**Moorfoot Runners Junior Section**

 **How to Join**

**Welcome!**

Thanks for your interest in the Junior Section of Moorfoots Running Club.

**Who we are.**

The Junior section of the club has become increasingly popular over recent years and has up to 40 Juniors regularly attending the open Tuesday evening session, 10 of whom attend a performance group and compete in regional and national events.

As a Scottish Athletics affiliated club, the sessions are run by a small team of qualified and highly committed volunteer Scottish Athletics coaches who rely heavily on the support of parents to run the sessions safely.

As a small club, we’ve enjoyed a remarkably consistent level of success with juniors reaching national standard who now as adults are mentoring our upcoming juniors.

**Our Ethos**

We want the juniors to enjoy the cameraderie and support from their peers, coaches and older juniors and that comes from regular attendance and commitment to improve their running over time.

We’d be expecting a weekly commitment, prompt start, a hello from each junior at the start (also helps the junior tell the coach that they are well) and a wee thankyou at the end. Old fashioned maybe(!) but an effective container to hold the juniors in, so they get the most out of the session.

**Who can come?**

We do our best to accommodate all the Juniors who are interested in joining but we don’t yet have the resources to run a range of sessions to suit all abilities and ages.

To help us keep the group safe and properly supported, we need the Juniors to have a reasonable level of running fitness before starting with the club. If your child can run comfortably for 20 minutes without stopping, they will likely be able to manage the session.

(See guidance below in **Appendix 1** on how to increase your child’s level of fitness in preparation to attend).

We start to take new members from aged 10 and we would prefer that any newcomers of Primary school age speak in the first instance to their PE teacher or school running club organiser about possibly attending Moorfoot training.

We ask that parents contact Ross (ross.grieve@thistle.org.uk or 07976271905) prior to their child attending to confirm their readiness and to check that the club is not operating a waiting list at any particular time.

The club sometimes make exceptions for 9-year-olds who have a proven aptitude for running and are recommended by their school PE teacher. Again, the coaches will discuss with parents to explore together whether the time is right for the child to attend.

Next step is to come and attend a couple of sessions as this gives the junior, parents and coaches alike an opportunity to decide together whether the junior is comfortable and likely to enjoy the experience before committing.

**What we do**

**Tuesday Training - Open Training, 6.30-7.30pm**

On Tuesday evenings we hold an open training session for all Juniors members who are interested in using running to improve their general fitness and /or compete in competitions. Training is focused on preparing the juniors to be able to participate in middle/long distance, cross-country and hill running events scheduled throughout the year.

In the summer (April to Sept) we hold the session at PHS, 2G pitch and in the winter (Oct - Mar) we hold sessions on two pavement loops, which have no road crossings, starting from Kingsmeadows car park.

**Additional Sessions**

Additional sessions are held throughout the week for juniors who are committed to competing in regular racing throughout the year in cross country (XC), track or hills or are looking for support to achieve a performance-based target (e.g. a 5K park run).

(For more information on these sessions and how to get involved, see **Appendix 2**)

**Appendix 1: How do I get a reasonable level of running fitness?**

There is a lot you can do yourself to get ready for club training. To begin with it’s not about running fast; it’s about for how long you can run at a comfortable pace; a bit more than a jog but easy “conversation pace” running (i.e. you should not be breathing so hard that you can’t chat as you run).

• Try some easy pace running, building up gradually 1-2minutes extra each time you go out until you can run comfortably for at least 15mins non-stop. You might start by alternating between a few minutes of easy running and a minute walking until you can run non-stop for 15minutes. E.g. run for 5mins, walk for 1min, run for 3mins, walk for 1 min, run for 2mins, walk for 1 min, and then a few more 1min repeats. Next time try 6/3/2/1, then 7/3/2/1 etc.

• Once you can do 15mins non-stop easy paced running you can then alternate between

 a) going for a 15min+ easy run, and b) dropping back down to a 10min run, but with the last 2-3mins run at a slightly faster sustained pace. So, you do 7-8mins at your easy conversation pace, then 2-3mins at a faster, harder pace (breathing hard so it is difficult to chat).

• Then each time you do this type of “progressive” 10minute run, aim to start the second harder phase 30secs earlier until you are doing 5mins easy followed by 5mins harder.

• Keep doing the longer easy run at least once/week and try to keep building it up to 20mins+.

• The next step is to extend your progressive run to 15mins and split it into three phases – phase 1 easy (holding back), phase 2 steady (getting a fair puff going but not all-out and you should still feel that you could run a little bit faster), and phase 3 hard (but sustained). Start with 7mins easy/5mins steady/3mins hard, then gradually reduce the easy phase and increase the hard phase by 30secs until you are doing three equal phases of 5mins (5/5/5).

• For a further variation you could go back to a 3-2-1, type of run, but at a slightly faster pace. Always start with 5mins easy but then run hard for 3mins, 1min walk, run hard for 2mins, 1min walk, run hard for 1min, then do a few more 1min repeats.

So eventually, if you run three times/week, you might do a long easy run, a shorter progressive run, and a faster 3/2/1 type run with 1min walks, jogs, or walk/jog in between the faster sections.

Grass is a more forgiving surface than pavements, although running on pavements/paths every so often is fine, e.g. if the grass is long, wet, slippery or muddy. But make sure you have good fitting running trainers with support, not casual/fashion trainers or ordinary gym shoes. It is also advisable to wear something bright and preferably reflective particularly once it is dark.

Don’t do too much too soon and remember there are lots of other physical activities which can help your running fitness.

**Appendix 2: Joining the Performance Group**

Additional sessions are held throughout the week, for juniors who are committed to competing in regular racing throughout the year in cross country (XC), track or hills or are looking for support to achieve a performance-based target (e.g. a 5K park run).

The additional sessions are:

* Sundays: all year (intervals at a range of local venues, including hills)
* Mondays: Oct- end Mar (winter indoor conditioning and drills)

April - end June (outdoor conditioning)

* Thursdays: Spring/Summer (middle-distance speed sessions.)
* Fridays: Summer (for support to develop the weekly long run)

We tend to keep the group attending these additional sessions smaller ( around 10-12) so it’s a manageable number for the coaches to provide more specific coaching support, and to be able to give and receive feedback from the junior and parents as they develop their capacity to tolerate the consistent training required to improve their performance.

For those Juniors striving toward and/or competing at National level, we can offer highly personalised coaching and training plans.

**How do juniors get to attend the additional sessions?**

Its highly likely that the coaches will have noticed and invited a junior who is demonstrating the qualities that would enable them to be part of the performance group but do let the coaches know if your child is interested in attending further sessions.

 Regardless of whether or not the junior is invited, the coach will explain what we’d need in terms of a commitment and discuss with the junior and parent whether they are able to make this commitment. The coach may ask the junior and parent to evidence their commitment prior to attending by following the weekly model training week for several weeks, practising filling out a weekly training diary and demonstrate improvement by repeating an event such as the local Parkrun.

**Commitments:**

The Junior commits to:

* Following the model training week (adapted to include other activities)
* Filling out a weekly training diary
* Compete regularly in competitions or have a performance goal to be training toward
* Attending weekly Tuesday and Sunday sessions
* Attending Monday conditioning in Winter