



INVERNESS HARRIERS AMATEUR ATHLETICS CLUB

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



www.invernessharriers.org.uk

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Inverness Harriers A.A.C. would like to welcome your child into the North of Scotland's largest and most successful athletics club; we are a club which features prominently at a National and International level across all disciplines.

We promote and develop competitive athletics for members of all ages from nine upwards and our oldest athlete is 74! In order to do this, we have a structured coaching programme which is designed to allow each athlete to reach the highest performance level they can.

Over the years, we have had athletes representing Scotland and Great Britain at all levels up to Commonwealth Games and World Championships. However we of course recognise that only a tiny minority will achieve this, and the club's aim is to help each and every one of our members to develop and achieve their full potential, which starts with the under 11 local league team and moves onwards from there.

I would, however, bring to your attention that we are a competitive athletics club and members are accepted on the understanding that they will train and compete regularly for Inverness Harriers.

The information in this booklet is designed to introduce the parents of new junior members to how Inverness Harriers works and to give details of the competitions available as well as the training arrangements leading to them.

Please feel free to ask any of the coaches or club officials if you have any further questions and I hope your young athlete will enjoy and benefit from being a member of Inverness Harriers.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

We appreciate that when you first join a club, there are various tips and hints that can make a difference for you as your child progresses through the club.

This Guide aims to help you through some elements of the club and share some of the information that as fellow parents, we have found useful to know. We also want to develop a shared value in the club. As you will be aware, all our coaches are volunteers, and we need to remember the need for volunteers in the club functioning, and the part that as parents or guardians we play in the continued success of the club by helping, volunteering, supporting.

Feel free to feedback on anything else you would find helpful to have known, and also on what you have found helpful and think other parents could benefit from – it makes a difference to us all!

TRAINING GROUPS – AND THE RELEVANT EVENTS

The club's longstanding policy on coach supervision meets UKA/Scottish Athletics governing body and insurance requirements for a coach qualified at Level 2 or above to be present in direct line of sight of any coaching activity.

Group	Lead Coaches	Training Days
U11	Craig Burns	Tuesday and Thursday
U13	Grant Nairn	Tuesday and Thursday
U15	Graham Laing	Tuesday and Thursday
Throws	Duncan Flockhart, Harry Lakeland	Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
Junior Endurance	Ross Cairns, Paul Davidson	Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
Senior Sprints/ Jumps	Dianne Chisholm, Iain Fleming	Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
Senior Endurance/ Disability	Charles Forbes	Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
Other Coaches	Stephen Mackay, Charles Bannerman	

EVENTS – WINTER SEASON

CROSS COUNTRY/INDOOR SEASON – SEPTEMBER TO MARCH

Generally, athletes only compete in their own age/gender group within the same race and the team they are in will also be the same age/gender. Exceptions to this are the North District and Scottish National cross-country relay championships, where teams are made up of one athlete from each of the U11, U13, U15 and U17 age groups.

At most events/leagues individual medals are awarded to the 3 top runners. The top 3 teams also receive medals. Teams are usually the highest 3 placed runners from a club. Cross-country has an excellent emphasis on team as well as individual performances.

Distances are approximately 1500m for U11, 3000m for U13, 4000m for U15 and 6000m+ for U17.

Depending on the event and venue Inverness Harriers will decide whether to put on a subsidised bus for travel.

NORTH DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE (NDCCL) – OCTOBER-FEBRUARY

- Open to all Harriers and all athletes are encouraged to attend.
- Depending on the location, sometimes a subsidised bus is put on
- 6 cross country races between October and March, hosted by a different North club with a venue in their area, commonly selected from Keith, Gordonstoun, Dores, Forres, Nairn Beach, Thurso and Evanton.
- Points are allocated to all runners that finish the race. 100 points to 1st place, 99 to 2nd place, etc.
- For a team to be counted in any one race. There must be at least 3 runners taking part and completing the course, e.g. 3 x U13 boys. If there are more than 3 in a team, it is the top 3 counters scores that are used for that race.
- After all the races are run, points are tallied up – for individuals, only their top 4 scores are counted, i.e. they must run at least 4 races, and same goes for teams.
- The awards ceremony is held at the end of the last race of the season.
- These events are always on a Saturday afternoon.

