

## **EKAC REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2017**

### **January 2017**

Greg Kelly got 2017 off to a flying start when he won the 148<sup>th</sup> edition of the New Year Sprint at Musselburgh Racecourse. This is Scotland's top sprint handicap event and Greg's win reflects great credit on him and his coach Gordon Bury. This wasn't Greg's only success of the year, but more on that later. We had 2 athletes selected for the Inter District Cross Country events in Edinburgh later that week. Both Hannah Anderson and Grant Baillie acquitted themselves well in their respective events, cheered on by massive crowds who had turned up to see a great day's athletics topped off by a fantastic duel between Callum Hawkins and Mo Farah. This event is also notable for an award-winning press photo of the EK Tartan Army supporters cheering on Callum towards the end of that race. Meanwhile, away from the mud, the Scottish Athletics Indoor League was in full swing at the magnificent Emirates Arena. We entered several teams in this 3 match League, giving many of our younger athletes some valuable indoor competition, not to mention a great experience. Due to fixture congestion, the first match of the 2017 league already took place the month before! A vote of thanks to Fraser Hopkins for organising this league. Towards the end of January we finally moved into the new Athletics Hub. This hub represents a true milestone in our Club's progression, giving us a venue that fits our aspirations. Our old leaky Clubhouse had served us well since 2003 and was finally removed in October 2017. Moving into the building was just the start. We had to build racking in the storage areas and move all our equipment over. A big thanks to all those who helped with this.

### **February 2017**

On 4 February we held our Club Cross-country Championships on a wet, sleaty day in Strathaven. Later in quite a crowded month we had 2 boys and 2 girls teams in the U12 Superteams indoor event at the Emirates. The Girls A team of Holly Murdoch, Millie Aitken and Gemma Woods did particularly well in finishing 15<sup>th</sup> of almost 60 teams and both girls and boys teams set new club records in the 4x200m relays. Highlights of the Scottish indoor Champs were probably Greg Kelly's win in the 60m. The Scottish Cross Country Champs were held at Falkirk on 25 February. Best EKAC performances on the day were 32<sup>nd</sup> by George McKenzie (U13), 41<sup>st</sup> Abbie Kirwan (U13), 71<sup>st</sup> Hamish Anderson (U15), 17<sup>th</sup> Hannah Anderson (U15), 25<sup>th</sup> Martin Lynas (U20), 8<sup>th</sup> Heather Addison (U20), 33<sup>rd</sup> Grant Baillie (Senior), 241 Gemma Kirwan (Senior).

### **March 2017**

The Committee established an Athlete Assistance Award, aimed at assisting promising athletes travel to events outside the local area, where they could experience higher levels of competition and therefore enhance their athletic development. Several athletes have benefited from this award since its inception and a Race Night organised by Brian Gilbride was held in the Murray Owen Centre in March to raise funds for this initiative. We had a trial night & new intake on 21 March. At a National level this year, all sports have been tightening up their enforcement of Child Protection and Welfare and this meant we also had to respond by ensuring all Coaches and Parent Helpers had up-to-date PVG/Disclosures. This also meant we had to change our policy on the ages of athletes we can accept as members. For insurance purposes they

now had to be 9 years and upwards. The Senior men's team finished 15<sup>th</sup> at the National 6-stage relays in Livingston at the end of March, their best finishing position since 1988 and a sign of greater strength in depth in our senior squad.

### **April 2017**

With Spring well underway, a host of EKAC athletes competed in the Lanarkshire relays on 29 April at the East Kilbride track, and the club came away with 1 gold, 4 silver and 5 bronze medals after an exciting evening of athletics.

### **May 2017**

There was some good news from the EK Sports Council Awards in early May where EKAC had 2 award winners – Luke Kirwan for Coach of the year and Greg Kelly for U18 sportsperson. Later in the month EKAC athletes earned 6 medals at the West T&F champs: golds for Greg Kelly in the U20 100m and 200m, silver and bronze in the U15 200 and 100m respectively for Liam Woods, silver for Ryan Clydesdale in the U17 400m and bronze for Hannah Anderson in the U15 800m. In addition we had 10 athletes in another 12 finals finishing in 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> places.

### **June - August 2017**

Throughout the Summer EKAC athletes competed in a number of Track & Field leagues. The YDL had 3 meetings and a final and our U13/U15 athletes competed as part of a composite South Lanarkshire Team. These athletes had great successes and prompted some thoughts of trying to enter an EKAC team in this event in future. The CSSAL is our whole club league where athletes from U11 to Masters get the chance to compete side by side. We won Division 3 in 2016 but unfortunately this year in Division 2 we finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place and expect to be relegated. This league really a bit of a numbers game and despite many great performances we suffered due to lack of numbers in certain age groups, specifically U17 and Senior Women. As already mentioned, U20 sprinter Greg Kelly had a fantastic year. At the Scottish Track & Field Championships in August he won the silver medal in his age group at 200m and also a silver medal in the Senior 200m a week later.

### **September 2017**

Amongst many fine performances at the Lanarkshire Track & Field Championships on 2 September EKAC athletes won 7 gold, 7 silver and 6 bronze medals. Our Lanarkshire Champions were John Fergusson, Ryan Clydesdale (2), Lucy Muirhead, Hamish Anderson, Hannah Anderson and Ben Everett. A week later we had the Club Championships and a contrast in weather from the previous weekend. 67 athletes braved the wind and showers and our champions were Rachel Griffiths and Sam McGrory at U11, Cara Gilbride and Jamie Scullion/Callum Charters jointly at U13, Hannah Anderson and Liam Woods at U15, Lucy Muirhead at U17 and Andy Clydesdale at Masters. We also had a Coaches meeting to devise a new structure to take us into 2018. This was necessary to handle the influx of new athletes at the latest intake, allow some athletes to move group in line with their event preferences and to allow Coaches with upgraded qualifications to form Development groups.

## **October 2017**

October saw the start of the Cross-country and, perhaps bizarrely, the Indoor Season, with the first SAIL meeting at the end of the month. An early highlight was a first ever win by the Senior Mens team in the Western Districts XC Relays at Hamilton racecourse. Aside from a bronze medal almost 40 years ago, this is the only medal won at this event by an EKAC Senior Team, and generated a host of congratulations messages from all over Scottish athletics. The team comprising Aidan Gilbride, Martin Lynas, John Fergusson, Grant Baillie and Coaches Jamie Clements and Niall Walker were awarded the Scott Walsh Endeavour Award at the Club Dance later in the month in recognition of this feat. At the same event Hannah Anderson recorded the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest leg of the day in her race. Was it just a coincidence that the Club had welcomed Callum and Derek Hawkins to a Club Q&A and training session just 5 days earlier? Our young athletes did us proud by asking lots of superb questions and then had a chance to compete with the GB Internationals over a 400m race, which Callum narrowly won. The following weekend saw the Lanarkshire Road Relays and more great performances, with golds coming from the U11 boys, U13 girls, U15 girls, U17 women and silvers from the U13 boys, U17 women and Senior men. The Club Dance on 28 October reverted to a live band from previous ceilidhs and was a great success. The special awards presented on the night were: Athletes of the year – Ryan Byrne at Junior, Hannah Anderson at Youth and Greg Kelly at U20/Senior level; Sheila MacDougall Award – Liam Woods; Endeavour Award – West XC Senior relay team & coaches; Ten Event competition – Heather Addison and Niall Walker.