

Lindsays scottishathletics National Cross Country Relay Championships
Cumbernauld House Park, Cumbernauld, G67 3JG
Saturday 19th October 2024
Referees' Report

1. Introduction:

- Our National Cross-Country Relay Championships returned once more to our tried and tested course around Cumbernauld House Park.

2. Event Information:

- Competition Information, Parking to Course Directions, Entries Summary – Teams, Team Manager Information, Course Map - Young Male/Female, Course Map - Sen/Jun/Mas and Tent and Gazebo Guidelines were available for downloading on [scottishathletics Events Calendar](#).
- **Entries:** On-line Entries only. Entries closed Thursday 03 October 2024.
- **Parking:** Team / spectator parking at Cumbernauld Academy, South Ring Road, Kildrum, Cumbernauld, G67 2UF, approximately 1.5miles (15-20mins walk) from the venue with club tent drop-off only near the venue.
- **Officials Parking:** At Cumbernauld Theatre carpark. It was reported that there was a lack of signage / direction to the Officials carpark.
- **Declarations:** Team managers declared teams online from a pre-entered pool of athletes and collected bib numbers from the **scottishathletics** on-site gazebo adjacent to the start / finish area from 10am and up to 30mins prior to Race Start Times.
- **Bib Numbers:** Chip timed races with chip in bib. Young Athletes races all white numbers. Seniors' 1st & 2nd laps white, 3rd lap yellow & 4th lap white. Bib numbers suffixed A, B, C, etc. (running order) with V & X as appropriate to designate masters M40-49 & M50+. Masters also wore V or X as appropriate on their back.
- **On-Site Catering & Portaloos:** Located adjacent to the start / finish area.

3. Medical & First Aid:

- First Aid cover with defibrillator provided by Amvale Scotland, two first aiders at start / finish area and two as a roving team around the course.
- 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 four relatively minor "incidents", where treatment was provided and patients subsequently discharged.

4. Weather:

- Weather preceding the event was closely monitored. Although generally wet in the lead up conditions improved for race day, with near perfect mild and broken sunshine autumnal conditions on the day.

5. Race Timetable:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| • Young Females | 12:00 | • Senior / Junior Females | 13:20 |
| • Young Males | 12:40 | • Senior / Junior Males | 14:45 |

6. Start & Changeovers:

- The start / finish area is limited by a large tree to the east and ground sloping away to the west, with consequent restriction on finish set up and start line width.
- Concerns were raised over the proximity of the start / changeover to the finish chip timing mats, with the risk of outgoing runners' chips triggering on the finish mats. The width of the sterile zone between the start / finish was therefore increased (see also item 10: Place & Time Recording) with the branding to the east of the start moved back to maximise the start line width.
- A start assembly line was set up 2-3m behind the start line, where runners assembled before being called forward to the start.
- The Starter signalled starts using electronic audible / visual start system. Each race start went off without major incident.
- Immediately after "first leg" mass starts, the changeover team assembled the changeover holding pen and funnel. A wider funnel of approximately 3m was trialled, which improved changeovers significantly.
- It was noted that, reading incoming finishers bib numbers proved difficult, looking directly into the low winter sun.

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7. The Course:

- Refer to item 8: Course Marshalling maps, Young Athletes 2.5km and Seniors 4km loop.
- The Conveners' pre-event Course Visit with Clerk of Course and South Lanarkshire Council identified areas requiring course clearing and holes near the start / finish.
- Pre-event course clearing was completed by South Lanarkshire Council, holes at start / finish area were dug over and flattened on the day, prior to course inspection walk-round.
- The Assistant Referees walked the course along with the Assistant Convener and Clerk of Course. A few issues with taping around RH bens and transitions from RH to LH turns, holes, etc. were identified and addressed.
- Following recent rain, underfoot conditions were generally soft.
- The following feedback was received on course marking on the senior 1.5km loop around to top plateau:
 - a. On the longer straighter section of the course, there was just one 'guide' tape to show the course line, this wasn't the most direct line to the next turn.
 - b. Some navigational errors occurred in the transition between course marking tape changing from being on the right to the left around the low bend and up the hill towards the end of the senior loop.

These points were highlighted in the walk-round and adjustments made, within the constraints of the in-place course marking and timing pressure. There was no adverse feedback from marshals at these points.

8. Course Marshalling:

- Marshals' maps identified Marshalling positions.



Young Athletes 2.5km Loop



Seniors 4km Loop

- Marshals and key personnel were provided with Radios, radio protocol and instruction on their use. There were no reported reception blackspots.

9. Finish:

- The finish was set up to the west of the start, with start / finish lines aligned and an exclusion zone around and beyond the finish, with finishers ushered through this area by the finish area control team. A further outer exclusion zone was established around the Sound and Chip Timing contractors who were located to the west of the finish.

10. Place & Time Recording:

- "Chips in bib" timing was provided by FR Systems, with video and manual timing back-up.
- Despite the increased sterile zone width between the start / finish, FR Systems reported issues of outgoing runners' chips "triggering" on finish mats, requiring constant monitoring and correction.
- One lost bib was reported. A spare was provided with the appropriate adjustment made in the timing system.

11. Results:

- Results were processed through *OpenTrack* competition management suite for athletics organisers, allowing FR Systems provisional results to be processed and posted promptly on **scottishathletics** website.
- One Senior / Junior Women's team reported that their times were reversed in the results. It was subsequently clarified that they had worn the wrong numbers, FR Sytems actioned the change.
- Following feedback on provisional results from clubs, matters raised were resolved, results approved and signed off by the Referee.

