

The 2019 Scottish National Pentathlon Championships was held in Falkirk, at the Grangemouth athletics stadium on the 13-14th July.

Blyth Juniors had 2 U13 girls taking part in **Sadie Parker** and **Hannah Wilson** in what was going to be their very first outdoor pentathlon, which consists of High Jump, 70m Hurdles, Long Jump, Shot Put and finally the 800m. Still only Year 6 athletes, they along with a friend Rebecca from South Shields were to be the only representation from south of the border in a huge field of 36 from all over Scotland.

The U13G grouping always seems to produce a huge crop of athletes which is fantastic as it's an indication of the growth and future depth of the sport. It is always exciting to see so many young athletes trying combined events as we try to develop rounded athletes and encourage diversity at this foundation stage of their development.

Both girls and their families travelled up the day before their competition and went straight to the stadium as they wanted to sample the venue and also support their friend Luke from Wallsend competing in the U13B on the Saturday. Luke was flying, half way through his day and was leading after producing some of his best performances so far. The girls took some confidence that they could also do well, despite being so far from home.



Preparations hit a slight hiccup, as Hannah suddenly announced she had forgotten any running shoes and would be left doing any warm up drills and possibly her shot put in a pair of red Converse, which I suggested was a good idea as she might learn from her mistake! However, I was overruled though and a quick check on Google suggested a nearby sports store might save her blushes. After checking in to a nearby hotel, feeding, and trying to get a decent sleep in sweltering heat with no air-con in the rooms, we met at breakfast to focus on the day ahead.

The morning air suggested it was going to be a warm one! Water, shade and conserving energy were going to be crucial in the hours ahead, with first event High jump starting at 10am and last event 800m scheduled for 4pm.

The girls arrived in good time and declared and got numbers pinned on. A gentle jog around to settle any nerves and get a feel for the track and then headed inside with foam rollers and water to the indoor warm up area. It was clear by the numbers of girls it was going to be busy and they were to be split into 2 pools for HJ, SP & LJ, with 4 heats for hurdles and 800m. After a gentle warm up, some active

stretching and light foam massage, the mass of girls were beginning to file into call-up room. How was it all going to unfold? We were about to find out.



The high jump began and both girls were looking slightly tentative in practice, making small adjustments to their approach, settling in and finding their rhythm. Their starting height was the same at 1.19 and was going up in 3cm increments. Both girls cleared well and nerves settled. 1.22, 1.25 were also cleared with room to spare. Sadie looked in the zone, clearing with ease each time, setting herself up confidently and sailing over the bar, 1.28, 1.31, 1.34 (new PB!) in just 6 jumps. Hannah meanwhile was having a stutter. With the bar now at 1.28, she clipped it, knocking it off. Anxiously, she gathered herself, 1st foul, it was bound to happen sooner or later. However, she composed herself and made sure her next attempt. 1.31 next and she clipped it again, something wasn't firing? Again though she composed, adjusted and cleared on her 2nd attempt. 1.34m this was now PB territory, could she get it? Foul first attempt, it didn't look like it, Foul second attempt! It was beginning to look too much. Final attempt, with only a handful of girls left in now. Boom! She cleared it!

Both girls now with PB's, 8 girls left, how far could they go? Unfortunately this was to be Sadie (and Rebecca's) last clearance at 1.34. Hannah however, seemingly buoyed from her last ditch effort at the last height, then went and cleared 1.37 with her very first attempt. Shouts and cheers came from the sidelines and even a little fist pump to herself as she clambered off the landing mat! However this was to be her last as 3 fouls at 1.40 placed her in joint third with Sadie and Rebecca in joint 6th. A great start. With Hannah in =3rd and Sadie =6th



Next up was 70m hurdles and by the time athletes had gathered and took on some water, changed their

spikes, it was upon them. With hardly any time to prepare it was back in the call-up area and into heats. Both girls had been slightly apprehensive about the hurdles, with mixed preparations leading into to the champs. Sadie in heat 4/5 got off to a great start and was strong throughout in her heat, finishing =2nd. 9th overall. Hannah was next up in heat 5/5 and didn't get the best start, in fact was last to the first hurdle. Once her momentum was lost it was a struggle to the line although battling hard, she never regained and finished well below her best in 11th overall.