CLUB CROSS COUNTRY HANDICAPS – OCTOBER-FEBRUARY (INVERNESS HARRIERS ONLY)

- Open to all Harriers and all athletes are encouraged to attend.
- 4 race days, and usually run on a Sunday. All races are normally walking distance from Queens Park, which is where the registration is before the race, and where all the athletes come back to after the race.
- On the day, there are 3 races – Boys/girls (U11/U13), Boys/girls (U15/U17), Male/female (U20/senior).
- U11/U13 races are approx. 1500m and U15/17 up to 4k
- Athletes have a staggered start depending on previous performance with the slower runners having a larger handicap.
- Points are allocated with regards to the order the runners return to the finish – so 1st runner finishing receives 100 pts, 2nd receives 99 pts etc.
- The handicap time can change after each race.
- The runners' top 3 scores over the 4 events are totalled to give their final score.
- Awards are presented at Awards Night (usually late March).
- It is all about a bit of fun and bettering yourself. It is a great way to get to know other runners/parents as after each race everyone is invited back to the hut for some refreshments.

CLUB CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Due to fixture congestion, normally the NDCCL standings will be used to determine the 1st, 2nd & 3rd places in each of the age groups and eligibility of races to count for the champions will be notified at the start of the season.

CLUB CHRISTMAS RELAYS – DECEMBER (INVERNESS HARRIERS ONLY)

- A bit of fun pre-Christmas.
- Open to all – made up of teams of 4 runners, pulled out of a hat.
- 1st runner does half a lap of Bught Park (approx. 800m), 2nd and 3rd runners do one lap (approx. 1500m), and the final runner does 2 laps of the Bught. Runners get to decide their team order.
- Prizes for best Fancy Dress and Winning Team.

NORTH DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY RELAYS - OCTOBER

- One day event, with the venue changing each year.
- Each leg is 2000m-3000m.
- Same-gender teams made up of 1xU13, 1xU15 and 1xU17.
- Teams selected on form and availability by club coaches.

NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS - OCTOBER

- One day event. The venue can change each year
- Each leg is 2000m-3000m.
- Same-gender teams made up of 1xU13, 1xU15 and 1xU17.
- Teams selected on form and availability by club coaches.

NORTH DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS - DECEMBER

- One day event, with venue changing each year.
- Open to all Scottish Athletic members but will be entered through Inverness Harriers.
- Separate male and female race for U13/U15/U17/U20 and Senior age groups.
- Event is used to select U13/U15/U17/U20 and Senior runners to compete for team 'Scotland North' at the Inter-District Championships.
- There is a separate U11 race that day, but this would be a non-championship event out with Scottish Athletics and held at the discretion of the host club.

INTER-DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS - JANUARY

- One day event previously held at Holyrood, Edinburgh.
- North team chosen (by selection committee) primarily from results of North District Cross Country Championships, but also runners who have run well in NDCCL. Teams are selected on the basis that athletes will be competitive at the Inter-District championships. This may mean that the selectors (not club coaches) may select more athletes in a particular age group than others. Teams of up to 15 runners (in each age group) can be selected to compete for team 'Scotland North'.
- North teams compete against East and West teams.
- The top 6 runners in each team also receive medals.

NATIONAL AGE GROUP CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS - FEBRUARY

- One day event, normally held in Falkirk. Normally this is the focus even for the Winter XC season.
- Any Scottish Athletic athlete can enter but must be entered through Inverness Harriers.