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12. Prizegiving:

- Individual and team medal winners were identified by the Presentation team and checked against the chip timing results prior to presentation at the Presentations area adjacent to the Start / Finish, shortly after each race finished.

13. Entries and Finishers:

Race	Entered	Finished	Incomplete	Total on the day
• Young Females	85	52	12	64
• Young Males	83	44	11	55
• Senior / Junior Females	88	54	19	73
• Masters Women	14	10	0	10
• Masters W50	19	11	1	12
• Senior / Junior Males / NB	132	93	23	116
• Masters Men	31	18	3	21
• Masters M50	36	21	4	25

14. Incomplete Teams:

- Several issues were raised / identified on the day regarding the policy of allowing Young Athletes, in older age groups, with no incoming runner to take over from, being allowed to run.
- Historically, the rule for Young Athletes relay teams was that '*incomplete teams*', with no 1st or 2nd leg runners, were not allowed to run. More recently this has been relaxed to allow runners, who had made the journey but found that younger runners had either not appeared or failed to finish, to at least get a run, albeit that they were asked to remove their bib number and no time or finishing position given.
- On the day an announcement was made that Young Athletes in this situation should report to the referee for instruction and asked to remove their bib numbers. This led to a strongly felt protest from Garscube Harriers young females team manager over not being allowed to wear bib numbers or be timed. The team manager also noted that they had received an email from **scottishathletics** saying that they could run with their bib numbers, at the Referees discretion. The Referee noted the protest and advised that the issue would be reviewed for future events.
- Following consultation, the Referee / Assistants came up with a possible solution. However, this was too late for the Young Females race, the three U17 Garscube ladies were allowed to run, but without bib numbers.
- The Events Team subsequently advised the Referee that by allowing runners to run without their bib number created a Health & Safety issue namely, it would not be possible to identify a runner in the event of a serious incident on the course.
- The same incomplete team scenario occurred in the young male's race. Two VP-Glasgow AC U17 runners were therefore asked to retrieve their numbers and wear them, which they did, with an "N" added in the top RH corner of their numbers to identify them as non-counters. A further ten U17 Kilbarchan runners also turned up at the changeover, without numbers. When asked to retrieve their numbers their team manager advised that when declaring their incomplete teams at Declarations, they had not been given numbers. All twelve U17's were allowed to run, with or without numbers, and were set off at 24:00 on the "running clock". FR Systems were advised of the two VP-Glasgow AC U17 non-counting runners and their start time, they do not appear in the results.
- Further confusion arose in the senior male and female races with Larkhall YMCA Harriers, when declaring as incomplete teams, had not been issued with bib numbers. Both teams (three person) were allowed to run but were not recorded.

15. On-Course Incident (Unsporting Behaviour):

- An incident of on-course unsporting behaviour in the young males first leg (U13 boys) race was reported by a spectator, who provided his name / contact phone number together with photos of the two boys allegedly involved and description of the incident.
- Cambuslang Harriers subsequently confirmed the incident and presented corroborative photos of the two boys involved, stressing that they didn't want to take the matter further, although did want the alleged assailant to be advised that his behaviour was unacceptable and warned as to his future conduct.
- This was subsequently followed up by the referee with the Club team manager with a warning given as to the future conduct of the alleged assailant.

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16. Referees' Closing Remarks & Recommendations:

- Thanks to South Lanarkshire Council for their continued support of the event and cooperation in facilitating course clearing, host club Cumbernauld AAC for setting the course and providing Marshals, the event Convening team, **scottishathletics** Event Management team, all the officials and volunteers who give freely of your time for the benefit of our sport.
- The Event Convener noted that it might be possible to bring the Senior / Junior Males race forward by 5 minutes to 14:40 and would consider for the future.
- Prior to setting-up the start / finish area, chip timing provider should be consulted on the minimum sterile zone width between the start / finish to ensure that there are no issues with outgoing runners chips 'firing' on the finish mats.
- There were a few issues with course marking which should be reviewed and addressed for future events.
- Item 14 Incomplete Teams:
 - Issues outlined in item 14 require careful consideration, to address both Health & Safety and the best interests of the athletes.
 - Despite the best of intention, this issue became a minefield on the day and will require resolution through the Road Running and Cross-Country Commission ahead of future relay championships.
 - Any solution will require to be agreed with the chip timing provider to ensure that it is manageable, and that their system can accommodate.
- Item 15 On-Course Incident (Unsporting Behaviour):
 - The following Saturday at the East District Cross-country League races, the Referees met with the alleged assailants team manager, who was quite shocked about the incident and agreed it unacceptable.
 - The team manager subsequently spoke with the boy and his father, who was also quite shocked. The boy claimed that he had been spiked during the race.
 - The outcome is that the team manager will report the incident to their club's welfare officer and appropriate action taken.
 - The Referee subsequently reported the above outcome to Cambuslang Harriers, who were pleased that the parent and club were taking the matter seriously and would be addressed in an appropriate way. They have updated Cambuslang Harriers president; welfare officer and father of their young athlete.
 - Given that Cambuslang Harriers did not wish the incident to be pursued through SAL disciplinary procedures, this is considered a satisfactory solution and the matter is now closed.

Ronald Morrison, Referee (Level 4 Endurance; License No. 2665241)
David Cairns, Assistant Referee (Level 4 Endurance; License No. 2659560)
Carol Rose, Assistant Referee (Level 2 Endurance; License No. 3412988)