



“INSPIRING ATHLETES  
ONE STRIDE AT A TIME”

# INSTRIIDER

MAGAZINE



EXCLUSIVE

THE ATHLETE  
SPRINGBOARD



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# DEAR READERS

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy once penned in his acclaimed novel, *Anna Karenina*, that “Spring is the time of plans and projects”, likening it to a time of renewal and growth.

And in Scotland you feel that sense of renewal in those opening days of double-figure weather. The boldest men are optimistically topless, the social butterflies are fluttering in the beer gardens and the commute home from work is met with the sunshine that has long eluded us.

For Stride Athletics, this spring epitomises Tolstoy’s words. Flat ‘N Fast 4 made history as the first 5km race in Scotland, and one of very few in the United Kingdom, to receive official certification from World Athletics, in cooperation with AIMS. This means times ran at our races count towards qualification standards at major championships. It was also the debut of our mixed relay race, added to the schedule alongside the 3km and 5km races.

The night itself? A record number of athletes and an incredible night of running. As always, the Stride team dragged themselves through an arduous day of organising, but we wouldn’t change it for the world. We’re in it for the love of the game. And the leftover caramel wafers.

Speaking of our team, we welcome a new group of contributors to the Instrider. We’ve brought together passionate, young writers to tell the stories they want to platform. Have a look out for their stories in this edition. We’re winding the clock back a year to Duncan Robinson’s record-breaking solo run, an in-depth chat with new University of Edinburgh’s head coach, Mark Rowland, and exploring the transition from winter and summer training. Plus, an in-depth report from Flat ‘N Fast 4.

And you can get to know more about our first intake from the Athlete Springboard, who we have dedicated a double spread to. Five top athletes who we are very proud to represent us in the black and yellow.

Spring may now have long bloomed and we have indulged in many never-ending days during June, but the Stride Summer is nowhere near finished. We have an array of fantastic events, projects and guests on our channels to keep you going until we return for the momentous Flat ‘N Fast 5 on September 13.

*Michael Houston*

Instrider Editor





# WINDY 'N WILD RACE SEES SIMPSON & CROWE WIN AT **FLAT 'N FAST 4**

**L**inlithgow, **Scotland** – Annabel Simpson of Fife AC and Jamie Crowe from Central AC claimed victories on their first appearance at the West Lothian Cycle Circuit, on a challenging day at Flat 'N Fast 4.

Both made the trip to Linlithgow as part of packed fields, which saw 17 women run 17 minutes or under, and 42 men under 15 minutes and the most finishers in the event's history. With times not the priority, both elite races saw

several contenders coming into the final straight.

Olympian Megan Keith of Inverness Harriers competed in the elite men's race too, setting a new women's course record of 15:11, beating Morag Millar's previous best mark of 16:00.

Simpson was part of a breakaway pack of five runners in the elite women's race including Morag Millar from Central AC, Sophie Hicks of Belgrave, Livingston's Sarah Calvert and Hanna

Andrejczuk from the University of St Andrews.

The group managed to bridge a sizeable gap to Kirsty Walker from Edinburgh AC and Millie McClelland-Brooks of Inverclyde AC, with an even larger gap back to the second pack. At the halfway point, Walker made the move to go with the front to make it six in contention.

Simpson braved it with 600 metres to go, making a run for home going into a headwind.

She was pursued by Millar and the early leader Hicks, as well as Walker. Andrejczuk was the first to be dropped, with Calvert – who is part of the Athlete Springboard – losing contact too, finishing fifth. Hicks would be the one to miss out on the podium down the home straight as Simpson made the run for home in 16:13, chased all the way by Flat ‘N Fast 3 winner Millar in 16:14 and the well-paced Walker in third, also in 16:14.

In the following race, Jamie Crowe won an action-packed elite men’s race which saw the top nine runners finish within four seconds of each other. Crowe

was keen to take to the front with his teammate Hamish Hickey, with Cambuslang Harriers’ Andrew McGill, who won Flat ‘N Fast 3 and is a member of the Athlete Springboard; and Finlay Ross-Davie of Garscube Harriers.

