

Central Athletic Club

Cross Country

Young Athlete Information Guide

October 2026

The Cross Country season runs from October to February. There are various competitions that the club recommends young athletes to compete in. Young athlete age groups are Under 12, Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 based on age at the 31 December following the cross country season. For the 2026-27 season these are:

- Under 12 - born 2016 or 2017
- Under 14 - born 2014 or 2015
- Under 16 - born 2012 or 2013
- Under 18 - born 2010 or 2011

The East District League is open to all young athletes including Under 12 age groups. All competitors in the league should be members of the Scottish Athletics membership scheme. Membership can be obtained online at: <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/membership/>

Information

Details for each event are posted on the Central AC Members and Parents Facebook page approximately one week prior to the event. Details for pre entry events are published well in advance as there is a closing date usually two weeks before the event. In pre entry events entries are submitted by the Team Manager and not by individual athletes. Late entries are not accepted.

Race Day

Cross country events involve hundreds of athletes. They are extremely busy events and it is important to arrive at the course well in advance of the race start to get registered and ensure that there is sufficient time to walk the course and warm up properly. Athletes should arrive at least 60 minutes before their race. A warm up should consist of a jog, followed by drills and strides. Make sure you are at the start line in time for your race.

Race Kit

Cross country events are not cancelled due to inclement weather. As such always race appropriately dressed for the weather. Expect to run in sunshine, rain, wind and even snow and expect to run on courses that are muddy and wet. All young athletes run in a club vest. Kit should include gloves, hat, tights and a long sleeved top. Spare dry socks are essential. Athletes should turn up to an event with a suitable warm jacket.

All courses are suited to wearing spikes. Cross country spikes come in 9mm, 12 mm and 15mm lengths. On a firm course 9mm spikes are suitable. As a rule the more muddy the course the longer the spike. A mixture of 9mm and 12mm spikes is a good combination. 15mm spikes are generally not useful for younger athletes.

It is useful to have a hot drink and food available after a race. Most events have catering facilities.

Courses

The length of a course varies for each age group. In league races the distances are typically

- Under 12 – 1.7km
- Under 14 – 2.6km
- Under 16 Boys and Girls and Under 18 Girls – 4.3km
- Under 18 Boys / Men – 5.2km
- Under 20 Women – 5.2km
- Under 20 Men – 7.8km

Relay events are an exception where all junior age groups run the same distance of 2.5km. The normal format for relay events is 3 runners per team: U14, U16, U18 or U14, U14/U16, U16/U18.

Usual Event Calendar

Event	Date	Entry	Age Groups
East District Relay Championships	October	via Team Managers	U14,16,18
East District League – first race	October	Turn up on day	U12,14,16,18
National Relay Championships	October	via Team Managers	U14,16,18
National Short Course Championship	November	via Team Managers	U16,18
East District League – second race	November	Turn up on day	U12,14,16,18
East District Championships	December	via Team Managers	U14,16,18
Inter-District Championships	January	District Selection	U14,16,18
East District League – third race	January	Turn up on day	U12,14,16,18
National Championships	February	via Team Managers	U14,16,18

East District Cross Country League

The East District Cross Country League publishes event details on its webpage:

<http://www.salroadrunningandcrosscountrymedalists.co.uk/Archive/East%20District%20League/ED%20League%20Home.html>

Race Times

Each of the East League races follows the same timetable:

Under 12 Girls	12.00 noon
Under 12 Boys	12.15 pm
Under 14 Girls	12.30 pm
Under 14 Boys	12.50 pm
Under 18 Men	13.05 pm
Under 20, Senior and Masters Women	13.10 pm
Under 16 Boys	13.45 pm
Under 16 Girls and Under 18 Women	14.00 pm
Under 20, Senior and Masters Men	14.20 pm

Other Races

Other open cross country races are held throughout the cross country season. These can be found on the Scottish Athletics Events page

<https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/events/>

and then select **Events Calendar**. You can limit the list to Cross Country events only.

Central AC organises its own cross country series for young athletes to give them an introductory experience to cross country. All courses are approximately 1 mile. These are open events, and are publicised on the club website and Facebook.

School XC events (primary / secondary) – entries are made through individual schools.