

**Caithness Amateur Athletic Club**

# **Welcome Pack**

***What you need to know***

**Important information for new athletes and parents**

*“Never mind how many others are better – be as good as **you** can!!”*



## **About the Club**

At Caithness Amateur Athletics Club (CAAC), our aim is to have fun, enjoy our sport, build skill and fitness through training and encourage athletes to take part in competition. We welcome athletes of all abilities, from age 8 to adult. We provide training in all the main athletics events, covering running, jumping and throwing.

We are an 'athlete-centred' club, where the needs of the athlete come first, from health, safety and well-being to providing the right level of challenge to allow our athletes to build their performance.

We have a group of coaches and helpers who run the training sessions and a small committee who manage the business of running the club. All our coaches, helpers and committee members are unpaid volunteers, except for our Club Together Officer, who is employed by Scottish Athletics.

## **Membership**

There are different kinds of membership of CAAC:

- Full member, aged 18 or older.
- Junior member, aged 8 to 18.
- Student, for those 18 to 21 and in full time education.
- Associate, for those wishing to contribute but not take part.

Membership fees are reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting of the club and are paid through direct debit either monthly or annually. Current fees are shown on the membership form attached to this pack.

## **Keeping in Touch**

The main way we keep in touch with members, parents and guardians is by email. This is why we ask for an email address when you join. Using email allows us to quickly notify members of club events and to changes in training sessions.

We also have a website and Facebook page, where we post more general information on the club and to post any information we send by email, as a back up.

Occasionally we have to cancel training sessions at short notice. We use email and our Facebook page to notify members of cancellation. If we do cancel a session, we try to ensure a club representative is at the cancelled training venue to tell any athletes who may have missed the cancellation notice.

## **Attendance and Behaviour at Club**

We encourage parents/guardians of athletes to take an active interest in their child's sporting career. If you have any questions about our training, please come along to a session and ask the coach in charge.

We ask that you do not allow your child to take unnecessary valuable items to training, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage.

**We expect our athletes to turn up in time for the start of the session and remain for the whole session.** For safety reasons, we take a register at the start of each session. We recognise that occasionally athletes will turn up after the start and have to leave before the end. In these situations, the athlete must tell a coach on arriving or leaving.

**We expect parents/guardians to arrive in good time before the end of the session, if they are collecting their children.** We appreciate that there can sometimes be unexpected delays, so we will always try to ensure a club representative waits with young athletes. They will generally wait inside the games hall/training venue. If the delay exceeds five minutes, we will attempt to contact your emergency number.

We expect all athletes and parents to abide by the Scottish Athletics code of conduct (a link to this is available on our website). We expect athletes to show good behaviour, to listen and follow instructions and to treat their fellow athletes and coaches with respect. We appreciate that young athletes can take some time to learn good behaviour. However, we will note repeated disruptive behaviour and reserve the right to take action in these situations. This may mean excluding athletes from activities or getting in touch with parents/guardians to address bad behaviour.

Athletes must be prepared for both outdoors and indoors training at all sessions. Trainers, tracksuit bottoms or shorts and a t-shirt are fine for indoors. For outdoors, we'd advise bringing a warm top and a light-weight water-proof jacket for wearing over their indoor gear and a hat and gloves. Anoraks and heavy jackets are okay but not the best for sports activities as they restrict movement and can end up making you too hot. It is a good idea to bring a waterproof bag to keep your things dry at the side of the track. **Please make sure you bring a drink of water. No fizzy or energy drinks and no snacks during training please.**

Our coaches check each athlete's clothing and footwear, as part of the session. The supervising coach has the right to withdraw an athlete from a session, if their clothing or footwear is not appropriate for the planned activity.

All other equipment required is provided by the club apart from spiked running shoes (known as spikes). These are not essential but are important for training and competition, especially for older athletes, as they provide a better grip on the track. We hold a small selection of second hand spikes that are available for a small donation. Please ask one of the coaches, if you want to try out a pair. Club branded clothing is available for all ages, again, please ask a coach about purchasing these.

## About Our Training Sessions

Athletics is divided into a summer season from March to September and a winter season from September to February. During the winter season, we work on building strength, speed, stamina and movement skills, as these are the foundations of all athletics events. During the summer season, we work on learning and training for the individual athletics events. It can be difficult to do this indoors, so we try to get outside as much as possible (weather permitting).

To allow everyone to get the most out of our training, there are separate sessions for younger athletes (8 years old up to about 12 or 13) and older athletes (approximately 13 years old and above). We use age groupings in athletics competition, see the table below for an explanation of these. We use the same age groups in training but there is more emphasis on grouping athletes by ability during training.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Track and Field</b>	<b>Road Running and Cross Country</b>
Under 11	Aged 9 or 10 on the 31st August within the Competition Year.	Aged 9 on the day of competition, or 10 on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.
Under 13	Aged 11 or 12 on the 31st August within the Competition Year.	Aged 11 on the day of competition, or 12 on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.
Under 15	Aged 13 or 14 on the 31st August within the Competition Year.	Aged 13 or 14 on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.
Under 17	Aged 15 or 16 on the 31st August within the Competition Year.	Aged 15 or 16 on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.
Junior Men and Women	17 or over on 31 August within the Competition Year, but under 20 on 31 December in the calendar year of competition.	Aged 17, 18 or 19 on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.
Seniors	Athletes aged 20 and over on 31st August prior to the commencement of the Competition Year.	
Masters	Over 35 years on the day of competition, although for some non-championship events age over 40 may apply	

Our main training base is Thurso High School track and games hall.

