring Incident Report submission to UKA.

6. Officials:

- Officials reported to the marquee in Callendar Park where they received meal tickets and duty allocations.
- "Chip in bib" timing was provided by FR Systems, with manual back-up place / time recording.

7. Radio Allocations:

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

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8. 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** 13:45 **SM/NB** 14:40
- The Gap between the U20M & U20W races was increased this year to address new course lap / race distances, but this resulted in U20M on their first long lap catching the U20W shortly after U20W had completed their first short lap while the U20W field were still relatively tightly bunched.

9. Race Starts:

- Following consultation with the Start Area Manager and the Starters Team, the following modifications were made to the start:
 - Start line width was increased from approximately 20m to 24m to accommodate SM race, with branding to the west adjusted to suit.
 - Assembly line added, which was limited to 1.5m behind the start line due to restricted space between the start line and terrace wall to the rear of Callendar Park House.
 - To address previous issues of runners warming up on the course prior to race starts, then forcing their way back into the front of the assembled starters, a start line exclusion zone between the start and assembly lines was taped off.
 - Runners then did their final warm-up / stride-outs on the adjoining grassed area between the start and finish.
- 5m, 3m and 1m race pre-start warnings were given.
- Start line exclusion zone taping removed on the 3-minute warning whistle.
- Starter checked that both chip timing team and manual back-up timekeeper were prepared for the start.
- Starts signalled using electronic audible / visual start system. Each race start went off without any major reported incidents.
- All generally worked well, although it was noted at the start of the SM race that restricted space between the start line and terrace wall resulted in runners spilling out either side.

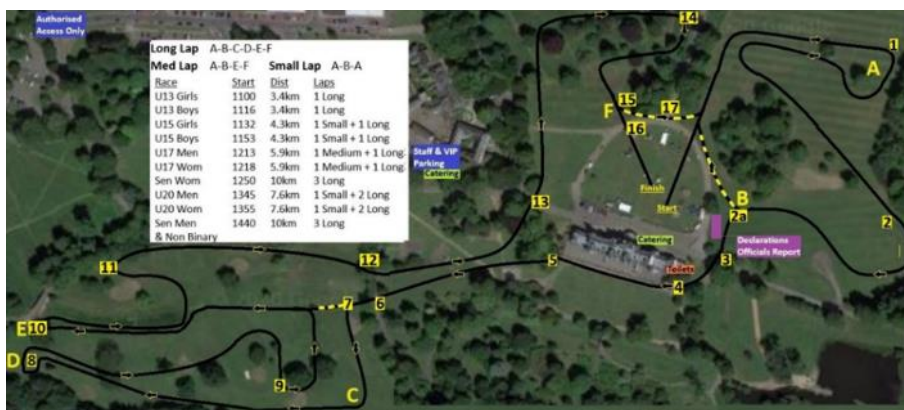
10. The Course:

- Course redesign included omission of the *Antonine Wall* sections (behind the high flats and to the east of the "avenue" leading down from Gaham High School to Callendar Park House) and incorporated extended use of the former *golf course* to the SW.
- The changes seemed to work well, maintaining the challenging features whilst improving spectator friendliness, appeared to have been met with favourable responses from runners and spectators alike.
- Refer to item 8 below: Course Marshalling Map.
- Course clearing and grass cutting were completed by Falkirk Council ahead of the event.
- The Referees walked the course along with the Clerk of Course.
- The course was fully double-taped each side, addressing the risk of runners misreading the course marking and going off-course.
- Course marking along the ash path in front of Callendar Park House between marshal points 4 and 5 allowed the option of running on the ash path or on the adjoining grass verge.
- During the course walk-round, several instances of dog fouling on the course were noted and duly removed.
- Following recent rain, underfoot conditions were generally soft, with associated concerns over the course cutting up. Although there were areas of wear and tear, it was subsequently reported that there were no major areas of concern and that the course stood up well to the number of runners.

