

SCOTTISH CORNER

AS CLEAR AS MUD

Although a long standing member of Aberdeen AAC I have also joined a newly-formed athletic club specifically for hill-runners (Cosmetic Hillbashers) as all too often I have been the sole Aberdeen AAC runner competing in hill-races or at least there have not been sufficient AAAC members to make a creditable team particularly at championship races. In an attempt to clarify my position with regard to team competition I have spoken to various officials and there has also been correspondence between the Secretary of Cosmic Hillbashers and the SAF. (At this stage it is worth pointing out that the Secretary of Aberdeen AAC accepts the formation of the new club and has agreed that AAAC does not properly provide for hill-runners).

For those who have resigned from their previous club the situation is reasonably clear - they can run for Cosmics in team competition after serving a nine month ban. (Though why they should have to serve a ban in the circumstances is beyond me).

However for those of us who still wish to retain our links with our previous clubs and run for them in cross-country and road competitions the situation is as clear as mud. BAF Rule 4(5) states that "where an athlete's first claim Club does not include all the disciplines of athletics.... the athlete is eligible to represent their next claim club in any discipline of athletics for which their first claim club does not cater". (Unfortunately in Scotland virtually all clubs claim to cater for all the various disciplines as there is no financial disincentive to do so). Nonetheless given the fact that the Secretary of Aberdeen AAC is willing to leave the "Hill-running affiliation box" empty it would seem that I can compete for Cosmics in team competition.

However BAF Rule 4(5) states "only first claim members of a club may represent that Club in Open Team Competition unless the organisers have stipulated that such competition is open also to second claim members." Despite the tenor of rule 4(5) this would seem to preclude me from taking part in team competition for Cosmics although being free to run for them as an individual.

Rule 4(11) which is meant to deal with closed championships such as police or university championships seems to further complicate rather than clarify the situation.

In England most races advertise themselves as being run under FRA Rules of Competition. The relevant one is Rule 8 which states "Runners count in Team

Competition for their First Claim Fell Running Club only. This MAY be different from their First Claim road, cross-country or track Club if that Club does not cater for Fell Running". Leaving aside the question as to who decides whether or not a club caters for a specific discipline it would seem that when Cosmic Hillbashers turn out in force south of the border at Wasdale or Coniston then I can count for them in team competition but at Ben Nevis or Clachnaben I can't.

Or maybe I can. Clachnaben, which will be a Scottish Championship race in 1994, is likely to expose the total folly of the present situation as I will be part of the Cosmic Hillbashers organising team but may not be able to count for Cosmics in the team competition. On the other hand if you accept the notional argument that I can run for Cosmics, as AAAC do not cater for hill-runners, how can one explain the ten or so AAAC members who may run Clachnaben as a one-off hill race for the season? Confused? SO AM I.

- Ewen Rennie

P.S. A Registration Scheme that would allow each individual to nominate their choice of club for each individual discipline (which might mean two or more different clubs) might be one way of resolving the situation but I am certainly not in favour of paying a further £10 to the BAF for the privilege of telling them. After all I already pay out two club subscriptions (which both include an SAF/BAF levy as well as being a member of the SHRA, the FRA and Scottish Vets. That's a lot of pennies before I even buy a pair of running shoes or run a race.

If you would like to check any of the above the secretaries of the relevant Clubs are as follows:-

Aberdeen AAC: Hunter Watson. Tel: 0224 310352

Cosmic Hillbashers: Brian Lawrie. Tel: 0224 646873.

NON- PERMITTED HILL RACES

In response to the editorial in the last issue of Scottish Hill Runner which invited comment, and to avoid the danger of silence being construed as approval of the status quo, I would like to put on record my objections to the present eligibility rules that apply to SAF permitted hill races.

The present rules say:-

Any person who competes in a non-permitted hill race renders himself ineligible to compete in any permitted hill race.

Any person who competes in a permitted hill race alongside anyone who is in-

eligible for any reason will himself become ineligible to compete in any subsequent permitted hill race.

Any person who commits either of the sins described above must consider himself to be banned from entering permitted races. The SAF will not ban that person. The SAF has no procedure for banning anyone. No-one is ever officially banned by the SAF. Any sinner must voluntarily withdraw from future participation in permitted hill races.

The upshot of these rules is that every participant in every permitted hill race held anywhere in Scotland is a banned runner, with just two exceptions: (1) new members of affiliated clubs running their first race; and (2) reinstated members of affiliated clubs running their first race since reinstatement. There are not many such exceptional runners. We are all banned. Not many of us bother about applying for reinstatement.

You, dear reader, are a banned runner. I am a banned runner. I will not be applying for reinstatement. I might consider applying for reinstatement if I am informed by the SAF that a disciplinary committee has formally banned me after due consideration and by following the proper banning-people procedure. But I am on safe ground. There is no such committee or procedure.

These rules are due for scrapping. The SAF should scrap the rule that bans people who have previously run in a non-permitted hill race.

Why the rule should be scrapped:-

As the rules stand at present, any member of an affiliated club is effectively barred from competing in all his local non-permitted hill races. There are loads of non-permitted hill races in NW Scotland, and possibly elsewhere too. Nobody should be prevented from running in their own local hill races. Also, anyone who loves running in their own local non-permitted hill races and continues to do so, cannot join an affiliated club or run in any permitted hill races. This is wrong. It is also wrong for the SAF to stop people running in non-local non-permitted hill races.

The SAF's line:-

The SAF issued a statement on 16/11/93 to all affiliated clubs 'BEWARE ATHLETES PARTICIPATION IN UNPERMITTED EVENTS' to remind us all of the present eligibility rules, and also giving two reasons justifying these rules. (1) the present eligibility rules are there to protect us. (2) were the present rules to be scrapped then some local non-permitted events might suffer from the presence of club athletes. On point (1), speaking for myself, I do not need or want the SAF'S protection. On point (2), I believe the local organisers themselves are the best