

Scottish Highland Games Association - Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In a few weeks' time the 2019 Games Season will be upon us. At the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, I had the pleasure of attending the 150th year of the Historic New Year Sprint, with Greg Kelly the eventual winner. The most pleasing thing for myself was the enthusiastic participation of the youths on the first day at Meadowmill.

The 2019 season will be my 6th year as President of the SHGA, a role I have thoroughly enjoyed, and it has been made enjoyable by the support I have received from fellow directors, general council, the member games, Judges and you the athletes.

I have been taking a keen interest, in the New Visitor Centre at Braemar, and was delighted to be at the official opening to the public on the 15th Of March 2019. A unique achievement and a legacy to the Braemar Society and Gathering and the wider Highland games family.

I wish you all the best in your final preparations for the 2019 season, and I am sure I will see most of you between North Berwick and Caithness.

All the best.
Charlie Murray



Early Season Meetings

Gordon Castle
Sunday 19th May

Blackford
Saturday 25th May
Handicapper A Crawford

The Atholl Gathering
Sunday 26th May

Carmunnock
Sunday 26th May

Cornhill
Saturday 1st June

Helensburgh
Saturday 1st June
Handicapper A Crawford

Markinch
Sunday 2nd June
Handicapper A Crawford

Bearsden
Saturday 8th June

Strathmore
Sunday 9th June
Handicapper A Crawford

Oldmeldrum
Saturday 15th June

Cupar
Sunday 16th June
Handicapper A Crawford

Aberdeen
Sunday 16th June

Newsletter Spring 2019

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SHGA LEAGUES - POINTS SYSTEMS FOR 2019

OPEN RUNNING
ALL HANDICAP EVENTS
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

ALL SHGA SCRATCH CHAMPIONSHIP RACES
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

ALL OTHER SCRATCH RACES
3pts - 2pts - 1pt

FEMALE POINTS LEAGUES (OPEN & YOUTHS)

A TOP THREE FINISH IN AN OPEN MIXED
HANDICAP
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

ALL FEMALE SCRATCH RACES
3pts - 2pts - 1pt

FIRST THREE FEMALE FINISHERS IN AN OPEN
MIXED SCR RACE
3pts - 2pts - 1pt

YOUTHS RUNNING
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

JUMPS LEAGUE
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

CYCLING- OPEN & YOUTHS
5pts - 3pts - 2pts

HEAVY EVENTS
6pts - 4pts - 2pts

TUG O WAR
5pts - 4pts - 3pts - 2pts & 1pt to all other teams who
compete on the day.

Yearbook correction - page 89
Youth Relay, should read under 16 on
14th September 2019

Late News - for information
Invercharron Highland Games have
been cancelled in 2019 due to a number
of reasons, let's hope they can regroup
for 2020.

S.H.G.A. Presentation of awards evening

The annual presentation Dinner will take place on Saturday 19th October at the Gilvenbank Hotel Glenrothes. This is a joint venture between the S.H.G.A. and the Fife Highland Games Association.

Tickets priced at a very reasonable £15.00 can be purchased by contacting Ian Grieve, 54 Crawford Gardens, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 8XQ, Tel 01334 476305 Email ig2shga@gmail.com

Please order tickets as soon as possible as numbers are limited at the hotel. Cheques should be made payable to "Scottish Highland Games Association"



Youth Cycling

In an effort to boost youth cycling at the Highland Games and invest for the future of cycling, a number of bikes were purchased last year and loaned to various young cyclists last season. The plan is to reallocate these bikes to newcomers who might be interested in trying grass track racing this summer. If you, or you know someone who would be interested in having a bike for a season please get in touch with secretary at ig2shga@gmail.com or call 01334 476305 for more information by Saturday evening the 4th May at the latest.

Note for cyclists that Strathmore H.G. on Sunday 9th June will be having junior cycling for the first time, so hopefully it is well supported.

DRUG TESTING REPORT AND PROGRAMME

All the results have been received and we are happy to report that there have been no positive results. Ten tests were carried out over the season at five different venues.

We are grateful again for the financial support from Sport Scotland helping us to carry out our drug testing programme which allows us to carry out this large number of tests.