Our training sessions are listed below, note that the start and finish times vary between winter and summer:

### **Wednesday 5.30 to 7.30 – Development Group**

Multi-event training, open to all athletes in the under 15 age group and above. Younger athletes by invitation only. Meeting at the track or Games Hall.

### **Thursdays 6.00pm to 7.30 – Foundation Group**

Multi-event training for the under 9 to under 13 age group, meeting at the Games Hall.

### **About Our Training**

As our athlete's develop, we expect them to move to the more advanced training. However, we aim to do this when the athlete is ready, rather than when they reach a set age. It's important not to get too hung up on how quickly you are progressing. Development is not often a steady progression.

To begin with, the aim is to teach the athletes HOW before how far and how fast. How to run, jump and throw. We aim to get the athletes fit and strong and able to carry out a wide range of movements. The technical term for this is to get them physically literate. We'll still be teaching them the individual athletics events like long jump and shot putt, but we work on the basics first.

We develop the basics using games and short duration exercises that are movement puzzles. We want the athletes to work out how to move to achieve the best result in an activity. This way of doing things recognises the shorter attention span of children and to achieve one of our other main goals – have fun!

Just as important as physical development, we aim to develop the athlete's attitude, commitment, discipline, humility and respect. Learning fair play and sportsmanship, learning how to win and lose well and listening skills and good behaviour are fundamental at this stage.

## **Health and Safety**

All our training sessions are supervised by a Level 2 UK Athletics accredited coach. All our coaches and helpers have PVG clearance to work with children.

All our coaches have had emergency first aid training and have access to a first aid kit. For minor injuries that are common in athletics, such as small grazes and minor muscle sprains, we will provide first aid treatment, if it is needed. For more serious injuries, we will contact parents/next of kin and the coach in charge may ask for the athlete to be taken home. If in doubt, we will take the athlete to accident and emergency directly, as well as contacting parents/next of kin.

We would ask that athletes who have an existing injury do not attend training until they are fit again. Athletics is a high intensity sport that puts a lot of stress on joints and muscles and it is very easy to aggravate existing injuries. If you are unsure about your fitness, please ask a coach before the training session starts. The supervising coach has the right to remove an athlete from a training session, to prevent further injury.

If your child has any medical or special needs that should be taken into consideration the club must be kept informed so that we can tailor training to ensure your child does not miss out.

## **100 Club**

CAAC run a monthly lottery called the 100 Club. It's one of our main methods of fund raising and we would encourage any parents or senior club members to take part. Prizes are awarded monthly, comprising: 1<sup>st</sup> £50; 2<sup>nd</sup> £30; 3<sup>rd</sup> £20. Each number costs £2.17 per month payable by direct debit.

If you are interesting in supporting this aspect of the club's fund raising measures please complete the 100 Club form that comes with your membership form and return it to any coach at a club session.

## **Scottish Athletics**

As a club, we are affiliated to Scottish Athletics, which is the governing body of our sport. We would encourage all athletes to become members of Scottish Athletics, you can do this on-line, via their website.

(<http://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/membership/>)

## Competition

Like any sport, competition is a key part of athletics but to begin with, we want our athletes to learn to compete against themselves before they compete against others. This means getting an idea of how good they are at any particular event and wanting to get better at it. Athletes talk a lot about getting a 'PB', a personal best. You'll hear elite athletes on television talking about their PBs. This is what we mean by competing against yourself.

The best way to get a recorded PB is to take part in a competition, so we encourage all our athletes to take part in at least one competition each year. The easiest way to do this is at our own club championships, usually in September.

Competitions are arranged in age groups as shown in the table on a previous page. The minimum age for competition is 9 years old.

If you are unsure which group you or your child belong in, please speak to a coach as entering the wrong competition will mean not competing on the day.

As a club we compete as a team in the Grampian Athletics League during the summer. Athletes are picked for the team we send to the league meetings. Athletes competing in the league meetings must be members of Scottish Athletics. More details on Scottish Athletics membership can be found here (<http://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/membership/>).

There are also open meetings held during the summer season, which all athletes can take part in. You don't have to be a member of Scottish Athletics to compete in these but the entry fee may be cheaper if you are. We'll keep you posted on these through our Facebook page and website during the season. Finally, there are the Highland Games which offer a range of track and field competition to athletes of all ages.

Before the competition:

- Make sure you have a club vest
- Know where the competition is taking place and the travel arrangements for getting there
- Don't break-in new spikes or trainers at a competition, wear them at training first
- Bring suitable warm/waterproof clothing and a change of socks/footwear in wet conditions
- In warm weather, bring sunscreen and a hat and have something to cover up with
- Ensure you have plenty of drinks and healthy snacks.
- Bring safety pins to attach competitor numbers

At the competition:

- When you arrive at the venue, find out where and when to

report for your event

- Begin your warm-up in good time for your event
- Report to the start area in good time
- Keep warm if there are any delays before the start of your event
- Congratulate your opponents and thank officials at the end of your event
- Cool down and stretch after your event to avoid sore muscles
- Replace lost fluids after your event
- Keep warm after your event
- Refuel with something healthy to eat.