SCOTTISH ATHLETICS SUPERTEAMS – UNDER 12S INDOOR - FEBRUARY

- One day event, held in rotating venues in Scotland, but previously in Emirates Indoor Stadium, Glasgow.
- Teams of 4 athletes – same gender.
- Team points scoring team system.
- Each athlete competes at 60m, long jump, shot putt and 4 x 200m relay.
- Athletes are selected by club coaches and team entries are made by the club.

SCOTTISH YOUNG ATHLETES' ROAD RACE - MARCH

- One day event, usually held in Greenock on road/concrete paths.
- Any Scottish Athletic athlete can enter but must be entered through Inverness Harriers.

NATIONAL AGE GROUP – INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS – JANUARY, FEBRUARY OR MARCH

- Championships at U13, U15, U17, U20s – held on different dates at Emirates Arena, Glasgow.
- Individual athletes enter directly through Scottish Athletics events web site.
- Track and selected field events can be entered.

EVENTS – SUMMER SEASON

OUTDOOR TRACK SEASON – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER

OPEN GRADED MINI MEETS – TRACK AND FIELD – APRIL-AUGUST

- One day events – U11-senior.
- As the name suggests, these events are open to all Scottish Athletic athletes. Inverness Harriers have approx. 5 per year.
- Athletes can enter 3 events in total – a combination of track and field allowed. An entry fee is required. Athletes enter themselves.
- All age groups and an Inverness Harriers are encouraged to attend.
- No prizes, but official times/distances/heights recorded for Power of 10.

GRAMPIAN ATHLETICS LEAGUE – APRIL-AUGUST

- Athletes (U11-Senior) are selected by their coaches to represent Inverness Harriers at 3 meets held at Queens Park.
- Meets are on a Sunday.
- Teams from Highland and Moray compete at the events for points.
- There are “A” Counter and “B” Counter athletes who gain points for the team. On occasions, there can also be “non-counter” entries. No points are allocated for non-counters, but their times/distances/heights are officially recorded for Power of 10.
- The top 6 teams in the different age brackets (based on points) go through to the final and compete against East Teams from the Aberdeen/Dundee area. The final alternates each year between Inverness and Aberdeen (2018 will be Inverness), and it is held in September.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE (YDL) - APRIL-JULY

- Athletes (U13/U15 YDL and U17/U20 Challenge) selected by their coaches to represent Inverness Harriers at these meets.
- There are 3 rounds, one held in Inverness, one in Dundee (although the track is temporarily closed so Aberdeen is being used) and one in Aberdeen.
- The top 2 teams from the North East of Scotland (after the 3 rounds) then go to the finals held in Grangemouth in late July to compete against the East and West of Scotland teams.
- The top 2 teams from the final in Scotland would then go forward to the England league and represent Scotland at the UK YDL Finals.

THROWS GRAND PRIX - APRIL-SEPTEMBER

- All athletes interested in throwing are encouraged to sign up for these events. Normally 4 meets held at either Livingston or Queens Park.
- Athletes sign up themselves with Scottish Athletics.
- Points are awarded for improvements on PB distances.
- Official times/distances/heights recorded for Power of 10.

NORTH DISTRICT AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS - MAY

- Held at Queens Park, and open to U13/U15/U17/U20 age groups.
- Held over 2 days (Friday/Saturday).
- Individual athletes can enter directly through Scottish Athletics events website.
- Track and field events can be selected.

NATIONAL AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS - AUGUST

- Held in rotating venues in Scotland over individual age group days.
- U13/U15/U17/U20 and Seniors have different dates.
- Individual athletes can enter directly through Scottish Athletics events website.
- Track and field events can be selected.

SCOTTISH ATHLETICS U12 SUPERTEAMS - JUNE

- One day event for U12 – held in rotating venues in Scotland.
- Teams of 4 athletes (same gender), selected by coaches.
- Points scoring team system.
- Events – 100m, long jump, turbo javelin and 4 x 100m relay.
- Entries made by Inverness Harriers

TRACK AND FIELD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

- U11/U13/U15/U17/U20 and Seniors.
- 5 best point scoring events – track and field.
- Must be a Power of 10 (officially times/measured)
- “Thistle” awards scoring system or equivalent used to calculate.
- Track and field events can be selected.