But they were just some of those involved. Peter Bradshaw of Edinburgh University Hares and Hounds, Aberdeen duo Sean Chalmers and Mohamed Warsame, Cambuslang’s Jamie MacKinnon and Callum Tharme and Shettleston Harriers’ Taha Ghafari, who was second in September, were all involved in the action at the front.

When the kick came in the last lap from Hickey, the group followed, but Tharme was the first to falter. Crowe, who is regarded for his endurance over his speed, managed to find the gap coming into the final straight as Hickey fell back, finishing seventh ahead of MacKinnon and McGill.

Chasing Crowe was Bradshaw, who looked capable of outsprinting his older opponent, but the Central AC athlete was solid through the final straight, holding on for the victory in 14:09, ahead of Bradshaw, also in 14:09. Chalmers came through for the bronze medal after a strong final lap in 14:10, pipping Ross-Davie

to the podium who had the same time. Warsame finished fifth in 14:11, with Ghafari, Hickey and MacKinnon in 14:12 and McGill in 14:13.

Falkirk Victoria Harriers’ Luke Sedman successfully defended his under 15 boys’ title in the junior 3km race, in a time of 9:15. He, along with Connor Campbell of Garscube Harriers and Anster Haddies’ Luca Anderson were the front three in the race, closely followed by Giffnock North’s Cameron Nugent. The front three pushed away further from Nugent, and all went inside the old course record for this age group of Rory MacMillan of 9:19.

Anderson finished second in 9:16 and Campbell third in 9:18.

Lasswade’s Cerys Wright set a new course record in the under 15 girls’ category too, crossing the line in 10:21 to beat Imogen Turner’s old mark of 10:25 from September. She was in a close battle for the podium too as she held off strong opposition in the form of Holly Simpson of Giffnock North in 10:24 and Aberdeen’s Emily Taylor in 10:25, who has won a medal at all three Flat N Fasts she has competed in.

James Shinnie of Aberdeen put in a tremendous performance in the under 13 boys’ race to take

the crown in 9:51, beating Law & District’s Alexander Wotherspoon (10:01) and Sam Deery of Giffnock North (10:16). Eilidh Murdoch from Banchory Stonehaven set a new under 13 girls’ course record of 10:50, cruising to gold ahead of East Kilbride AC’s Nina Clark and Cambuslang’s Brooke Walker, both finishing in 11:02.

Thank you to timekeepers ProTay, our officials at Scottish Athletics for dedicating their time, our race sponsors, our marshals and volunteers, Amvale Scotland, Coull Beans Coffee, Bonnie Events and Pops Pizza for providing food and drink and our sports brands for attending.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

- Megan Keith**  
(15:11, women’s course record, fourth on Scottish 5K all-time list, native best),
- Oliver MacDonald**  
(14:25, fastest U20 men’s time, joint-10th Scottish U20 all-time list),
- Layla Todd**  
(16:43, Shetland record),
- James Alexander**  
(14:35, equals his Scottish U17 5K record),
- Jessica Taylor**  
(16:45, fastest U17 women’s time, joint-third on Scottish U17 all-time list),
- Luke Sedman**  
(9:15, fastest U15 boys’ time),
- Cerys Wright**  
(10:21, fastest U15 girls’ time),
- Eilidh Murdoch**  
(10:50, fastest U13 girls’ time),
- Helen Leigh**  
(17:31, fastest women’s V40 time).

FLAT ‘N  
FAST 4

233  
SENIOR PBS

60  
JUNIOR PBS

PB RATE OF  
57.5%

	APRIL 2025	SEPTEMBER 2024	APRIL 2024	SEPTEMBER 2023
MEN’S TOP 10	14:16	14:33	14:49	15:10
MEN’S TOP 20	14:36	14:55	15:02	15:30
MEN’S TOP 30	14:49	15:05	15:21	15:53
WOMEN’S TOP 10	16:47	17:21	18:00	18:13
WOMEN’S TOP 20	17:11	17:39	18:26	19:00
WOMEN’S TOP 30	17:31	18:08	19:23	20:34

UNDER	FnF4	FnF3	FnF2	FnF1
15 MINUTES	42	24	19	7
16 MINUTES	123	79	61	37
17 MINUTES	202	125	95	63
18 MINUTES	274	182	133	89

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# DUNCAN ROBINSON A YEAR ON

BY DANNY MUNRO



**“This is painful. This is painful.”**

Duncan Robinson repeated this to himself while careering around the West Lothian Cycle Circuit at Flat ‘N Fast 2 last April. “Just hold it, hold it, hold the pace” – his mantra, as he worked his way through each of the five laps – the course appearing thinner with each kilometre as the baying crowd edged closer to the race leader, stirred by the prospect of witnessing a course record.