11. Course Marshalling:

- Marshals reported to the Chief Marshals at the marquee, where they received meal tickets and detailed briefing on their roles. They were also given cowbells to enhance the atmosphere of the occasion.
- Radios were allocated to both early and late shift marshals at points 1, 2, 7, 8, 10,11 and 14, with marshal 11 tasked with providing radio feedback identifying leaders on each lap and tail runners.
- Marshalling positions as shown on the Marshals' map (see below).

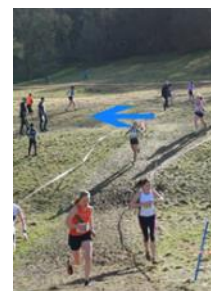
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Course Marshalling Map

- Marshalls feed-back summary as follows:
 - Difficulty identifying when last runner had passed and when to start course dismantling. Marshal 11 updates on runners coming through assisted.
 - Marshals on the final straight challenged with numbers wanting to cross the course.
 - Cowbells were a big help, not only for giving the runners encouragement but also warning spectators of approaching runners and ensuring that the course was clear.
 - Marshal 11 noted that there was a gap in the course marking tape at the LH bend below point 11 where two runners went off course:
 - One in the SW race, where spectators called the runner back.
 - One visually impaired runner in the SM/NB race, directed back onto the correct course by marshal 7.
 - In both cases the runners rejoined the correct course at the point they left.

Referees Comment: Course set-up was double-taped each side therefore this must likely have been the result of spectator damage (hopefully not vandalism).



- Some reported confusion in the SW and SM races at the split point coming off the "last" bend, where finishers were directed into the finish and lapped runners sent out on their last lap. As finishers / lapped runners approached this point they generally took the same tighter inside line around the bend, leaving finishers insufficient time to adjust their running line into the finish.

12. Finish:

- The finish was set up to the west of the start, with barrier fence spectator exclusion zone enclosures each side and an official's access gate to east enclosure, but no access to the west enclosure.
- FR Systems and the event sound system contractor set up in the east enclosure, FR Systems under an open sided gazebo and the sound system contractor in an enclosed gazebo.
- The above set-up generally worked well given the prevailing weather. FR Systems might have struggled in more adverse wet or windy conditions and later in the afternoon, as the sun came round, FR Systems struggled with reading their computer screen.
- FR Systems provided video back-up.

13. Place & Time Recording:

- Assistant Finish Referee noted the first three finishers in each race and cross-checked with manual position back-up and chip timing.
- Referee cross-checked chip timing and manual back-up timing. A few discrepancies were identified and modified to suit.
- In the U20W and SM/NB race a software malfunction with a 10s discrepancy between the software and the race clock was identified. This was resolved and required adjustments made.

14. Results:

- Live results were posted on FR Systems website.

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- One U20M who had not entered was refused permission to run and one U20M who ran wearing an unused team-mates number was subsequently disqualified and removed from the results.
- Only two non-binary runners entered in the SM/NB race therefore no medals awarded. For the purposes of SM team positions, non-binary runners were excluded from the team calculations.
- Following feedback on provisional results from clubs / individuals, matters raised were resolved with results approved and signed off by the Referee.

15. Prizegiving:

- Individual and team medal winners were identified from the chip-timed results, with individual medallist's cross-checked against manual back-up placings.
- U17W team bronze medals were mistakenly presented to Harmeny AC rather than Kilbarchan AAC, whose last finisher had not finished when chip timing team results were taken for presentation.