Ian Gurr (SHGA Drug Liaison Officer)



S.H.G.A. Sponsors 2019

Tomintoul Distillery

Ashers
Ice Cream

Henderson Gray
Marquee Hire

Martin Smith
Outside Catering

Glenfiddich Distillery

Judges – there are a number of Highland Games who struggle each year to get a full complement of judges for their event, if your event is in this category get in touch with secretary and we will see if we can offer some training in this area.

Contact secretary at
secretary@shga.co.uk

SOME PRE SEASON NOTES FOR ATHLETES

The members of the SHGA will be holding their spring meeting at the beginning of May in the new splendid Highland Games Visitor Centre at Braemar which was opened last month and is now open to the public, and well worth a visit. The General Council of the SHGA will be making a number of proposals for season 2019, we will be running a new league for under 18 young heavyweights and are hopeful a number of additional games will host these to encourage young athletes to get involved in the sport, there will be four events in their programme. Also to encourage more female athletes to get involved and improve equality we will be running additional leagues for female athletes in both Adult and Youths categories.

Other changes for 2019 will include the issuing of additional/duplicate numbers for athletes to wear front and back, the registration scheme has also been reviewed and will remain the same as present in an effort to recruit and retain participants. The fee is being maintained at the same level, this has not been increased since 2009. Athletes are encouraged to register online and not on their first day of competing, this will be at £15 till the end of April increasing to £20 on the first of May.

Registration link <http://www.shga.co.uk/participants-registration.php>



The world's first visitor attraction celebrating Highland games is now open in Braemar !

The Braemar Royal Highland Society has worked with partners, including The Prince's Foundation, to open **The Duke of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion** in Braemar. The building reflects the existing architecture of the site used for their Gathering since 1906.

The exhibition is spread across three rooms, within a stunning beamed space, walled with French windows and a splendid view of the games park. In addition to explaining the various events that make up the games, the Highland games community is explored, including the Scottish Highland Games Association and Braemar's Kindred Gatherings - Lonach Highland Gathering, Ballater Highland Games and Aboyne Highland Games.

Visitors can discover the absorbing story of the Braemar Royal Highland Society and their celebrated Gathering. Told through objects, costumes, photographs and documents, this is the story of how a village society created an annual event that has become one of the most famous Highland games in the world. Arguably the most eye-catching part of the room is the spectacular decorated ceiling, featuring illustrations of real-life Highlanders originally commissioned by Queen Victoria in the 1860s.

The building is also home to the archive of Braemar Royal Highland Society. Founded in 1815, a variety of interesting exhibits are rotated on display for visitors to see (access to other parts of the archive may be made upon application in advance).

In addition to the exhibition, the Pavilion boasts a comfortable café and shop area. Elegantly furnished, with touches of the Duke of Rothesay tartan, the café has wonderful views, and offers an inviting menu showcasing the best of Scotland. Meanwhile, the shop stocks a range of Highland games and Braemar Gathering-related products. Parts of the building can also be hired out, for anything from small meetings to evening charity functions.

Visitors to the Centre will leave with inspiration and information – there are more than 60 other SHGA member events across Scotland to visit too!

[HRH The Duke of Rothesay, The Prince Charles, is patron of the Scottish Highland Games Association]

Doing the “Double” Greg Kelly Style

After winning the 148th New Year sprint it was always going to be an aim to be one of the few who manage to win it twice. The second time is always going to be much more difficult after being pulled heavily from a previous win. However, I feel this makes the victory all the more special. The run up to the 150th is probably the hardest myself and squad have trained and it all paid off. I think with the hard training as well as the experience I have had winning it and having been in the final twice before the 150th this allowed me to enter the rounds with lots of confidence in my ability. I was mentally and physically prepared for the day at Musselburgh. The feeling when crossing the line was amazing and emotional. It was a sense of relief and joy that I had managed to win the prestigious race twice. The work and support that my family, coach Gordon and training partners put in all made it happen and I couldn't have done it without them.

For the 2019 season I'd like to take on the confidence and experience from my New Year performance into the summer season and push on to progress with my times on the track. The plan is to build on the hard training I done prior to the New Year and hopefully progress through the Scottish Senior ranks as it is my first year in the senior age group. I also would like to continue to support the highland games as much as possible as I think they are great events which are both enjoyable and beneficial for athletes.

