

EKAC REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2009

2009 was a significant year for the club as it celebrated its 50th anniversary. This was marked by a Civic Reception and Dance in October- see later.

January 2009

Early in the New Year Caitlin Hackett & Megan Stewart, both U13 Girls, were selected for the West team at the Edinburgh Inter-district District Cross-country race, although only Megan was available to run. At the West District Indoor Championships Shannon McMahon won the U13 Girls 60m and Nicholas Coupland won the equivalent boys event. These were possibly the highlights of a strong showing in the sprints & jumps by the EKAC sprint squad. Towards the end of the month Grant Baillie finished 15th in the Scottish 4K Cross-country Championships and EK were 6th team.

February 2009

The Club cross-country championships were held on the 1 February, and for the first time in the grounds of the John Wright Sports Centre complex, which made for a challenging but spectator friendly course. The turnout was 36 athletes. At the National Indoor Track & Field Championships on 14 February, Nicholas Coupland was 2nd (and first Scot) in the U13 60m, Ross Maxwell was 2nd in the U15 long jump, Shannon McMahon was 2nd in the U13 200m and Laura McCracken set an U15 girls club record in the 60m, amongst other performances from the Club. 28 athletes competed at the National Cross-country Championships which were held again at Falkirk towards the end of the month. Jamie Clements in 17th place in the U20 men's race and Megan Stewart 19th place in the U13 girls were probably the best Club performance on the day.

March 2009

Kevin Downie won a cross country team medal at the European Masters Championships to show it's not just the young athletes who have developed winning ways. East Kilbride hosted, and the Club helped organise, the Young Athletes National Road Races on 22 March. A total of 25 of our young endurance athletes contested the event, with the U13 girls team of Megan Stewart, Sophie Smith and Olivia Steven winning a bronze medal. Later in the month a group of 9 EKAC tartan army members kept the club profile high by attending the World Cross Country Championships in Amman Jordan, and even got to stand on the victory podium in a dress rehearsal for the medal ceremony. At the end of March we learnt of the death of club coach Scott Walsh. Our thoughts go out to his family. Scott will be sadly missed by all who knew him. In his memory the club have renamed one of our top awards the Scott Walsh Endeavour Award and a trophy has been purchased for presentation annually.

April 2009

EKAC finished 2nd at the first CSSAL meeting of 2009 on April 26th. There were lots of great performances, so much so that only multiple event winners are listed for special mention. The highest praise must go to Nicholas Coupland, who won 4 events, including the 4x100m relay where he made the other teams look as if they were stationary. Mention must also be made of Mia Coffield, Arlene Barr, Laura McCracken, Beth Duff, Deborah Stokoe, Luke Kirwan, John Fergusson and Stephen Matthews for winning more than 1 event each.

May 2009

At the inaugural Inter Regional Competition on 10th May, Ailis Clements in the hammer and Beth Duff in the 800m were selected to represent the West Coast team. On the 12th at the Lanarkshire Track Relay Championships EKAC got 2 x 3rd places, 7 x 2nd places, and both Senior Ladies and Senior Men won the 3 x 800m relay titles. The other clubs started filling more event places for the 2nd CSSAL meeting on May 24th and this resulted in EKAC ending the meet in 4th place. The performance of the day was a new club U13 girls record by Shannon McMahon in the 200m.

June 2009

On the 3rd the Club organised its annual Children's Fun run as part of the EK Sports Festival, attracting over 100 youngsters who each went away with a medal and the satisfaction of having completed the 2K run. Mid-month, Ross Maxwell was possibly the top Club performer in the Scottish Schools Track & Field Championships, winning the long jump and the multi-events competition (both in Scottish Schools records) and coming second in both the 100m and 200m. In addition to Ross' performances, Ailis Clements was 2nd in the hammer, Beth Duff was 2nd in the 800m and Arlene Barr was 4th in 100m. At the final CSSAL meeting the Club finished last on the day, but managed to avoid relegation due to the accumulation of match and league points from the first 2 meetings, ending the season in 3rd place. Meanwhile, in Athens, Arlene Barr was winning a gold medal as part of the Lanarkshire 4x100m relay team at the International Children's Games. The Games will be hosted in Lanarkshire in 2011, with the athletics events at East Kilbride, and it is to be hoped that some of our young athletes will be selected as team members when the time comes. The Club were also heavily involved in the 10th running of the Diet Coke East Kilbride ½ Marathon. This was the last year the race will be sponsored by Coca Cola, but the race may continue in future with backing from elsewhere. Stephen Matthews had an excellent run to win the 10K race that was held in parallel with the ½ Marathon. The month ended with the Calderglen trail races, where Grant Baillie was 2nd in the 10K, Stephen Matthews won the 5K, Jamie Clements was 3rd and Kelly Baillie was 2nd Lady, with the team prize also going to EKAC. To cap a very busy month, our endurance athletes competed in 2 competition hike events. In the first, the Kilbryde Hike, there were 8 x 3 person teams. John Fergusson, Paul Brooks and Adam Gatens took 1st place overall, 1st Girls team went to Rachael Thomson, Jacqueline Fergusson and Olivia Steven, and 1st Expedition category (team with an adult) was won by Ralph Riach, Luke Kirwan and Kyle Johnston. There were 4 teams at the Cleveland hike later in the month, where the girls team repeated their success of the Kilbryde Hike, and EKAC took the trophy for the 3 highest placed teams from one club.

