

Scottish Youth Climbing Championships 2010

May 15th

Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, Ratho

We had 62 climbers on the day. The qualifiers from the North and South Scotland YCS rounds; some of our Scottish GB Climbing Team Youth B & C members and nine sign-ups for the newly introduced 17-19 open groups. Rumours that Natalie Berry asked MCoFS to introduce the 17-19 category because she liked the amazing trophies are totally unfounded, but it was great to see our top GB climber back in harness after several months out following a hernia operation. Natalie, who first competed in YCS ten years ago, said "It's great to be able to compete at a Scottish level again. This new category fills a gap between the YCS and senior competitions."

EICA had sectioned off the old comp wall and part of the hanger wall for the qualifying and final routes and the route setters had set out to ensure there were no climb-offs required for the finals with routes starting a 6a and going all the way up to 7b+. After a group warm up hosted by EICA's very own 'Green Goddess' Alan Blunt, route setter Robbie Phillips kicked the day off by demoing all 12 qualifying routes in succession. "I'll never complain about 4 by 4s again" said a rather rosy-cheeked Robbie after the final route. "Trying to climb like someone half your height isn't easy".

But the route setters had underestimated the quality of the climbers taking part with nine achieving a perfect 180 score on the boulders and ten achieving a perfect 300 on the routes. Dylan Mackenzie, Steven Addison, Rory Cargill and Robert Davidson all managed to flash everything.

Thankfully however, final routes and boulders were sufficiently tricky to filter off the top 3 in each category to go through to the final climb. Going into isolation was a first for some of the climbers, but they took it in their stride, marching out with confidence to cheers from the crowd. The 8-10s had a 6c green on the old comp wall and went off at the same time as the 11-13s on the hanger wall who were faced with a tricky half-height red 7c.

In the Girls 8-10 Rhiannon Freireich and Keri MacLennan reached the same point and had to be separated on their qualifying scores. Hannah Grindley who had qualified first, but put a foot on the wrong hold in the final climb, was third.

In the 8-10 Boys a brilliant climb by Rory Cargill took him near the top and into first place ahead of Robert Davidson and Thomas Ryan.

The 11-13 groups saw GB team Youth C members Nikki Addison and Angus Davidson demonstrate why they were wearing the GB team kit. They both did exceptionally well on the testing hanger wall climb. Nikki took first ahead of Dawn Longworth and Sophie Harper, while Angus finished ahead of William Bosi and Ruairidh Macaskill who had to be separated by their qualifying scores after both reached the same point.

Photos: Rachel Carr, Natalie Berry, Paul Williamson, Jonny Field & Paul Williamson, Angus Davidson



The 14-16 and 17-19 categories were all on the same hanger wall red 8a so each climber had the full attention of the audience. The 14-16 Girls was dominated by GB Youth B team member Rachel Carr who finished several moves ahead of Ellen Barber and Amy Anderson.

The 17-19 Girls was closer, but GB Team Junior member Natalie Berry took the honours ahead of GB team Youth A member Ellen Macaskill and Jessica McCaskey.

The route had a crux at a roof volume that brought several of the climbers off the wall, so when 14-16 Boys' Steven Addison cruised past this move a huge cheer went up. This success gave him first place over fellow GB Youth B team member Dylan Mackenzie and Alisdair Johnstone.

The 17-19 Boys category finished the day in style with Paul Williamson flashing the route to rapturous applause. Fellow GB team Youth A member Jonny Field couldn't match this performance but took second place ahead of Christopher Matthew.

On a North/South split the South took 5 first places ahead of 3 from the North, but the North secured 14 podium places to 10 for the South. Whatever the geographic split it is clear that Scotland has a strong group of climbers to take onto the European and World scene this year and in the future, and competitions like the Scottish Youth Climbing Championships allow them to demonstrate their skills and showcase the sport to the population. Organiser Simon Tait said "It has been a brilliant day. Our volunteers were great, we had a lot of EICA customers stop to watch the competition and the young climbers and their families all demonstrated great sportsmanship in success and defeat."

Future Youth Competitions

Several Scottish climbers are heading off to the Colours Festival (22/23 May) and EYS first round (5/6 June) in Imst in the coming weeks.

The YCS final is at EICA on 12th June where the top 3 climbers in each category from North and South Scotland will compete against climbers from across England, Wales and Ireland.

There is a BMC Open Youth Leading competition for ages 12 years and up at Ratho on 24th July which will be used to select the GB team for the World Youth Championships at EICA in September.

Photos: Rory Cargill, Group Warm up, Megan Saunders & Robbie Philips, The Prizes (Rachel Carr in background)

All photographs by Will Carroll

