

Competition Guide

Introduction

There are a large variety of competitions available to athletes. This guide is designed to explain the differences between these and which competitions are suitable for which athletes.

Competitions can be split into the following categories:

- Club events (e.g. club time trials and club championships)
- League matches (e.g. Youth Development League)
- Open meetings (e.g. Grangemouth Open Graded meetings)
- Championships (e.g. Scottish Championships)
- Representative matches (e.g. internationals)

The earlier parts of this guide will be useful to the less experienced athletes. The later parts of the guide will be of more use to the more experienced and elite level athletes.

What you need to compete:

- 1) A club vest. Details of how to get one along with other club kit are here: <http://www.centralathletics.co.uk/about-the-club/club-kit/>
- 2) A Scottish athletics membership number. You can do this online here: <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/membership/>

Age groups

Most events use the following age groups based on age at the end of August in the current season. Under 11 = age 9 or 10 on 31st August. Note athletes must be at least 9 on the day of competition to compete

Under 13 = age 11 or 12 on 31st August

Under 15 = age 13 or 14 on 31st August

Under 17 = age 15 or 16 on 31st August

Under 20 = age 19 or less on 31st December.

These age groups apply to all league matches, open graded events, club time trial and club championships. Athletes remain in the same age group throughout the summer season.

Indoor Season

During the indoor season (October to March) athletes compete in the age group applying for the following summer. This means the actual ages of the athletes will be a lot younger than the age group implies, e.g. under 15s will be mainly 12 & 13 at the start of the indoor season as it is based on age the following

August which will be many months away. The same applies to everyone so nobody has to compete against anyone more than 2 years older.

Those who also do cross country may get confused with this as cross country uses the previous summer age groups meaning athletes can be in a different age group for cross country and indoors and could be 15 and still under 15.

Club events

Club time trials

Pre season Meeting - Usually on the last Saturday in March.

Monthly club time trials – Last Thursday of the month from April to August.

The pre season meeting and club time trials are informal events mainly held at Stirling University but sometimes at Lornhill Academy. These performances will be included in the club rankings used for selection for league events and will count for the club standards scheme but will not appear in the power of 10 for national rankings. Selection for the league events at the start of the outdoor season will be based on indoor performances along with the pre season meeting so athletes who didn't compete indoors must do the pre season meeting if they want considered.

Note that these events give a good opportunity for athletes to earn extra points on the club multi events standards scheme by competing in unfamiliar events. See the guide to the standards scheme for full info. To maximise their score athletes should make sure at least once in the season they compete in a running, jumping and throwing event. The time trial is the perfect opportunity for a track specialist to get a performance in at long jump and shot and earn 2 extra points, more if they achieve a graded standard in these events.

Under 11s who compete in long jump, shot and a track event at the same time trial will also earn a ½ bonus point for the club awards. If they do this twice they get a full bonus point which guarantees a certificate and may boost them up a level.

Club Championships

Usually held a Saturday late August or early September at Grangemouth.

All young athletes are expected to compete at this.

Athletes have to enter in advance online and pay an entry fee and can take part in 3- 4 events depending on age group. The entry form will give the full rules.

The club championships are used to decide the club champion in each age group. The athletes' performances are scored on tables that give equivalent points to equivalent performances. Their best 3 events (which must include at least 1 track and 1 field event) are added together to decide their final standing in the club championships.

The top 3 in each age group, along with perpetual trophy winners and award standard certificate winners receive their awards at the annual club awards night usually held in November.

League competitions

The club competes in several leagues.

<i>League</i>	<i>U11</i>	<i>U13</i>	<i>U15</i>	<i>U17</i>	<i>U20</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Mens League				selected	as seniors	Yes
Womens League		Yes	Yes	Yes	as seniors	Yes
YDL (upper ages)				Yes	Yes	
YDL (lower ages)		Yes	Yes	See notes*		
Forth Valley League	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Indoor League	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Selection Policy

This varies according to the ratio of available athletes to spaces and from league to league.

For leagues where we are selecting the strongest available team:

- Where there are more athletes than spaces available (this is the usual situation) then the team manager will have to select which athletes to use.
 - Usually this will be based on ability taking into account seasons best, personal best, recent form. This may involve discussion with coaches to decide who is on form.
 - The team manager may deviate from this either for tactical reasons or to accommodate specific requests for particular events.
- Where there is room for every available athlete the team manager will attempt to give everyone a space with priority to given to the more able athletes.
- Where there are more spaces than athletes available the team manager will attempt to get as many athletes out as possible and fill the team as best they can. Athletes may be asked to do events they would not normally do to ensure the team can maximise their score.

