

Strathearn Harriers Juniors

AGM 2023 Report

Summary

Yet again, it's been another brilliant year for the juniors. Membership remains high although slightly down on 2023 as a result of a couple of families not renewing. However, the engagement among junior members is excellent. Attendance at training has again been very good throughout the last 12 months and we've seen a further significant increase in participation in competition including a record-breaking cross-country season. We are also holding on to some of our older juniors into the U20 category which is paying dividends in some of our senior teams with great results at team relays this year.

We continue to provide a strongly positive environment which encourages inclusion but also celebrates success, whether absolute (medals, records, top 10s, selection for representative teams) or relative (Personal bests and improvements).

At the top end, we have had unprecedented success with 4 of our athletes claiming Scottish vests in the last 12 months. We also had our first ever winner at the Scottish Cross Country Championships in February this year and a winner in the Scottish Athletics hill running league for U20s.

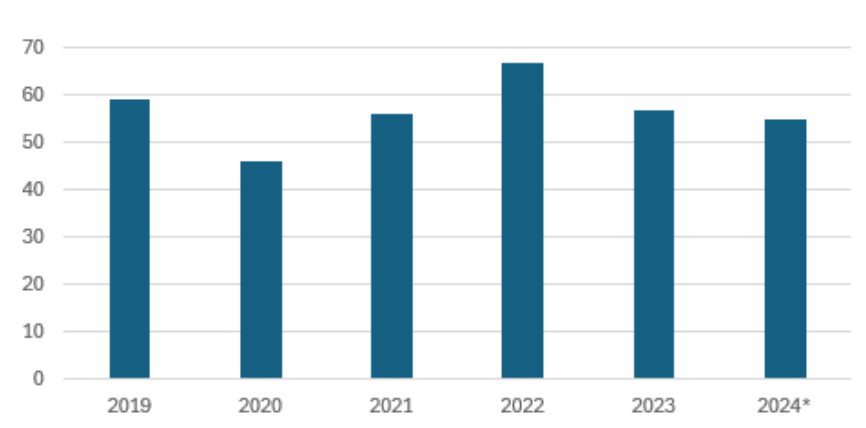
We have welcomed a new coach, Gareth, to the club who is providing a greater level of resilience and flexibility for our coaching. And we continue to have a reliable and wide pool of parent helpers including 3 more that have stepped up to become coaching assistants.

The group of juniors we have at the moment are amazing. Committed, hard-working, supportive and friendly and polite to each other, coaches and those outwith the club. They are a credit to the club, their families and themselves.

Membership

Membership peaked at 57 in 2023 which was down from 67 the previous year but this includes 14 new members. There were quite a few non-renewers from 2022-2023, but very few from 2023-2024 which means we are currently sitting at 55 – and this should continue to grow through the year.

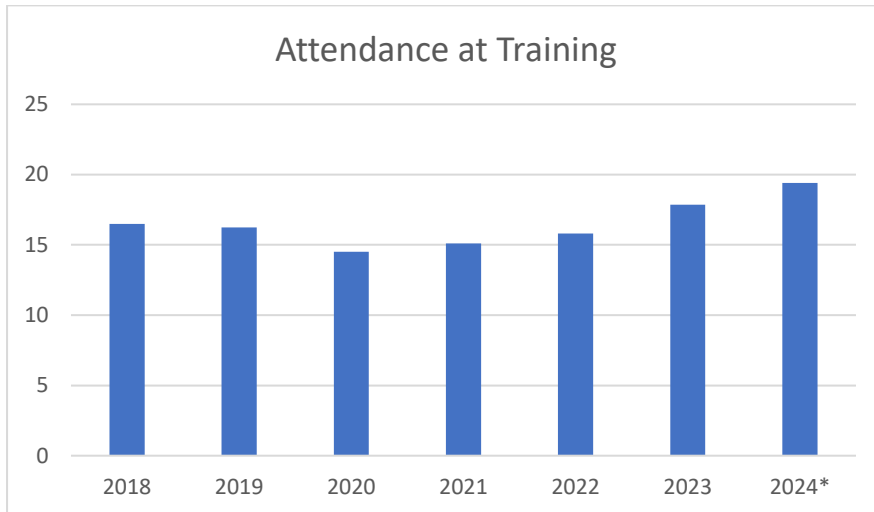
SHJ Membership 2019 – 2024 (as of March 2024)