Thankfully, Duncan did hold on, accompanied only by a cameraman hanging off the back of a bike for the majority of the race. Understandably, his competitors were unable to hang on to his sub-2:50 kilometre pace. Flanked by a small army of supporters, Duncan lifted his hands to his head as he crossed the line. Moments later he would learn that he had set a new Scottish native best – his staggeringly fast time of 13min 52.3sec is, at the time of writing, the fastest a Scottish person has ever run five kilometres on home soil.

Duncan plays it down when I remind him of his unique accolade. “It feels kind of good,” he shrugs, clearly keen to play down his achievements. “It’s cool – I don’t know if I’ll ever have a native record again, or how long it’ll even last, so I’m happy to have it.” Humble as he may be, Duncan admits that he likely would not be where he is now had it not been for his bold performance that night in Linlithgow.

“I think it gave me a lot more options,” Duncan says of Flat ‘N

Fast 2, “A lot of schools that were looking at me probably wouldn’t have if I didn’t do that run, so I’m really glad I did it.”

Having completed an undergraduate degree at Glasgow Caledonian University, the Glaswegian was seeking a scholarship abroad this time last year – and was quick to accept a place at the prestigious Iona University in New Rochelle, New York, who reached out to him having

**“THIS IS PAINFUL. THIS IS PAINFUL.”**

been impressed by his 5km effort. Duncan joins me from a library in Greater New York, where he has just politely asked the two students who have booked the room he is sat in if he can have another 15 minutes to carry out our interview.

“Anything for Stride,” he laughs.

Duncan arrived on the call fresh from the physio. “He was digging into my feet and was making me scream,” he exclaims, assuring me that that’s a good thing. The physio has, unfortunately, been someone that Duncan has spent a lot of time with since arriving in New York – after picking up an Achilles injury in his first stateside race. “I only had one race in the US and it was a pretty hilly, brutal course,” he recalls. “So I was doing 8km on a really hard course and I think my calves and my Achilles were gubbed after.”



Duncan and his team did not bother to grace his recent injury with a formal title – chalking the pain down to some kind of tendonitis. Thankfully, having spent the majority of his time in the United States shelved by his ambiguous setback, Duncan has returned to a more regular training schedule and is looking ahead to finally get back to racing, just as he initially set out to.

But with a dearth of racing activity to speak of in the last year, Flat 'N Fast 2 lies prominently in the mind of the young Business Administration student. Reflecting on how he managed to hold on while running ahead of the pack for so long, Duncan makes a bold admission about the importance of being alone, stressing that holding yourself accountable can be key.

“I think training solo sometimes does make racing solo a bit easier...it's good not to have to rely on people. Even though training partners are a great tool to have, and you have a lot more fun when you're training with other people,” Duncan concedes.

A smile appears across his face as he adds, “But when it comes to it, if you're not able to just go out there and train yourself, then you're probably soft.”

Given the inherently speedy nature of the course, many of the 600+ athletes registered for Flat 'N Fast 4 will be searching for personal bests. And beyond solo training, the course record holder believes tempo training is the key when it comes to personal best hunting.

“I do think just having a dedicated day to tempo pace helps you get to know your own body, and it helps you to train in other areas because you're more aware of the effort you're spreading throughout the week.”

