

CROSS COUNTRY

District Championships at Elgin

Inverness Harriers won no trophies but had plenty of fastest individuals at the North District cross country relay championships at Elgin on Saturday. They were, on the other hand, by far the best represented club in the event, with a total of ten teams competing and took second place in all three events.

The best performance of the day came from George MacLennan, who ran an excellently-judged lap in the young athletes' event overhauling his Elgin 'B' rival in the last 100 yards with a characteristic fast finish, and this effort not only took his team into second place behind Elgin 'A' but also gave George the fastest lap in the race, his time of 10 minutes 57 seconds being seconds faster than his nearest rival.

In the Women's race, Lee Lobban, also in the last leg, was also faced with a large deficit on an Elgin athlete, but she held second place for her team to record 7 minutes 2 seconds to equal the time of Marianne MacLeod, who completed the race for the winning Elgin team. In this event the Harrier's under 13 girls, who were in the first leg, put up a very good show, and look like being a very valuable asset in a department which had previously been a weak one.

RETURN TO FORM

It is some time since the name of Donald Macmillan figured prominently in these columns, for over the last two years a regularly recurring throat virus has kept him very much on the sidelines after a very promising early career. However, his difficulties seem to be over now, and he came out on Saturday to record the fastest lap of the day in the men's race, his time of 13 minutes 15 seconds being seconds faster than Neil Martin of Forres, who has been setting the pace in the North this year. This run secured second place for the Inverness team, inevitably behind the Elgin team, who seem to be carrying all before them this year in the senior events.

RIVAL EVENTS

It was, however, very disappointing that only four clubs, Inverness, Elgin, Forres and Orkney were represented in the championships. This did not devalue the performances of those present, as the best athletes happen to come from those clubs, but there were also clubs which were not present whose participation would have enhanced the event. Saturday's turnout of a mere 81 athletes does not reflect accurately on cross country running in the North, and in particular the turnout of only six teams for the senior men's event was sad to behold. With the Glasgow Marathon taking place on the following day, and with so many other similar events also on the programme, there must be a degree of disquiet in cross country circles as to the effect of the marathon boom on their branch of the sport, and in clubs with regard to its effect on the teams they can field for cross country events.