July 2009

July may have been a quiet month for many club athletes, but it's appropriate to note here the successes of the sprints squad on the Highland Games circuit throughout the Summer. Nicholas Coupland won the 90m at the Border Games in Peebles, at Inverkeithing and at Bridge of Allan, as well as the 200m at the Blackford Highland Games. He came 3rd in the Highland Games youths sprint league despite only competing at three meetings. Ross Maxwell won the 90m at Blackford, Helensburgh and Alva, as well as the Invitation 90m at Inverkeithing Highland Games, to finish fourth in the same sprints league. Arlene Barr won the 90m at the Airth Highland Games and joined with Laura McCracken, Ross McGill and Ross Maxwell to win the Inter Club Relay at Pitlochry Highland Games. What the sprint squad achieved as a team was really one of the biggest success stories of the year for the Club.

August 2009

At the East Kilbride open graded Grand Prix on 12th August, more than 30 of our athletes took advantage of our home track and the high standard of competition to record a series of great performances. At the National Age Group Championships Ross Maxwell was 3rd in the U15 long jump and Ross McGill was 6th in U17 100m. In the Lanarkshire Track Championships on the 29th, EKAC had 10 Lanarkshire champions, 6 x 2nd places, and 3 x 3rd places. The champions were Alan McNamee (U11 100m), Shannon McMahon (U13 100m & 200m), Nicholas Coupland (U13 100m & 200m), Arlene Barr (U15 100m), Rachael Thomson (U17 800m), Fraser Jamieson (U16 400m), Beth Duff (Senior 800m) and Jamie Clements (Senior 800m). On the hillrunning front Adam Gatens continued the winning form that has seen him gain selection for the Scottish Junior team by winning the junior International trial race at Menstrie, to add to his Ben Lomond race win earlier in the year.

September 2009

Sunday 6 September was a particularly wet day, but the weather could not dampen the enthusiasm of the 50 athletes who contested the 2009 Club Track & Field championships. There were some great performances and close competitions, but the turnout was a little disappointing, especially amongst Senior athletes. Special mention must go to Mia Coffield, Alan McNamee, Nicholas Coupland, Scott Hernon, Deborah Stokoe, Jamie Clements and Keith Garrow who won all their events. Mid September saw the annual club away-day, which this year was bestowed upon the lucky town of Callander. The 30 or so young athletes who attended were able to enjoy some fine weather and a selection of activities which included cycling, rock climbing and swimming.

October 2009

October's highlight was probably the Club's 50th anniversary dance on the 31st, where we filled the Ballerup Hall with 250 members past and present. There was a Civic Reception from South Lanarkshire Council culminating in a congratulatory speech from the Provost. A ceilidh band was there to provide entertainment, commemorative gifts were given to all members, and the Club Track & Field medals were presented along with a series of special awards. There was even a surprise visit from Ian Stewart, ex Olympic athlete and current UK Athletics Director of Endurance, who gave an impromptu speech praising grassroots athletics clubs. A lot of goodwill was evident on the night and we must find a way to harness some of this to bolster the clubs administration and coaching resources.

November 2009

Adam Gatens won the U17 Tinto Hill race at the beginning of the month, reaffirming his position as age group Scottish Hillrunning champion. From an EKAC perspective, the highlight of the Kilmarnock Cross Country was a win by Grant Baillie in the Senior Mens race, backed up by strong performances from John Fergusson and David Condra to lift the team prize too. The Lanarkshire Cross Country Championships at the end of the month saw Beth Duff win the Senior Women's title, Sophie Smith take 2nd place in the U15 Girls race with a strong finish, and both the U15 Girls and Boys take 3rd place team medals. The Club held the 21st edition of the Hugh Wilson Memorial Race on 28 November. At 139 runners, numbers were down 5 from the previous year. A vote of thanks is due to all those who helped.

December 2009

18 EKAC athletes competed in the West Districts Cross-country Championships at Irvine. Highest placing was Beth Duff, 3rd U20 Woman, 6th in the Senior Race. As in 2008, the young athletes Xmas handicap was held around the track, but this time a thick covering of snow provided an appropriately Christmas like backdrop to a bit of running fun just before the break. The Senior handicap was won that afternoon by Beth Duff as a blizzard descended on the Auldhouse area.