16. Entries and Finishers:

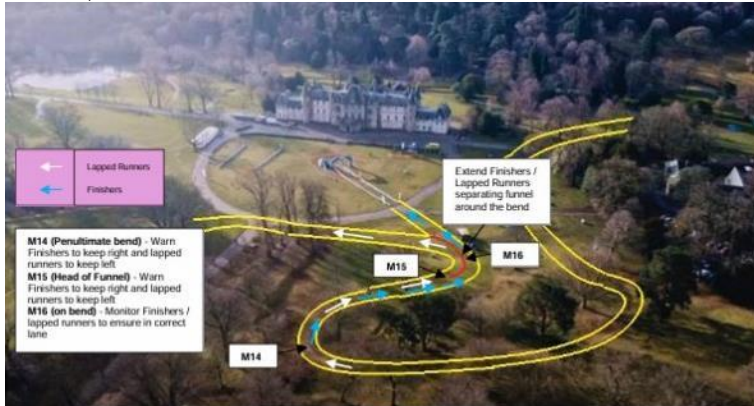
Race	Entered	Finished	Race	Entered	Finished
• U13G	179	155 (87%)	• U17M	118	93 (79%)
• U13B	140	116 (83%)	• U20W	68	50 (74%)
• U15G	132	108 (82%)	• U20M	87	61 (70%)
• U15B	136	111 (82%)	• SW	399	286 (72%)
• U17W	90	66 (73%)	• SM+NB (2)	858	639 (74%)
Sub-Total 1	677	556	Sub-Total 2	1,530	1,129
Total (1+2)	2,207	1,695 (77%)			

17. Referees' Closing Remarks & Recommendations:

- Thanks to Falkirk Council for their continued support and cooperation in facilitating course clearing, host club Falkirk Victoria Harriers for setting the course, the event Convening team, scottishathletics Event Management team and all the officials and volunteers who give freely of their time for the benefit of our sport.
- **U20M and U20W Timetabling:**
 - The Referee timed the last U20M completing the first short lap at 3m45s.
 - Subsequent discussion with the convener noted that consideration might be given to reverting to the former 5-minute time gap between the M20M & M20W starts. Although it is likely that the races would still overlap, both the U20W and U20M field would by then be well strung out, with reduced risk of bunched overlap.
- **Start & Finish Set-up:**
 It was noted in de-brief discussions that pre-event communication required between Course Builders and Referee to agree start and finish set-ups and avoid adjustments on the day. Recommended adjustments as outlined below:
 - Start Set-up:**
 Following the SM race the Referee paced out the gap between the terrace wall and the start line at 17m approx. For future events and to accommodate the SM race start, consideration might be given to:
 - Set start line a minimum of 22m from the terrace wall.
 - 25m minimum start line width.
 - Provide assembly line 2m behind start line.
 - Tape off exclusion zone around the start line, both sides and along the race assembly line with exclusion zone taping taken down between 3 minute and 1 minute prior to race starts.
 - Finish Set-up:**
 - Provide officials access gates to both east and spectator exclusion zone enclosures.
 - Consideration might be given to re-locating chip-timing from east to west side of the finish to avoid facing into the sun.
- **Course Access Crossing Points:**
 To address the risk of course marking tape spectator damage on course access routes consideration might be given to providing designated course crossing points, either marshal controlled or with course making tape locally lowered to ground level.
- **Finishing / Lapped Runners Split Approaching Finish:**
 Finishing / lapped runners split point was taped to create a funnel into the finish but might have benefitted from being extended around the bend, rather than at the crown of the bend with

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Marshals ahead of the split point direction finishers to keep to the right and lapped runners to the left, as outlined below:



Proposed Finisher / Lapped Runner Separation Funnel Set-up

- **Finish Set-up:**
 - Provide officials access gates to both east and spectator exclusion zone enclosures.
 - Consideration might be given to re-locating chip-timing from east to west side of the finish to avoid facing into the sun.
- **Team Medal Presentations:**

Irrespective of the number of team counters, patience needed to ensure correct team results prior to presenting team medals.

David Cairns, Referee (Level 4 Endurance; License No. 2659560)

John Mackay, Assistant Referee (Level 2 Endurance; License No. 2668829)

Frances Wood, Assistant Referee (Level 2 Endurance; License No. 2857557)