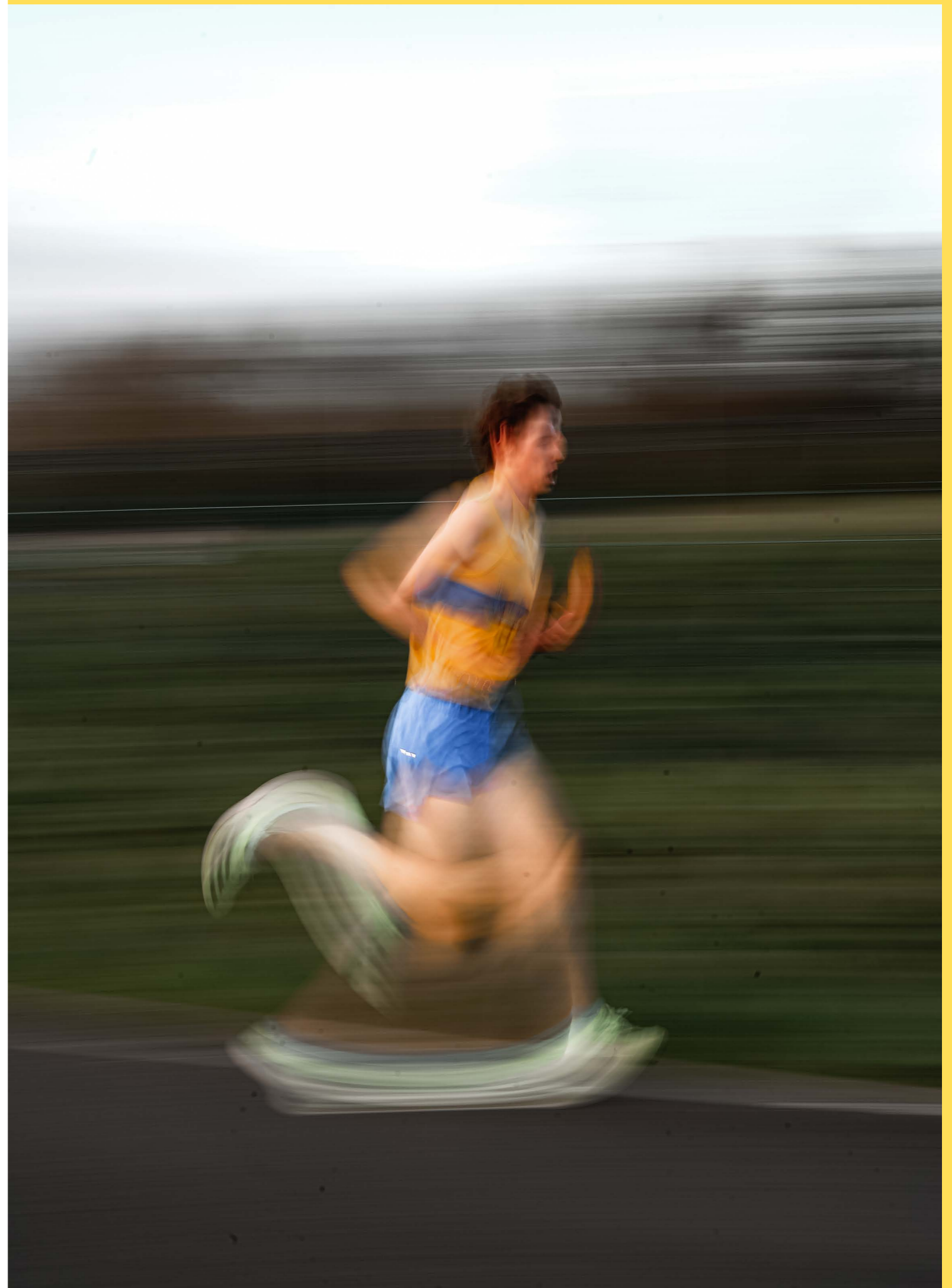
Wisely, Duncan prophesies about the value of consistency: “I don't think people need to be doing double thresholds and hundreds of miles a week. You can still improve just by adding small amounts of things, and things that are manageable. Adding the weeks and months together is gonna make you a lot more fit than having one good week.”

When asked about his peers, Duncan urges all his fellow elite athletes to sign up for the festivities.

