

## COMPETITION GUIDE

We are pleased to share our approach to competition participation at Impact Athletic Club. Our aim is to nurture every athlete's growth, confidence, and love for the sport. To achieve this, we align competition entries with each athlete's **age** and **ability**, ensuring a positive experience for everyone. Here's an outline of what this means and how it benefits your child.

### **Why Age and Ability-Based Competitions?**

1. **Promotes Fair Play**

Competing against peers of similar age and skill levels fosters fairness and ensures that challenges are neither too overwhelming nor too easy for athletes.

2. **Supports Skill Development**

Tailored competition helps athletes focus on improving their techniques, strategies, and confidence at a pace that suits them.

3. **Boosts Confidence and Enjoyment**

When athletes compete within their ability level, they feel more accomplished, which reinforces their passion for the sport and motivates them to keep improving.

4. **Encourages Long-Term Growth**

Our aim is to build well-rounded athletes who can excel progressively rather than burning out or feeling discouraged by unrealistic expectations.

### **Your Role as Parents**

We encourage you to support this philosophy by:

- **Focusing on Personal Progress:** Celebrate your child's improvement and effort rather than just outcomes.
- **Trusting the Process:** Our coaches are committed to placing your child in competitions that best suit their current stage of development.
- **Encouraging Positive Sportsmanship:** Help instill in your child the values of respect, effort, and resilience - essential traits for all athletes and life in general.

## **How the Age Groups Work**

The age group approach to athletics is a confusing one for parents as different age group categories operate for different types of athletic competition. Here is an attempt to explain how it works

Track and Field (*including indoor events but not sportshall athletics*)

- **U9:** For boys and girls in school years 2 and 3
- **U11:** For boys and girls in school years 4 and 5
- **U13:** For boys and girls in school years 6 and 7
- **U15:** For boys and girls in school years 8 and 9
- **U17:** For men and women in school years 10 and 11

Cross Country and Sportshall Athletics

- **U9:** For boys and girls in school years 3 and 4
- **U11:** For boys and girls in school years 5 and 6
- **U13:** For boys and girls in school years 7 and 8
- **U15:** For boys and girls in school years 9 and 10
- **U17:** For men and women in school years 11 and 12

## Competitions Entered by Impact Athletic Club

### **Border League Cross Country**

One of the competitions we encourage our athletes to participate in is the **Border League Cross Country Competitions**

This league is specifically designed as a **developmental cross country series**, offering athletes their first experience in competitive cross country running. Here's why we value this league for your child:

- **Accessible for All Abilities:** The Border League provides an inclusive environment where athletes of all skill levels can participate and gain confidence.
- **Real-World Competition Experience:** It offers a taste of competitive cross country running without the high pressure of national or advanced events.
- **Skill Development:** Athletes build endurance, adaptability, and race strategies, all of which are essential for their growth in the sport.
- **Team Spirit:** Participating in the league fosters camaraderie among teammates as they cheer each other on and share their experiences.

We highly recommend all those athletes interested in cross country take part as it's a fantastic stepping stone for developing their competitive mindset and enjoying the challenges that cross country running present.

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### **Downs League Cross Country**

As athletes progress and build confidence, we also encourage participation in the **Downs League Cross Country**, aimed at slightly stronger runners who are ready for more competitive challenges.

Here's what makes the Downs League an important part of our competition pathway:

- **Higher-Level Competition:** This league attracts more advanced runners, providing a step up in intensity and competition for those who are ready.
- **Enhanced Skill Development:** Athletes refine race strategies, pacing, and adaptability against a stronger field of competitors.
- **Building Confidence:** Success in this league can significantly boost confidence as athletes see the results of their hard work and progression.
- **Pathway to Advanced Competitions:** The Downs League serves as excellent preparation for regional and national events, helping athletes transition to higher levels of cross country running.

Participation in the Downs League is based on readiness and discussions between athletes, parents, and coaches. It's an excellent opportunity for those looking to take their training to the next level. Coaches will approach you if they feel your child is ready to take part in these races.

### **Surrey Sportshall Athletics League:**

Another exciting competition we participate in is the **Indoor Sportshall Athletics League**, open to athletes in **Year 6 and above**. This league offers a fantastic opportunity for athletes to experience a wide variety of events in a fun and supportive indoor environment.

Here's what makes the Sportshall League unique and beneficial for our athletes:

- **Wide Range of Events:** Athletes can take part in a variety of disciplines, including **running, jumping, and throwing** events. This diversity helps them develop well-rounded athletic skills and discover areas where they excel.
- **Team-Based:** Many events in the Sportshall League are team-oriented, encouraging teamwork and camaraderie as athletes support one another in relays and other events.
- **Skill Development:** The league provides an opportunity for athletes to enhance fundamental skills like speed, agility, strength, and coordination, which are transferable across all areas of athletics.
- **Inclusive and Accessible:** The indoor setting offers a controlled environment, making it accessible and enjoyable for all athletes, regardless of the weather or outdoor conditions.
- **Pathway to Further Competitions:** Success and enjoyment in the Sportshall League can motivate athletes to pursue additional track and field opportunities in the future.