SCOTTISH WOMEN’S LEAGUE

- Team-based league with fixtures generally held in the Central Belt.
- Selected events available for age groups from U13 to Seniors.
- Inverness Harriers compete as part of a composite team.
- Athletes selected by coaches/team manager

SCOTTISH MEN’S LEAGUE

- Team-based league with fixtures generally held in the Central Belt.
- Full range of events available for U20 to Seniors age groups.
- Athletes selected by coaches/team manager.

NATIONAL TRACK & FIELD RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Various relays over 100m, 200m 300m, 400m & 800m.
- Venue rotates around Scotland each year.
- Teams made up of 3 or 4 athletes (based on event). Athletes selected by coaches.
- 100m, 200m, 300m, 400m & 800m
- Rotation of venue throughout Scotland
- Team events (3 or 4 athletes)

Details of other events throughout the country can be found on the Scottish Athletics website

SCHOOL'S COMPETITIONS

There are also local & national events for schools that are not arranged through Scottish Athletics

Schools are required to enter their athletes/teams. Athletes compete for their school not Inverness Harriers. Regularly pupils need to 'remind' their schools to put entries in for the events. Main events:

Primary Schools

- Scottish primary schools road relays – October – Grangemouth - teams of 4 & individuals
- South Highland – October -Inverness – cross country
- McRobert Cup – March – Inverness – cross country
- North of Scotland Primary Schools – March – Forres – cross country
- Scottish Schools Cross Country Championships – April – Kirkcaldy – cross country
- Baillie Cup – Queens Park/Bught Park – Track & Field – Baillie Cup committee organise and run.
- Inter-school sports – Bught Park, Inverness – track & field – South Highland Schools organise and run.
- North Schools track & field championships – Queens Park – June

Secondary Schools

- Scottish Schools Indoors – Emirates Stadium – Glasgow - February
- North Schools Cross Country Gordonstoun – March
- Scottish Schools cross country championships South Queensferry – March
- Scottish Schools road races – Falkirk – October
- North Schools track & field championships – Queens Park – June
- Pentathlon Championships – Grangemouth Stadium – June
- Track & Field Championships – Grangemouth Stadium - June

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT AGE GROUP MY CHILD SHOULD BE IN?

The age group your child joins will be based on the competing age range for Summer season, so it's not about their age at October membership time but linked to their age group for summer season – i.e. your child might be 14 years old in the October period, but would be turning 15 during the summer season, so would therefore be in the U17 group. This can be confusing then it comes to young athletes competing in winter events/cross-country as that is based on the age category, they were in during the summer season. The “move-up” on age is from the spring/summer age group.

HOW DOES MY CHILD MOVE TO A “SPECIALIST GROUP” OR CHANGE ACTIVITIES?

The coaches meet regularly and monitor athletes on their performance and training and would discuss any moves to a specialist group.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important to develop as an athlete. Whilst it is understandable that other priorities come up, to progress and make the most of the training, good attendance is important, especially when it comes to the run up for events/competing as coaches may consider this when making selections. As the club is a competing club, athletes will also be expected to make themselves available for selection for events, and to sign up for those that are entered as individuals. Coaches can give more details on appropriate events for their groups, and more details can be found later in this document.

We have a lengthy waiting list for Harriers and if your child fails to attend regular training and compete regularly then their membership will be cancelled, and a new member will be offered this place.

EXPECTATIONS – FOR THE ATHLETE

- Turn up on time to training/events
- Team commitment to events and training
- Be ready with all the kit you require – this includes appropriate clothing for the weather (hat/gloves/layers in cold weather etc.), water, medication if required.
- Do not turn up if you are injured and therefore unable to train, or are ill, e.g. chest infection and therefore cannot train etc.
- Turn up willing to train – even if a friend is not there, or if the session is not the usual session.
- Remember to take all your belongings with you at the end of the training session/event.