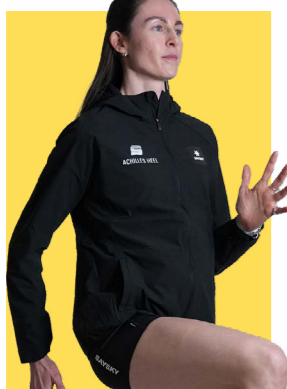
“I think all the guys on the Scotland team should be going to Flat 'N Fast. I ran 14:06 at Armagh [International Road Race, 2024] and then had a nice training block – and I ran a lot faster on the Flat 'N Fast course. It is actually flatter [than Armagh] in my opinion. It's nicer underfoot, and obviously conditions can vary but the year I did Armagh it was windy and rainy, so I'm Flat 'N Fast all the way.”

Regardless of what time you may be aiming for come the race, Duncan argues, rather passionately, that the race will hurt – regardless of how fast you are. “I think regardless of if you're running sub-14 or sub-25, you've just got to lay it on the line and just give it your all.”

“Running is the same for everyone. I think elite athletes can get a little bit snobby thinking it's harder for them. I totally disagree with that sentiment. Everyone at Flat 'N Fast is going to be putting in a huge shift, so kudos to everyone.”



# THE ATHLETE SPRINGBOARD



HANNAH CAMERON

**Location:**  
Aberdeen

**Club:**  
Aberdeen AAC

## Key Achievements

- 2x Scottish Senior 800m champion and 9x senior medallist
- 5x Scottish University 800m champion and Scottish University record holder
- 4x British Championship finalist

## Favourite hobbies outside athletics

Does drinking coffee count as a hobby? (editor's note: we'll allow it)

## Interesting skill

I'm a qualified physiotherapist which helps solve any injuries or niggles and also saves on the physio fees!

## Favourite city you have visited

Valencia has to be the best place I've been to - great running location with a good mix of city and beach and the tapas is a bonus too.

## Best advice someone gave you

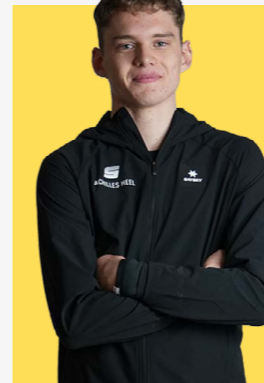
Someone recently said to me: "There will always be more money, but there won't always be more time".

## How others would describe you in three words

"Cheerful" according to my work colleagues, "Kind and Determined" according to my family.

## Describe your perfect day

Spending time in the sun with friends and family - maybe a BBQ!



JACOB SMITH

**Location:**  
Kendal/Durham

**Club:**  
Kendal AAC/Durham Uni

## Key Achievements

- 1st BUCS Indoor 800m and 2nd 800m Outdoor in 2024

## Favourite hobbies outside athletics

Hiking, Football, Handball, Darts

## Interesting skill

Ability to sleep 11 hours every night

## Favourite city

Edinburgh >> Glasgow

## Best advice someone gave you

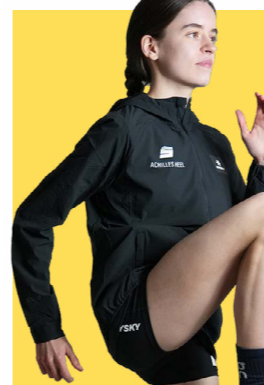
"Shy Bairsns get Nowt"

## How others would describe you in three words

Driven, Disorganised, Stubborn

## Describe your perfect day

Probably just a chill day with my girlfriend: brunch then a long walk followed by dinner and a few drinks.



SARAH CALVERT

**Location:**  
Edinburgh (Uni)/  
Linlithgow (Home)

**Club:**  
Livingston AC

## Key Achievements

- GB Vest at Euro U20s 2019 and Euro U23s in 2023,
- Scottish Native Record Holder in the Mile

## Favourite hobbies outside athletics

Cycling and cooking

## Interesting skill

Cooking weird meals with random ingredients and cycling uphill

## Favourite city you have visited

Geneva

## Best advice someone gave you

"Never give up"

## How others would describe you in three words

I asked my friend Zoe, she said "never goes slow!"