The Indoor Sportshall Athletics League is an excellent opportunity for athletes to test themselves across different disciplines while having fun and bonding with their teammates. We encourage all interested athletes to give these competitions a try.

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## **QuadKids Competitions:**

During the summer, we participate in **QuadKids competitions**, an exciting event specifically designed for athletes in **Years 3 to 6**. This format introduces younger athletes to competing in a multi-disciplinary setting while maintaining a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

Here's why QuadKids is an ideal starting point for young athletes:

- **Multi-Event Experience:** Athletes take part in **four disciplines** - a run, a sprint, a throw, and a jump. This gives them a well-rounded introduction to the various aspects of athletics and helps them discover where their interests and strengths lie.
- **Relaxed but Organised:** The friendly and supportive environment makes it perfect for first-time competitors, while the structured format ensures a smooth and enjoyable experience for all participants.
- **Skill Development:** Each event builds foundational skills like endurance, speed, power, and coordination, setting the stage for future success in athletics.
- **Encourages Participation:** The emphasis is on trying new things, building confidence, and having fun, rather than solely on results.
- **Team Spirit:** QuadKids competitions often foster camaraderie as athletes cheer each other on and celebrate each other's efforts and achievements.

QuadKids is an excellent way for younger athletes to get their first taste of competitive athletics in a supportive and encouraging setting. We encourage all eligible athletes to participate and enjoy the opportunity to explore the world of athletics in a fun and inclusive environment.

## Summer Open Meetings

In addition to other competitions, we also participate in **Open Meetings** during the summer. These events are ideal for **older athletes** (under 11s and above) who are looking to challenge themselves, improve their times and scores, and gain valuable competition experience in a traditional **track and field setting**.

Here's why Open Meetings are a key part of our summer competition schedule:

- **Wide Range of Events:** Open Meetings feature a full spectrum of track and field events, allowing athletes to choose disciplines they are passionate about or want to develop further.
- **Focus on Personal Bests:** These meetings are perfect for athletes striving to improve their personal records, as they provide an organised and competitive platform for achieving progress.
- **Tailored for Competitive Growth:** Unlike introductory events, Open Meetings are designed for athletes who are ready to push themselves against a stronger field of competitors.
- **Preparation for Advanced Competitions:** Participation helps athletes build confidence, refine their techniques, and prepare for higher-level competitions like regional or national championships.
- **Individual and Team Support:** While the focus is on individual performance, athletes benefit from the support of teammates and coaches, creating a positive and motivating environment.

Open Meetings are an excellent opportunity for athletes to track their progress, set new goals, and take their training to the next level. We encourage all eligible athletes to take advantage of these events to build their skills and competitive experience.

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## Additional Competitions: Pathways to Higher-Level Opportunities

Throughout the year, we also participate in a range of other competitions that serve as excellent opportunities for athletes to further develop their skills and potentially progress to **Surrey** or **National-level events**.

Here's what you need to know about these competitions:

- **Targeted Participation:** These events are typically aimed at athletes who have demonstrated readiness and the potential to benefit from a more competitive environment. Our coaches will assess and recommend participation based on each athlete's abilities and goals.
- **Pathways to Progression:** Many of these competitions act as qualifiers or stepping stones to higher-level events, offering athletes the chance to represent their club, county, or even compete nationally.
- **Skill and Experience Development:** These opportunities allow athletes to test themselves against strong competitors, refine their skills under pressure, and gain invaluable experience in competitive settings.
- **Communication with Parents:** We will email parents directly with details of these competitions and recommendations for their child's participation. This ensures that each athlete is entered into the most appropriate events for their stage of development.

These additional competitions are an important part of the athlete's journey, offering exciting challenges and the potential for significant growth.

## School Competitions and County Events

In addition to club-organised competitions, athletes are encouraged to participate in school-level competitions, which often serve as stepping stones to prestigious county events. Here's how school competitions benefit our athletes:

- **Pathway to County-Level Representation:** Many school competitions act as qualifiers for county-level events, offering athletes the chance to represent their school and compete at a higher level.
- **Accessible to All Athletes:** These events are open to a wide range of students, giving them an opportunity to showcase their skills in a familiar environment.
- **Skill Recognition:** School competitions help identify and nurture athletic talent, often serving as a platform for athletes to be picked for regional or national events and programs
- **Encourages Broad Participation:** As part of a school team, athletes experience the excitement of competing in a supportive setting, often with friends and peers.
- **Versatility in Disciplines:** These events typically cover a range of athletic disciplines, allowing participants to explore their interests across track, field, and cross country.

We highly encourage athletes to take part in school competitions as they complement our club events and provide an additional layer of experience and recognition. Success in these competitions can open doors to exciting opportunities, including county championships and beyond.

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With a comprehensive calendar that includes **QuadKids, Sportshall Athletics, Cross Country Leagues, Open Meetings**, and other targeted events, we strive to create a pathway that supports every athlete's aspirations and development.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions about upcoming competitions or your child's readiness, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Craig Smith  
Head Coach