*2024 – NB in 2023, 12 new members joined between Apr and Sep

Attendance at Training

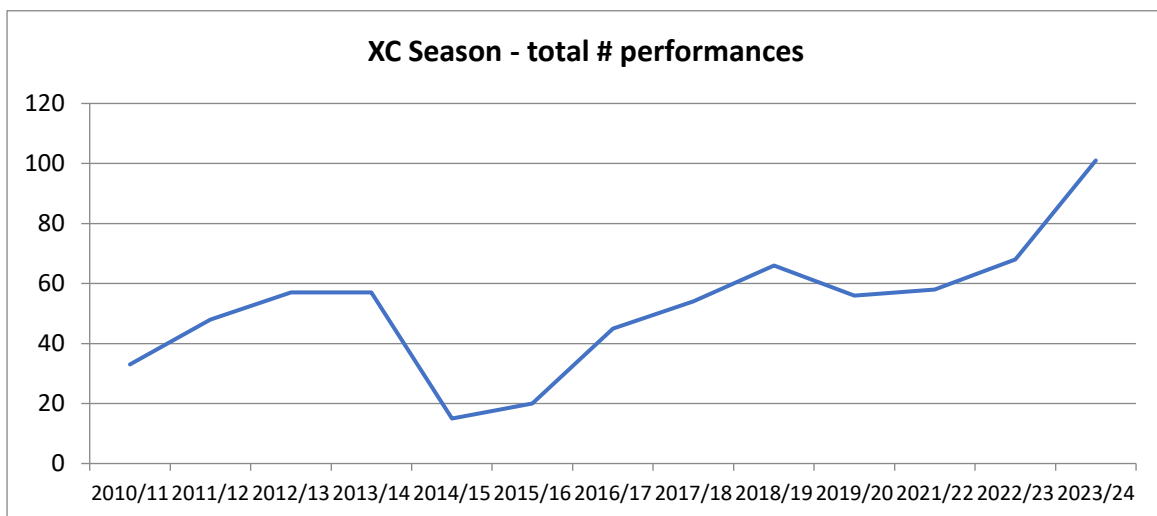
We train twice a week and have been keeping records of attendance for many years. 2023 saw record levels of attendance averaging nearly 18 at each session. This is currently standing at 19.4 for 2024 to date.



Competition attendance

It's been a hugely busy and rewarding year on the competitive side of the club.

We have had record levels of attendance over the winter cross country season



Last year we had a busy outdoor track and field and hill running season with good levels of participation and performance at Open Graded, Sprint Galas and Championship events as well as the junior hill running league and championships.

Our intra-club events (time trials, track day and intra-club XC) have all been well supported with lots of evidence of improvement and progress both individually and as a club. We have also seen good support from junior Harriers for junior Parkrun in MacRosty park. Perth and elsewhere. The Parkrun is a great way to dip toes into competition and it's proved a good funnel for some younger athletes to join the club.

Performance

It's been a great year for our athletes with some very fine performances across the year. Here are just a few of the highlights

- 6 club age-group records for our club mile time trials
- 5 Scotland vests from 4 different athletes (Junior Home International x 2, Mini-Marathon x 2, SIAB XC)
- Gold at National XC Champs
- Team Gold at UK Interdistricts (East District Team)
- Team Gold at Junior Home International Hill Running (Scotland team)
- Winners of East League Cross Country for U11 Boys
- Winners of Hartley Relays
- Winner of the Scottish Athletics Junior Hill Running League for U20s
- Bronze at Interdistrict XC Champs
- Four athletes selected for East District Teams (3 x cross country, 1x hill running)
- Silver at National Track Champs
- Bronze at Scottish Schools Outdoor champs
- Gold and Bronze at East District T&F champs
- Two silver medals at East District Cross-Country Champs

There are so many other fine performances and achievements, but this hopefully gives a sense of what a year we've had.

It's also worth mentioning that our older juniors are having an impact on the senior teams now too. We had juniors in our winning Hartley Relay team, our National Cross Country Relay teams helping us to our highest ever men's and women's finishing positions, the Simon Wake Comrie Hills Relay teams and, at this year's devils burdens we had 6 juniors in our top men's and women's teams. This was always our vision for the junior section...and it is really satisfying to see it coming to fruition and helping us to compete well as a club on the national running stage.

Coaching Team

We have an excellent group of coaching assistants and helpers with some new faces joining the team which means that we almost always have enough helpers to run the sessions. We have also seen a good increase in the number of parent helpers taking the UKA Coaching Assistant course which is the first step towards the full Coach qualification.

We have two qualified Athletics Coaches (Phil and Gareth) which is sufficient to manage our current activities. However, it would be great to see one or two of our CAs take the next step to give us more resilience, capacity and flexibility in our coaching.

Finally...

This report only scratches the surface of what the juniors have been up to this last year. I have also deliberately steered away from mentioning individuals by name as there are so many that deserve mention and just not enough time or space to ensure everyone gets the specific praise they deserve. Suffice it to say, that our current crop of juniors is the best we have ever had and every single one of them make coaching a genuine pleasure!