## Describe your perfect day

Wake up at 7am, eat some apple porridge and have a cup of tea, do a hard track session in the sun with a good group, go to a cafe and get an almond croissant!

**ANDREW MCGILL**

**Location:**  
Glasgow/Linlithgow

**Club:**  
Cambuslang Harriers

**Key Achievements**

- Scottish 1500m Champion
- Sub-4 minute mile

**Favourite hobbies outside athletics**

Singing/playing the guitar and reading fiction

**Interesting skill**

I can rollerblade/skate

**Favourite city you have visited**

Florence

**Best advice someone gave you**

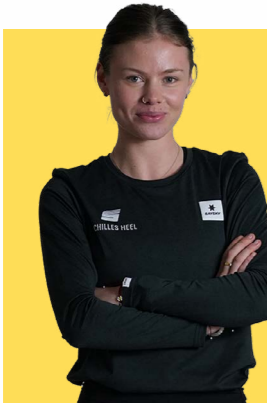
As my mum says to me before every race - “run hard or go home”

**How others would describe you in three words**

Highly-energetic, enthusiastic, driven

**Describe your perfect day**

Got to be an evening race abroad. Nothing more exciting than travelling somewhere new to race with friends. followed by dinner and a few drinks.

**MEG GADSBY**

**Location:**  
Teddington, London

**Club:**  
City of Norwich AC

**Key Achievements**

- 2024 European Cross Country Championships,
- 15:52 5K, 32:55 10K.

**Favourite hobbies outside athletics**

Seeing friends

**Interesting skill**

I can riffle shuffle a deck of cards.

**Favourite city you have visited**

Valencia

**Best advice someone gave you**

“Have fun with everything you do”

**How others would describe you in three words**

Focused, chaotic, genuine

**Describe your perfect day**

Long run in the morning, walk around a sea side town, cinema in the evening.



# THE OVERCONSUMPTION OF RUNNING

BY EMMA PADNER

**S**o you've run through your running shoes. Congrats! It's a great accomplishment that feels insurmountable when you purchased them some weeks, months or years ago.

They feel flat, maybe your shins are hurting and anyway, Strava sent you that 400-kilometre reminder 450 kilometres ago!

So now what?

The running industry, like any, takes its toll on the environment. A polyester shirt produces more than double the carbon footprint of its cotton equivalent. The ethylene vinyl acetate (eva) that

makes up some trainers may still be in a landfill 1,000 years later, according to The Guardian.

How we choose to buy and use our running shoes and kit can make a difference. Repairing gear can be an easy way to give it a second life. Stitching a seam or patching a puffer jacket can reinforce items, getting them ready for many more runs.

Not to mention, keeping a pair of trousers for years will see you through hundreds if not thousands of adventures. It creates a sentimental bond for an article of clothing, which can become the centre of your stories and experiences.

I am trying to use my current running gear until the total end of its life, not only because I love the fit of many pieces, but because they have been through races and training cycles. So many that I feel emotionally attached to them. They are pieces that I will patch and repair if they start to rip.

In a world of fast fashion, innovative technology and ample choice, it's easy to forget the shirt we ran our entire training cycle in is still functional after we complete the race. Your shoes that carried you 300 miles? They still have life!

This is by no means a call to never buy running kit again. It

is important to allow ourselves to indulge in our hobbies and interests, spend our hard-earned money on our passions and let ourselves geek out over the latest technology, fabrics, fits and colours being created.

Nor am I making the case to never sign up for a race that is across the world, or to buy a brand new pair of trainers even though you have some at home. It's important to reflect on what we have, what we actually need and what is not necessary.

Jasmin Paris, the first woman to ever complete the Barkley Marathons, wore the same pair of Inov8 Mudclaws for all three attempts, resoling and patching them when they wore through. In an article breaking down the

gear Paris wore when competing, it all appears to be many seasons old – her red Inov8 shirt has an old brand logo, her Ultimate Direction pack is a discontinued style, and her Black Diamond poles are the ones she carried during her 2019 win of the Spine Race.

When searching for running gear, I try to recognise the multi-use aspects of items. Can I also cycle, walk or hike in this quarter zip? Can I wear this running backpack on my bike, or to the top of a Munro?

