



Competition Plan

1 Introduction

The Club's aim is to provide athletes with competition pathways that are appropriate to their aspirations, age and ability in all branches of our sport – track and field, road, cross country, trail, ultra and hill running. Historically, Fife AC promotes many events, over 30 per year at the last count, including the largest hill relay race in Scotland, the Devils Burdens, the premier 5 mile road race, the Cupar 5, the very popular cumulative 5-day Tour of Fife, plus a series of local races to cater for its members and the local community. The Club also has a policy of hosting National and District Cross Country Championships to bring national events to the locality. The Club also competes in 5 T&F leagues and a variety of championships and open graded meetings. These events together with the SAL and UKA offerings form the backbone on which the competition plan is delivered.

All Club members are encouraged to compete regularly but in a manner that is appropriate to their development as an athlete. Fundamentally the competition pathway for an athlete is tightly linked to their coaching plan through the Club coaches who advise the athlete on the fit between training and competition. Just as the coaching plan is progressive, so is the competition plan with the athlete moving through events as they develop, with attention given to the phasing of entry to these events.

Thus there are two elements here: the T&F and endurance events that the Club hosts to provide for its athletes together with the events at District, National and International level which it supports as a Club, and the method used to guide an aspiring athlete through the competition year.

The aim is to significantly increase the number participating at local, District, National and International levels.

2 Competition Structure

One major development within Fife AC's competition structure is the establishment of 2 sub-committees, Endurance and T&F, to plan and implement the events promoted by the Club and those that will in addition be offered to members at District, National and International levels. The Club already has a policy of giving financial support to athletes competing at National and International level in terms of travel expenses and entry fees.

While the progressive pattern of the competition plan is allied to the coaching plan, the differences in the nature of T&F and Endurance running require slightly different approaches.

2.1 Track & Field

One major development within Fife AC's Competition structure is the appointment of a volunteer Club T&F Convener, who will oversee the development of all aspects of T&F competition within the Club, and liaise with the Club coaches to determine the competition needs of Club athletes.

There will be three broad levels of T&F competition, predominantly but not exclusively age-based, but aligned with the coaching programme. Athletes with disabilities will be integrated into this structure.

There is a strong expectation that athletes who train with the Club will compete for the Club in appropriate competitions.

2.1.1. 9-12

Children between the ages of 9 and 12, to the end of primary school, will be offered Multi-Event competition, of a general nature that enhances skills development. The programme will be delivered through after-school clubs in both St Andrews and Glenrothes and also, where possible, in all the feeder centres.

2.1.2. 12-15

Once athletes start at secondary school, from the age of approximately 12, they will move on to a more focused track event-based competition structure that is appropriate to their planned development. The Club already competes in events such as Local junior athletic matches, Tayside & Fife championships, Petrofac League, Club Championships and the Pitreavie Trophy meeting. Athletes in the U13 and U15 age groups will be encouraged to compete in the replacement for the YAL.

2.1.3. 15+

From the age of approximately 15, athletes will compete in more specialised events - sprints, middle distance, throws, jumps or hurdles. The competition programme spans from local events, like the Club Championships, through District and National Championships, graded meetings to events such as the U17/U20 section of the new Athlete Development League where the Club contributes athletes of the appropriate ability to the Kingdom team.

Senior athletes have the option of competing in the National leagues through the Club's teams and often take advantage of the open graded meetings in Scotland and UK-wide. Athletes at National and UK level are encouraged and supported individually to compete at UK-level championships.

2.2 Endurance Running

A second major development within Fife AC's Competition structure is the appointment of a volunteer Club Endurance Convenor, who will oversee the development of all aspects of Endurance competition within the Club, and liaise with the Club coaches to determine the competition needs of Club athletes. The Endurance Convenor will also ensure that the provision of local events meet the needs for the Club's athletes in all branches – track and field, road, cross country, trail, ultra and hill running.

There will be four broad levels of Endurance competition, predominantly but not exclusively age-based, but aligned with the coaching programme. Again athletes with disabilities will be integrated into this structure.

To reiterate, Fife AC already promotes many endurance events, over 30 per year at the last count, including the largest hill relay race in Scotland, the Devils Burdens, the premier 5 mile road race, the Cupar 5, the very popular cumulative 5-day Tour of Fife plus a series of local races to cater for its members and the local community. The Club also has a policy of hosting National and District Cross Country Championships to bring national events to the locality. Through these events the Club provides appropriate competition for different athlete needs.