Standings now reflected this, but thankfully Sadie only dropped 2 places to 6th and Hannah to 4th.



Long Jump next up and one of the stronger events for both girls. Marking out was done and a couple of practice jumps before their pool was underway. Both girls posted over 4m on their 1st jump and they were now in their comfort zone. A couple of minor tweaks to their run up trying to get sweetly onto the take-off board. 2nd jump and Hannah jumped out to 4.31, Sadie meanwhile was still coming a bit short of the board and didn't improve.

3rd and final jump for both girls and it was all out, move marker forward, get on that board Sadie! Her power and take off position were awesome. Come on!... Bang on the board, and she sailed out to 4.50! the best jump overall and a huge confidence boost. Hannah also improved her last jump to a great 4.39 to give her 4th overall. Huge points for both girls!

Sadie moving up into 2nd place, Hannah into 3rd.



After the Long jump there was a natural lull in proceedings, as athletes were challenged to keep their focus and freshness. Now 4hrs into an incredibly hot day, our girls showed incredible resilience to maintain their momentum, which is the key in multi-eventing. Pentathlon pente (five) and athlon (contest) is a true test across a number of events and it was already evident that some early athletes, strong in the first 2 events had started to slip after the LJ, but similarly there were some other athletes in good positions waiting in the wings.

The penultimate event Shot Put is not an event that both girls had practiced a lot but they now went into it riding high, with everything to play for. A combination of speed, power, coordination and timing, The 2.72kg weight shot revealed a huge mix of results from just over 4m to over 9.5m. Both girls got their first throws safely away, their second throws not quite as far, so it was down to the final throw to see some improvement. Both of them did saving their best till last, with Sadie throwing out to a respectable 5.63 agonisingly close to a pb and Hannah throwing out an absolute monster pb of 7.65 and 3rd best overall and with it came the huge boost to her point tally to move her into 1st place going into the last event. Other strong throws from other athletes, unfortunately saw Sadie slip down 3 places to 5th.



Now it was all about recovery before the final tough 800m. Again neither girl were regular 800m runners but had performed amazingly in the NOTAN event 800m the week before, as their final preparation, so knew what to expect. There were also some girls in the field with really strong 800m time's, so it was going to be a tough ask. Coaches began frantically working out the scores and possible results. Point's allocation for every few seconds of time. That's the name of the game in pentathlon, its athlete v's event, not the competition. You all do the very best that you can and that gives you your total points score at the end.

Having said that, close examination of the scores after 4 events meant one thing was sure. Both girls would now have to run the fastest 800m of their lives to secure or hold onto a medal position. With few points separating the top 5-6 athletes and some very fast runners across the 4 seeded heats. One athlete identified from North Ayrshire AC currently in 4th, was capable at 2m30s of overhauling everyone in this last event.

Our girls were to be in the final heat of the day, all eyes were on the fast starter in 4th overall who set off with intent. She knew she was in with a shout and by 300m was already way ahead of a pack of 5 with Hannah and Sadie tucked in. As the leader stretched it even further, we began to wonder if this was the moment our girls would begin to struggle and eventually fade. But they didn't, at 350m as they heard the cheers from the stand, Hannah and Sadie side by side, began to make their move and went ahead of the chasing pack, with just the leader in front by some 150m, as they turned the bend on to the back straight of the final lap, Sadie began to push even harder as she went ahead of Hannah, heading to 200m to go, but Hannah pulled along by Sadie managed to keep the gap tight into the final bend and began to go around her on the final bend. By this time the leader was heading down the home straight

and to possible gold. The shouts rang out as both the Blyth girls came off the bend and Hannah suddenly kicked and boy did she kick! Suddenly the determination in her face was clear as she increased her speed into a full sprint down the home straight, now flying for home, but needing to keep the gap to within 10 seconds of the leader who had just crossed the finish line and collapsed in a heap. It was now all about the time. Hannah blazed across the line as Sadie was just caught in the final second over the line in 4th place. What an amazing finale to a brilliant day. All girls were now laying on their back exhausted on the track not knowing what their times were or what positions but knew they had given absolutely everything they could.