I went through my running kit this morning, separating items into pieces I use on a weekly basis in my training, and pieces I haven't touched in a few weeks. If I don't reach for clothing within the next

two weeks, I plan to donate it, or pass it along to friends who may need some extra kit.

I challenge you to go through your kit drawers and see what you use, and what you don't. Swap gear with friends or people in your local running community. Give items a second life, one where they will be used and loved. Think about how you can use it for more than just running.

Use it until it is falling apart, then repair it and use it again.





# WINTER TRAINING

## *THE UNSPOKEN TABOO*

BY ESME CALLANDER

The winter season is often conceptualised as the most difficult time of the year to hone in on the training. Icy temperatures and blustery conditions force us to wrap up warm; calling a halt on the brakes, breathing reduced to the short and sharp manual setting. Usual routes often become inaccessible, with snow and ice impeding the tracks and trails. With darkness looming earlier and earlier, the fewer daylight hours burden the typical routine.

Whilst a passing whisper of 'winter training' often injects fear directly into the veins of runners, it simultaneously portrays a sense of endearment for the so called 'mountain goats'. Longer, endurance-orientated workouts are a common theme, featuring hill sprints and lengthier reps. With tracks freezing over, grass sessions become favourable. In other words: a cross country runner's dream. In fact, many awaken prematurely from their hibernation to face the unforgiving conditions with a joyful demeanour.

Base training is all about building that strong foundation, which can later be tweaked and refined. Mileage tends to increase, as pace concurrently drops. As aerobic running climbs, heart rate aims to remain low with chatter prevalent. Interval sessions tend to feature more elevation and fartlek workouts. Strides are also a hot take for those wishing to maintain their summer kick.

Nevertheless for some, the darkness marks the beginning of the indoor season. Short, snappy workouts remain rampant, focusing on speed, carefully catered towards the indoor meets. As races tend to be confined to the 200m track, technique plays a greater role compared to the outdoor equivalent. Strength, conditioning and drills hold their own.

For many professional athletes, indoor winter training is deemed a blessing in disguise. It's not just the warmth that calls Jakob Ingebrigsten inside, but the simplicity of the treadmill. It ensures an automatic degree of uniformity, allowing the added pressures and complications surrounding pace to be discarded. The environment for such athletes is heavily controlled, hence, external factors are negligible. Undulating terrain is non-existent. It allows aspects such as heart rate and lactate levels to be kept tightly under wraps.

The appeal continues to the average Joe also. Gyms advertise an element of comfort in comparison to the tough outdoor conditions and the colder months of February and March are amongst the busiest, according to PureGym's annual survey. Consistent training, heating, and a post-workout vending machine? What's not to love? Gyms packed to the brims amidst the 5pm rush is a common scene, especially surrounding New Year's resolution season.

It is also common to witness flocks of athletes embark on their warm

weather training, post-festivities. Reduced risk of injury, more time for recovery and relaxation, and the change of scenery boosts that motivation, which can be at risk of plateauing during the winter. A great proportion of these runners head to southern Europe, predominantly to Spain and Portugal during the colder months. This migration is commonplace across sport. You could easily bump into gaggles of cyclists or footballers with the same idea.

After speaking to one of Stride's runners from the Athlete Springboard programme, Hannah Cameron, we gained an insight into how her winter training slowly evolves into the summer equivalent.

She is a 2min 03sec 800m runner, who has finished fifth at the British Indoor Athletics Championships and by now, is a bit of an expert.

As Hannah leans towards the middle-distance bracket, focusing on track events in particular, her training does not differ hugely throughout the year. She embraced the fact that she has fortunately never struggled with any notable injuries to date, and questioned whether this was a result of sheer consistency. Her mileage tends to increase slightly through the winter months, but the key is her consistency.

Overall, the transition to winter training can be tough for some, yet the highlight of the year for others. The more important question is what about you? Get running and find out.



**FLAT 'N  
FAST 5**

**13TH SEPTEMBER 2025**

Find out more at:

[WWW.PROTAY.CO.UK/FLATNFAST5](http://WWW.PROTAY.CO.UK/FLATNFAST5)