For leagues we use for development e.g. Forth Valley League

- These events are used more for development so selection is aimed more at giving everyone an opportunity.
- Priority is given to athletes unable to get selected for the more important leagues.
- Athletes who make the womens league team and also do YDL should not also be competing at the Forth Valley League.
- Indoor league B teams may be used for development, e.g. athletes unable to make A team may be asked to rest so that new athletes can get an opportunity to compete.

National Relay championships

Selection for these is based on the team managers view on who the fastest athletes are. It is not necessarily the top 4 at the distance in the current season. e.g. for a 4x100m selection will consider 200m times or if an athlete is performing at a high level at hurdles or long jump but not had much opportunity to do a 100m they will be considered. Similar for a 4x300m, 200m times will be looked at. For the indoor 4x200m not many athletes will have had the opportunity to run a 200m indoors so selection will also

consider 60m, 300m times and 200m times from the previous season provided the athlete is showing good form in their main discipline.

Cross country generally allows everyone to compete who wants to.

Athletes will be emailed to ask for availability for league events. **It is important the athletes respond quickly to these emails if they wish to be considered for selection.**

The team manager will then select a team from the available athletes and confirm the team with the athletes. Athletes must inform team managers immediately if they are no longer able to compete. This is to allow the team manager to find a replacement or rearrange the team.

General points for league matches.

- Athletes should arrive at least an hour before their first event and report to the team manager.
- On arrival they need to report to the team manager to collect numbers and should reconfirm what events they are to do as this may have changed due to late withdrawals.
- Many league events finish with sprint relays which require 4 athletes. Athletes should not leave before the relay unless they have confirmation that they are not needed.

Mens League:

- 4 matches a year, covering the full range of Olympic events with 2 athletes per event.
- Usually Sundays from April to August.
- Senior age group only.
- Under 20s compete using senior implements where applicable.
- Under 17s can compete in the in the jumps events and relays (no standard required) and track events (if they have reached a qualifying standard). They can't do throwing, hurdles, steeplechase events as these use senior implements.

Womens League:

- 3 matches a year
- Reasonably full range of events.
- Unlike the mens league there are age group events for the girls as well for U13,U15,U17 & Seniors.
- The club competes as a composite Forth Valley Team with Falkirk Victoria Harriers and other clubs.

These are the only gender specific leagues. All other leagues apply to both male and female competitors.

Youth Development League (upper age groups)

- This is a UK wide league in which the club competes as part of Team Forth Valley in the Northern Division.
- Under 20 & Under 17 age group.

- 3 matches a year from April to August with venues as far afield as Carlisle, Liverpool and Manchester + promotion/relegation match if required.
- This has a full range of events – for matches in England there is an overnight stay required so there is a contribution required towards travel and accommodation.
- Space may be subject to selection but recent policy has been to give every available athlete a space in the team.
- This league is a great experience for athletes to spend a weekend away as part of a team.

Youth Development League (lower age groups)

- 3 matches a year from May to July + final in August if the club qualifies.
- Reasonably full range of events with 2 athletes per event for under 13 & under 15.
- Central AC compete in division 1.

Under 17 Team challenge

- This takes place alongside the YDL lower age groups event and has a limited range of events for under 17s.
- This is a lower priority league which may be used for development.
- As a club we encourage our athletes to compete in the YDL upper age groups events instead of this. However we will enter athletes who wish to compete in this where this event fits into their overall competition programme.

Forth Valley League

- 3 matches a year from April to August.
- Age groups U15, U13 & U11.
- This league is used for development. i.e. selection policy for U13 & U15 athletes in this league is to give priority to athletes who are not selected for other leagues. This is to give more athletes the opportunity to compete and avoid over competing our better athletes.
- In particular athletes who also compete at womens league and YDL should not take part in Forth Valley League to avoid over competing.
- The club has an A team and B team in this league in order to give every available athlete a place.
- We would encourage athletes not used to competing at league events to make themselves available for this as it is a great place for athletes to start league competition in a low key local league.

Indoor League

- 3 matches from October to February + final & relays in March, though dates can vary according to availability of venue.
- This takes place at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow over the winter for all age groups from U11 to U20.
- A & B teams can be entered. Note the A & B teams are separate teams, the A team will be our strongest team, B team may be used for development, i.e. not necessarily our next best athletes.

- Note that age groups are as for the following summer (see above).