EXPECTATIONS – FOR THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

- Drop your child off on time for training (and be on time to collect them).
- Make sure they have their session fees with them to pay for the session.
- If they are not feeling well, it might be they are not going cope with training – think twice to leave them to train, and maybe stick around at the Leisure Centre in case they need to leave.
- When at the training grounds/track, DO NOT cross the infield (the in the middle of the track) – it can be dangerous as this is where the athletes train for throwing.
- Do not walk on the track or let those with you such as toddlers etc. do so either. Use the path around the outer edge of the track.

DRESS CODE

Athletes should turn up to train with appropriate clothing – trainers, t-shirt, shorts/leggings, and appropriate layers to add/remove during the session. A waterproof layer/jacket will frequently be required – training does not stop for rain (or snow/hail etc.!). Some athletes find that hats/gloves are good to have as well, or to just keep in their bag. We recommend that you label the items so that if they get left at the track, they are easily found again.

Athletes feel a sense of belonging to the club to have a club hoodie and this gives a good team feel to attendance at events where competing clubs and athletes will be wearing the colours of their clubs.

Hoodies - many athletes buy the club hoodie to wear to training, and you can opt to have their name on the hoodie.

Club vests - for events/competing, athletes **MUST** wear a club vest, and preferably also club shorts.

Other club clothing – we have a variety of club clothing available to purchase – the club do not receive any commission for this, preferring to pass the lowest cost on to households to thereby enable more athletes in club kit.

New club is available on the club website from our new suppliers Richie Foran Teamwear.

HOW TO BUY:

Club vests: please download the form from Inverness Harriers webpage <http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/downloads/>

Club kit: Online store: – see www.rfssportsshop.co.uk/inverness-harriers-aac-26-c.asp for updates

Club crop-tops/running briefs: <https://www.wasp-sports.co.uk/info.html>

FEES

Membership Fees: These fees are due annually, with a new membership form being submitted each year. The new membership year is from 1st October, with the month of October being the grace period to get membership forms in.

Training Fees: Athletes should pay their session fees using the monthly direct debit – no cash handling is performed by club coaches or representatives.

Scottish Athletics Fees: Athletes should pay their annual affiliation (membership) fees to Scottish Athletics when notified on/soon after the anniversary date. The membership fee is required for any athlete who would like to compete at any Scottish Athletics Championship event (the athlete must pay the membership fee and any other outstanding fees due to Scottish Athletics before they will be able to enter). Events organised by clubs/other groups may also offer a reduced entry fee for Scottish Athletics members.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are essential for the club to operate – as mentioned previously, the coaches are volunteers, the committee are volunteers, the officials are volunteers. The fees we pay are not payments to the actual coaches – they are to cover the running costs of the club, professional memberships and use of facilities, subsidise transport and suchlike.

If you can give up a little time to help, it would be greatly appreciated – help that we always need is as follows:

- Helpers for registration
- Parent helpers on training nights
- Field helpers at events
- Helpers with catering at events
- Volunteers willing to train as officials or coaches
- General help or skill specific – if there is a specific skill you have and think would be of use, let us know.

NUTRITION

Good nutrition is vital for everyone, especially athletes.

BREAKFAST – always start the day with a healthy breakfast. Things like good quality cereals (porridge, muesli), toast (brown bread!) and fruit juice are a great way to start the day as they are foods with a low GI which means that they release energy slowly into your body. **AVOID** sugary cereals (such as Coco Pops, Cheerios, sugar puffs) and fizzy drinks.

SNACKS – it is a good idea to eat one or two small snacks a day, between meals in order to keep your blood sugar levels constant. Good snacks include fruit, nuts, cereal bars, smoothies, toast or yoghurt. **BAD** snacks include crisps, sweets, biscuits, cakes and fizzy/sugary drinks.

LUNCH – try to eat a balanced meal at lunchtime, i.e. vegetables, carbohydrates and protein. Never skip lunch.