2.2.1. 9-12

Low key local events that integrate fun with competition are used as an introduction to endurance. Events such as Parkruns with adults, the Strawberry race series and the Halloween torch lit races are already in place. These are short distance, fun events over a variety of surfaces. In addition, the Club organises the Mini Tour of Fife, which attracts over 100 youngsters to a 5-race series. Fife AC also hosts the Fife Primary School Championships.

2.2.2. 12-15

Fife AC caters locally for this age group by putting on additional races at the same venue alongside its established races. Thus, for example, the Norman's Law race has a shorter version, the Emily Hill race, for younger members. The most successful of these is the Mini Tour of Fife.

In the winter the SAL provide District and National, relay, team and individual championships in which the Club competes. Furthermore the highly successful East District cross country league is used to provide competition.

Through the T&F competition structure athletes can compete in endurance events on the track.

2.2.3. 15+

For serious athletes, the Club targets the progression of District & National championships events provided by SAL at hill, road, ultra and cross country. Furthermore the Club encourages and supports athletes to compete in UK level championship. This includes 10K upwards in T&F, road relays such as the 12 and 6 stage ERRC championship, the UK hill running relays and the McCain's cross country challenge.

In the last 20 years Fife AC has hosted 14 District or National cross country championships as well as the UK hill running relays.

2.2.4. Adult Beginners

Fife AC also recognises that not all members join the Club to be serious athletes. The Club also has a keen interest in promoting health and well-being within the community and as a consequence has already three Jog Scotland leaders and is trying to recruit more. This will ensure that adults can begin athletics in a supported and unthreatening environment. Through the Jog Scotland groups, adult beginners can begin to compete in appropriate events if they wish. They can also progress to the main training groups in either of the hubs as they become fitter and more confident.

St Andrews also has a local Parkrun that is used for this group.

3 Conclusion

Fife AC recognises that cost of competition may be an issue for many athletes and attempts to make competition affordable for all athletes. Its local races are either free to Club members or have a low entry fee. District and National Championship entry fees are paid for the athletes by the Club and the cost of travel further afield is assisted by the club in all disciplines. For example, those athletes chosen to compete in the NJL only pay £20 per competition for travel and accommodation.

Fife AC has a clear vision of the competition pathways that already exist within the Club and those which need to be developed and strengthened over time. Key to the success of the plan is the maintenance of the balance between local, District, National and International events that the Club promotes or supports to provide the appropriate competition plan for the Club's athletes.

4 Current Events Supported by the Club

4.1 T&F

4.1.1. Local Events

The Club has access to the track at St Andrews University where it holds the Club Championships and a number of paarlauf events. The addition of the new facility at Glenrothes will enhance the Club's ability to expand its local offerings at both venues.

4.1.2. Leagues

Fife AC competes in the Scottish Men's and women's leagues, the Petrofac League, The Young Athletes league and the NJL which will have a new format from 2013.

4.2 Endurance Events

4.2.1. Local Endurance Events

The following local endurance events have been in place for many years. They are reviewed and improved every year with a view to meeting the needs of the Club's athletes.

Tortoise & Hare Relay Race	Sandy Slither
Devil's Burden	Ceres 8 Mile Road Race
Cupar 5	Giffordtown 5K Road Race
Norman's Law	Halloween Races
Lomonds Junior Hill Races	Boxing Day Handicaps
Tour & Mini Tour of Fife	Nightmare Series (5 races)
Falkland Festival Hill Races	Ravenscraig Series (6 races)
Strawberry Novice Races	Haribo Handicap Series (6 races)
Mid-week Series (5 races)	Beveridge Park 5K road Series (5 races)

4.2.2. Leagues

Fife AC competes in the very successful East District Cross Country league. Elite athletes are encouraged to compete at a higher level in the UK McCain's series and the UK Inter-Counties Championships.

4.2.3. Hosted Championships

Over the years Fife AC have hosted the following District and National endurance events.

UK Hill running relays	2010-1 (Falkland)
East District XC Championships	1975-6 (Cupar), 1983-4 (Kirkcaldy), 2008-9 (Cupar), 2012-3 (Cupar)
East District XC Relays	1982-3 (Cupar), 1987-8 (St Andrews), 1993-4 (Cupar)
National XC Championships	1976-7 (Glenrothes), 1998-9 (Cupar)
National XC Relays	1985-6 (St Andrews)
National Masters XC Championships	1992-3 (St Andrews), 2003-4 (Cupar), 2010-1 (Kirkcaldy)