Open Graded meetings

Various venues hold open graded meeting. Most now require online entries in advance which can be found on the Scottish athletics fixture list. These are open to everyone so are ideal for athletes to get a performance in. Athletes who aren't making league teams or wish to try different events can use these events.

Grangemouth Stadium normally hold these from May to September outdoors on the first Wednesday of the month, and indoors from December to March on 1st or 2nd Wednesday.

For those looking for more competition there are other open graded events in Edinburgh, Glasgow & elsewhere. These will be advertised on the Scottish Athletics fixture list.

Championships

Championships are the main focus of the more able athletes' season.

Scottish Championships

Scottish athletics hold the following championships every year:

- Scottish Senior & under 17 championships (outdoor August, indoor January)
- Scottish age group championships (Under 13/15/20, outdoor August, indoor Feb/ March)
- Scottish Combined events championships (Under 13 to Seniors, outdoor July, indoor Feb/March)
- Scottish District championships (outdoor only in mid May)
- Scottish Indoor Open event (January, more an open graded than a championship but worth doing)
- Under 12 superteams, well worth doing for all under 12s.

Any athlete who is good enough should be taking part.

And a special note on the combined events championships, any athlete who completes a pentathlon or superteams event earns a bonus point on the club awards scheme which guarantees a certificate. They can earn up to 2 bonus points a season which boosts them up a grade on the awards scheme.

It is the responsibility of the athlete to enter themselves for these events. Entries generally close 2-3 weeks before the event. Entries can be done online by going into the Scottish athletics website, finding the event on the fixture list and clicking on apply online. Athletes will need their Scottish Athletics membership up to date as this will be checked. See start of this document for how to renew.

Scottish Schools championships

The Scottish Schools (SSAA) athletics association organises the following championships.

- Scottish Schools indoor championships (usually 1st Wednesday & Thursday in February)
- Scottish Schools pentathlon championships (1st Saturday in June)
- Scottish Schools championships (2nd Friday and Saturday in June)

The Scottish Schools website www.ssaa.co.uk is very good at giving information on these.

Only your school can enter you for these. Speak to your PE department. The championships have qualifying standards.

The club sends lists of athletes who have qualified to all the schools which should assist with getting athletes entered but the onus is still on the athlete to speak to their PE department.

UK Championships

These are for the very best athletes to test themselves against the rest of the UK. The senior championships double up as the trials for either Olympics, World or European Championships.

Age group championships are run by England Athletics so are officially called the England championships but they are open to anyone from throughout the UK so are effectively UK championships. Details on these can be found on the England athletics website.

www.englandathletics.org

England Athletics run:

- U20/U23 championships (June)
- U20/Senior combined events championships (June)
- U15/U17 championships (August)
- U15/U17 combined events championships (August)
- U20/U17/U15 Indoor championships (February)
- U20/ Senior indoor Combined events championships (January)
- U15/U17 indoor combined events championships (February or March)

A contribution towards funding for travel to these events is available from the Club.

Representative Matches

Schools Internationals

These are both Scotland v England v Wales v Ireland

SIAB track & field international

An individual event international is held in mid July for under 17's. 2 per event for a full range of events.

SIAB pentathlon international

An indoor pentathlon international is held late November/early December. Scotland host this every year at the Emirates Arena, Glasgow. 4 boys & 4 girls per age group. Official age groups are under 18 & under 16 however in reality these are under 17/15 from the outdoor season just completed.

Scottish Internationals

Note that international offered are continually under review. See Scottish athletics website for details for what matches will be available next season.

Under 20 international

Scotland v Wales v English regions

Held early August

Individual events, 1 per event

Home Countries Combined Events International

Scotland v England v Wales v Rep Ireland v N.Ireland

Held August or September

Seniors to U17s.

Decathlon for men, Heptathlon for Women

Elite level events

Commonwealth Youth Games, held every 4 years, Youth = Under 18.

Commonwealth Games (every 4 years in between Olympics)

Great Britain Internationals

These are for the very highest level athletes at the pinnacle of the sport. See UK athletics website for full details of events and selection policies:

<https://www.uka.org.uk/performance/>

Events available include

- Indoor combined events international under20/under23/senior
- Various outdoor events
- European Youth Championships, held every 2 years in even years, Youth = Under 18.
- World/ European Junior championships, alternates between each so there is one every year.
Junior = Under 20.
- European Under 23 championships (every 2 years)
- European Championships (every 2 years in even years)
- World championships (every 2 years in odd years)
- Olympic Games (every 4 years)