EVENING MEAL – same as for lunch, but don't eat a large meal before training. It is best to eat a small meal one-to-two hours before training starts.

PRE-TRAINING – before training it is important the body has substantial energy to complete a high-quality session. Carbohydrate is very important as it will give you energy. Make sure you drink plenty of water, but don't overdo it.

COMPETITION DAY – Breakfast is **essential** and should include plenty of carbohydrate and protein together with lots of fluids (e.g. milk, water, fresh fruit juice).

Snacks to take to the track are also important. Make sure you have a healthy lunch, including sandwiches, fruit, cereal/energy bars and lots to drink (sports drinks are fine before racing, but in moderation). **AVOID** sweets, chocolate and crisps in excess, especially right before your event.

AWAY DAYS – however early in the morning the bus leaves, **always** make sure you eat breakfast, have a supply of healthy snacks and drinks for the journey so you are not tempted to fill up on sweets and junk food during the journey down, and throughout the day.

VERY IMPORTANT – dinner must be consumed 2 hours prior to a heavy training session if you don't want to see the food again!

The Eatwell Plate



<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

Reasons to stay hydrated:

- Moistens tissues in the eyes, nose and mouth
- Assists the body in the regulation of temperature
- Provides lubrication to joints
- Protects organs and tissues
- Helps prevent & relieve constipation
- Helps dissolve minerals and nutrients for use in the body
- Supports kidney and liver health by flushing away toxins
- Carries oxygen and nutrients to cells

Top Tip – for a homemade sports drink: half fill your bottle with water, top up with fruit juice of your choice and add a pinch of salt. This makes a great sport drink at half the cost of branded products.

REMEMBER TO CHECK WITH YOUR PARENTS BEFORE TRYING THIS!

FUNDING

Inverness Harriers Amateur Athletic Club (IHAAC) is committed to supporting the athletic development of all its members in an inclusive manner which embraces the broad spectrum of our membership, covering those whose goals relate to the social and fitness aspects of membership, through to those who aspire to competitive success at a national and international level.

In promoting that commitment, it is important that the club's finances are used to support that broad membership, whilst recognising the increased financial commitments that come with competitive success.

Funding available to athletes at present from Inverness Harriers is as follows:

- Any athlete picked to represent UK Athletics, Scottish Athletics and Scottish Schools Athletic Association may be reimbursed for reasonable travel accommodation costs to the competition venue/pickup point.
- Any athlete invited (or qualifying standard has been met) by England Athletics or UK Athletics to higher level competition opportunities out with Scotland.
- Refer to the Funding Policy within the next section for full details.

CLUB CONSTITUTION & POLICIES

We have various policies regarding the governance of the club:

Document(s)	Link to Document(s)
Club Constitution	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/IHAAC-Constitution-adopted-AGM-01.10.2021.pdf
Equality Policy	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Equality-Policy.pdf
Welfare – Policies and Procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Regulations & Policy• Codes of Conduct• Recruitment, Licensing & Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG)• Safeguarding Toolkit	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/code-of-conduct-policies/
Conflict of Interest Policy	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Conflict-of-Interest-Policy.pdf
Funding Policy	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/funding-policy/
Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Disciplinary-Policy-and-Procedures.pdf
Honorary Life Membership Policy & Procedure	http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/honorary-life-membership/

COMMUNICATIONS

If you want to get in touch, here's how:

- Speak to your child's coach on a training night
- Our website - <http://www.invernessharriers.org.uk/> - links there to email /phone contacts
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/invernessharriers/>

Where to find out more – handy links:

- Power of 10 - <http://www.thepowerof10.info/> - British Athletics website with rankings and results – great place to see a profile of your athlete and give comparisons and rankings.
- North District Cross Country League - <http://www.northleague.co.uk/>
- Scottish Athletics website – this has the Events section for signing up for events – you will need your SAL number for that. <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/> □
YDL - <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/?s=ydl>