It was encouraging to see more mainstream athletes competing at the 150th New Year Sprint and recognition from Scottish Athletics.

HAS MUCH REALLY CHANGED IN 33 YEARS? Writes Shane Fenton.

Below is a letter I came across in a 1986 SGA News Letter. It was written by a popular cyclist from that time. He is more or less saying cyclists at the Games are treated as second class citizens compared to the runners.

One of his main gripes is the comparison in prize money. It got me thinking he probably has a case for what he is saying and made me think that not much has changed since that letter was written.

I know at my own Games at Markinch the Open cycling money is lower than the Open running money and I know that is the case elsewhere.

I should also point out in a survey I read a few years ago, tourists and visitors to games put cycling ahead of running in what attracts them to games.

The author of the letter mentions that the cyclists outnumbered the runners back then, I am not sure if that was the case then, but it makes you wonder if some of the observations within the letter has had an effect on the numbers now turning out in the cycling.

Many member games aren't helping the biker's cause either by not staging youth races on their programme, some Games don't even put on cycling of any kind, where will the grass trackers of the future come from if they are not encouraged. The SHGA have done their bit to help this last year by purchasing a number of bikes for the junior cyclists to use, hoping to encourage them into the sport. These will once again be available this season.

Have a read of the letter and you will probably agree with many of the points and understand where they are coming from. The SHGA welcome any comments on this.

Letter from a 1986 SHGA Newsletter.

FORGOTTEN CYCLISTS

My 8 year old son asked me recently, 'Why do runners get bigger prizes than cyclists, Dad'? A good question that! Unfortunately I did not have a good answer because I don't know why. It set me thinking though, and a study of old Games programmes dating back to 1970, my first year on the circuit, confirmed this is no new phenomenon but has, in fact, been going on for a very long time.

A further check on some recent programmes verified that, with a few exceptions, most Games continue to pay-out considerably more for foot racing than bike racing.

Now I have many friends among the Games runners-first class lads like George Laing, Kenny Cook, Robert Johnston, Ian Grieve to name a few, and the last thing I want to do is give the impression that I am knocking the runners.

Far from it, they train hard and are as dedicated to their chosen sport as we are, and thoroughly deserve what monetary rewards they can get. In any case the runners don't decide what the prize value will be.

Who does then? I can only assume that this is the job of individual Games committees and since virtually every race at every meeting is now sponsored by some business, company or other. Presumably a member of that Games committee makes the approach to a potential sponsor. Why then do they go to one company and ask, for say £200 for a 1600 metre foot race and then go next door to someone else and ask for £60 for a cycle race over the same distance?

Is there some kind of sliding scale for deciding prize values, with cycling events at, or near the bottom? This would certainly seem to be the case. That being so, what criterion is used for deciding the pecking order.

Could it be the number of competitors? Hardly so since the cyclists almost always outnumber entries in distance running events and certainly outnumber heavies!

Could it be entertainment value? Surely not, since the cycling events are far and away the fastest and most exciting on the programme.

Again it can't be based on expenses incurred since the replacement value of any of the bikes on the circuit ranges from £300 to £500.

The anomaly is seen at its worst where sprinters are concerned surely it borders on the obscene when the winner of a sprint race

at one meeting presently on the circuit can take home more money than all the prizes put together for the cyclists that day.

Unlike the runners, the cyclists take part in every race on the programme, often with totally inadequate rest between events.

All in all I think the cyclists give very good value and deserve a far better deal than they are getting. Hopefully Games committees will read this plea and do a re-think when deciding next year's prize lists.

We don't want more than anyone else but we are beginning to get just a wee bit fed-up with being the poor relation year after year.

Good prizes are the best incentive for bringing new riders into the Games.

We are talking here about the very future of cycle racing at the Games.

Would we be missed? Of course we would just ask the spectators.

THE SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES ASSOCIATION

COMPETITOR REGISTRATION

All competitors wishing to take part in **ANY** SHGA-registered events (including hill races, running, cycling, light field and heavyweight events) at SHGA Member Games **MUST** be registered with the SHGA **PRIOR** to competing.