In the end Hannah had just managed to hold on by 0.1sec and 8 points to secure the Championship gold medal. Sadie's fantastic 800m and new pb had moved her up 1 position in the final standings, but agonizingly into 4th place just outside the medals by a mere 92 points. 208 points separated the top 5 positions, with Rebecca finishing a respectable 7th.

It was also noted that both the Blyth girls were only 1st years with many other in the top 10 all 2nd years. Also no other 1st year U13G North East athlete has scored over 2000 points in an outdoor pentathlon since 2006 – until our 2 girls !

Hannah = 2268

Sadie = 2088

A huge well done and Congratulation! to both of them from all at the club, supporting parents and coaches.



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Girls Outdoor Pentathlon U13G						
	Points	HJ	70H	LJ	SP	800
1 Hannah Wilson U13 BLYTH RUNNING CLUB	2268	1.37m (481)	13.11 w: -1.5 (463)	4.39m w: +0.0 (401)	7.65m (377)	2:42.33 (546)
2 Nell McGregor U13 NORTH AYRSHIRE AC	2260	1.28m (389)	12.26 w: -1.5 (543)	4.24m w: +0.0 (364)	6.48m (302)	2:32.46 (662)
3 Jessie Caig U13 NORTH AYRSHIRE AC	2180	1.22m (331)	12.58 w: -1.2 (513)	4.11m w: -0.7 (333)	9.67m (508)	2:47.03 (495)
4 Sadie Parker U13 BLYTH RUNNING CLUB	2088	1.34m (449)	13.04 w: -1.0 (471)	4.50m w: +0.0 (428)	5.63m (248)	2:47.27 (492)
5 Aaliyah McCloud U13 PITREAVIE AAC	2060	1.31m (419)	14.08 w: -1.2 (391)	4.43m w: +0.0 (411)	6.16m (281)	2:41.28 (558)
6 Zoe Douglas U13 VP-GLASGOW AC	2032	1.28m (389)	12.05 w: -1.5 (563)	4.41m w: +0.0 (406)	6.49m (302)	2:59.27 (372)
7 Rebecca Harrison U13 SOUTH SHIELDS HARRIERS	2011	1.34m (449)	12.73 w: -1.5 (500)	3.67m w: +0.0 (235)	6.07m (276)	2:41.90 (551)
8 Lucy Carr U13 VP-GLASGOW AC	1977	1.22m (331)	11.78 w: -1.5 (590)	4.10m w: -0.6 (331)	6.03m (273)	2:51.17 (452)
8 Lily Simon U13 PITREAVIE AAC	1977	1.28m (389)	13.33 w: -0.8 (446)	3.52m w: +0.0 (204)	6.47m (301)	2:34.54 (637)
10 Kaitlyn Clark U13 LARKHALL YMCA HARRIERS	1950	1.28m (389)	13.82 w: -1.0 (406)	4.32m w: +0.0 (384)	7.02m (336)	2:52.75 (435)
11 Zoe Loughrey U13 VP-GLASGOW AC	1876	1.34m (449)	12.93 w: -1.0 (480)	3.89m w: +0.0 (283)	6.70m (316)	3:01.87 (348)
12 Shannon Brown U13 NORTH AYRSHIRE AC	1866	1.28m (389)	13.24 w: -1.5 (454)	4.20m w: +0.0 (355)	7.80m (386)	3:09.50 (282)
13 Isla Murphy U13 NORTH AYRSHIRE AC	1848	1.25m (359)	13.12 w: -1.0 (463)	3.79m w: +0.0 (261)	6.79m (322)	2:52.03 (443)

