



Guide to Competitions

If you're new to the club or your kids are wanting to compete for the first time, we've produced this handy guide to what might be the best competitions for your child. For younger children, we aim for everyone to run, jump and throw to avoid early specialisation which often hinders a child's athletic development.

U11 Age Group

Most kids who compete for the first time are in this age group and across the summer, there are a couple of local competitions that we'd recommend you to try.

NoTAN Summer Grand Prix (Quadkids) *Recommended strongly for years 3 -6*

This is an ideal first competition for young athletes, with 5 events taking place between April and August. They each feature a sprint (distance varies by age), howler throw, long jump and distance race (varies by age). The competition is very family friendly and you can get very close to the action and support your child. Each child gets a certificate at each fixture and there are trophies for overall points or if any records are broken. The events are held at Churchill Playing Fields at Whitley Bay and entries are view the race-results website or they can be made on the day. More information at <http://www.notan.info/>

Gateshead Minors Meetings

The events are exactly the same as those at NoTAN but it's a little bit more competitive and parents can't get as close to the action. Again the events are held between April and July when it's a little bit warmer outside. The events are held at Gateshead International Stadium with entry forms from the Gateshead Harriers website and entries available on the day. More information at <https://gatesheadharriers.com/>

North East Harrier League

For those wanting to do Cross Country races, there are U11 races at each of the Harrier League meetings and athletes compete over a course between 1.5k and 2k which is appropriate for their age group. Cross Country isn't for everyone and can be tough with events taking place across the winter months. Entries are for the season but you don't have to compete in every race. Entries are made on the day and more information can be found at <http://www.harrierleague.com/>

Sportshall

Sportshall is an ideal way for young athletes to gain competition experience and we take part in a club based event in February, plus there are open competitions held across the Winter at Blyth. More information at <https://blythsportshallathletics.weebly.com/>

U13/U15/U17 Age Groups

Moving up to the older age groups and there's a little bit of crossover as kids in school year 6 can still take part in the NoTAN and Gateshead events as well as the North East Harrier League and NEYDL competitions.

North East Youth Development League *Recommended strongly for years 6-11*

There are 4 NEYDL fixtures across each season and this year, the club will be competing in a composite team with Jarrow & Hebburn AC. This is a club competition for U13/U15 & U17 athletes with the aim to help to develop young athletes across the region. For us, we'll have an entry available in each age group for each event, plus we can also add extra athletes if needed but they may not count to the club's points total. The NEYDL is quite a relaxed competition and the ideal way to for athletes to work in a team and gain competition experience. At the end of each season, the top 3 athletes from each event/age group take part in an athletics meeting against the West Yorkshire League equivalent league team.

More information is available at <https://necaa.weebly.com/neydl.html>

North East Grand Prix

There are 6 NEGP meetings across the Summer, with most being at Monkton Stadium and all the fixtures are on Wednesday nights. It's a similar experience to the NEYDL, but athletes compete as individuals and there are points based on their finishing position in each event. The points are collated over the 6 meetings and the top 6 athletes in each age group are invited to a presentation evening at Gateshead Stadium, which is usually held in late September. There are a range of track and field events available across the series, so there's something for everyone.

This year, entries will be available on the Race Results website or you can enter on the night. More information is available at <https://necaa.weebly.com/negp.html>

North East Track & Field Championships

There are both indoor and outdoor versions of the NE Championships. The indoor version is usually held over a weekend in February (at Gateshead) and the outdoor version is over a weekend in mid May (at Middlesbrough). The competition standard is a little bit higher than you'd find at NEYDL or NEGP with the athletes generally having to go via a call room, which is often a new experience for them. There are also Combined Events competitions both Indoors and Outdoors.

Entries are always available on the Race Results website. More information available at <https://necaa.weebly.com/>

Open Meetings, Relays & Sportshall

In the early part of the season, there are often a few open meetings that are worth having a look at as there's sometimes a medal and they are good as season openers for more experienced athletes. Have a word with the coaching team for their opinions on open meetings as some are generally better than others. For this season, there's the

Kieran Maxwell Memorial Open at Middlesbrough (7th April) and the Gateshead Open Medal Meeting (14th April). There are also two relay competitions which take place in the Spring and Autumn, with entries being handled by the club.

Over the winter, there's a Sportshall competition at Blyth plus open Indoor meetings at Gateshead which are on Thursday evenings.

Entries are generally available on the Race Results website.

Northern & National Meetings

For those who wish to, there are also a range of age group fixtures both indoors and outdoors at a Northern and National level. The indoor events are usually held at the English Institute for Sport at Sheffield for both Northern and National competitions. The Northern Championships outdoors have been held in Liverpool for the past couple of years and English Nationals have been at Bedford.

At the moment, the club isn't a member of Northern Athletics and we need to be if any of our athletes wish to compete at that level. The Committee have already decided that we would join Northern Athletics when we have athletes who wish to compete at that level. My general rule of thumb would be that if you're competitive in the NE competitions then give Northern's a go, with that then following on that if you compete well at Northern level, then give National competitions a go – they can be quite daunting and that includes the experience for the parents too !

More information is available at <https://www.northernathletics.co.uk/> or <https://www.englandathletics.org/athletics-and-running/england-competitions/national-championships/>

Cross Country

As well as the NEHL fixtures, there are also Cross Country fixtures at Farrington at the start of the season (September) plus there's also the Durham Boys & Girls Club event which leads to a National Final in Essex. The club has also competed in the Birtley AC Cross Country Relays which are held in March, with the club arranging the entries for all these events. There are also NE, Northern and National Cross Country competitions.

Useful Links

<https://necaa.weebly.com/>
<https://www.race-results.co.uk/results/2019/>
<http://www.notan.info/>
<https://blythsportshallathletics.weebly.com/>

In general, if you've got a question, ask the coaching team on their view of the competition and if it is suitable for your child. We want to build performance and confidence, so choosing your competitions wisely is a bit of a skill and you'll learn from experience.

Mark Ellis
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