Only registered competitors will be permitted to take part in official events, be awarded points towards the SHGA leagues and be entitled to collect prize money, trophies or medals being presented by the SHGA. Unregistered athletes are not entitled to any cover under the SHGA's Personal Injury Insurance Scheme (which covers all athletes up to 75yrs old). Membership of athletic clubs should be declared on the application form and members must wear club vests. In addition to Youths applications, all application forms for 16 to 18 years must be countersigned by Parent or Guardian to allow drug testing if selected.

Annual Registration Fees for 2019 Season (1st January 2019– 30th April 2020)

Full Rate

- **Adults:** - **£20.00** per person (£15.00 subject to payment being received by 30 April 2019)

Concessionary Rate:

- **Seniors:** A reduced annual fee of **£10.00** applies to all competitors aged **65 and over**.
- **Youths:** A reduced annual fee of **£10.00** applies to track and field competitors aged **under 16**, and cyclists aged **under 16**. Photocopy birth certificate required for new Youth registrations (not required for renewals). In youth races, the minimum age will be nine years of age and the maximum will be 15 years of age, the exception being if a registered youth competitor reaches their 16th birthday after the first SHGA member games of the season. Once having reached their 16th birthday they will then have the choice of either remaining a youth competitor until the end of the season or immediately moving up to compete in Senior competition. Once the decision has been made it cannot be retracted.
- **Tug-o-War Teams:** - **£40.00** per team without insurance cover – to obtain cover please register as individuals, on the terms noted above.

Day Registration: Athletes who only wish to compete at ONE event in the year may pay a 'single use' fee instead of full registration at the following rates: Adult £3, Youth £1, (Tug o War £10/team). Insurance is not included and will not count towards leagues. Any further participation will require full registration at the standard rates.

Completed forms should be submitted with the appropriate fee to:

Ian Grieve, 54 Crawford Gardens, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 8XQ.

Cheques or Postal Orders should be payable to "Scottish Highland Games Association"

Year Books - Copies are available with your registration at **£5 each** (includes p&p).

Insurance – Athletes are encouraged to arrange their own Public Liability Insurance cover; note that this is not provided by SHGA.

DETACH AND RETAIN THIS TOP PORTION

COMPLETE THIS LOWER PORTION AND RETURN WITH FEE

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION WITH THE SHGA

I wish to register as a competitor with the SHGA for season 2019 and understand and accept that the SHGA forbids doping. I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the SHGA (including any disciplinary procedure from time to time) and consent to the random testing for prohibited substances which may take place at any time, and to inform the SHGA prior to competition of any medicines I may be taking at that time. I agree that SHGA may pass my personal information to its affiliated organisations for the purpose of insurance, licensing or for publishing results of events, leagues and awards, and may use my image in SHGA publications. Results may include (but not be limited to) name, town, sports club, times/distances and age category. SHGA will not share personal data with other organisations for the purposes of third-party marketing.

Please circle the discipline in which you intend to compete:

RUNNING
EVENTS

CYCLING
EVENTS

HEAVY
EVENTS

LIGHT FIELD
EVENTS

NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE _____

EMAIL: _____ TEL: _____

CLUB (IF APPLICABLE): _____

SHGA REG N° (renewals): _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Tick box to receive SHGA Newsletter:

SHGA USE ONLY:	DATE:	AMOUNT: £	SHGA REP:
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This must be completed in all cases where the athlete is under the age of eighteen (18).

I, the Parent / Guardian undersigned, declare that I am the person having parental responsibility of the Athlete undersigned (the "Athlete") and that I have full capacity to give consent to the taking of a blood or urine Sample as required by the anti-doping rules of the Scottish Highland Games Association ("the Rules").

I have read and understood the Rules and I hereby:

- (a) agree that the Athlete is bound by, and will comply with, the provisions set out in the Rules and will submit to the authority and jurisdiction of the Scottish Highland Games Association and any designee(s) of the Scottish Highland Games Association including UK Anti-Doping, to apply, police and enforce the Rules; and
- (b) consent and agree to the taking of a blood or urine sample from the Athlete for the purposes of official anti-doping Testing (whether such Testing is organised by the Scottish Highland Games Association, UK Anti-Doping or any other official body) during the period of the Athlete's registration to the Scottish Highland Games Association in accordance with the procedures set out in the UK Anti-Doping Procedures Guide and the International Standard for Testing.

Dated this day of..... 20...

Full Name of Parent / Guardian

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Full Name of Athlete.....

Signature of Athlete.....