

# ParaClimb Scotland 2017

(Round 1 BMC / MScot Paraclimbing Series)

## Report

The 2017 Mountaineering Scotland ParaClimb competition took place at EICA Ratho on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September. This is the fourth year we have run the competition and again it was held alongside the annual ClimbScotland Scottish Youth Climbing Championship. There were 41 competitors on the day, many travelling for five hours or more from all over England (that's keen!) and Scotland, and with 151 young climbers also in action in the Ratho Arena it was a busy day.

As the event is also the first round of the British Paraclimbing Series many of the GB Para Team members were in attendance and standards were high, but it was good to see new faces with over 66% of the competitors taking part in the competition for the first time and many of those from Scotland.

The competitors, climbing in nine different categories, had 3 hours to complete three boulder problems and three routes (all being top-roped). There was a range of styles of route and boulder problem including vertical walls, a slab and a pumpy line up the 'Sardinian Pillar'.

There were seven competitors in the Neurological Physical Disability category. Most had previous experience of the parclimbing series and it was GB Para Team member Hannah Baldwin from Plymouth who took the win. Rebecca Gilchrist (aka 'Smurf') was the only Scot (from Rothes) competing and she placed 6<sup>th</sup> against a strong experienced field.

The largest entry was for the Lower Limb Amputation category with eight competitors in the male category with a good turnout of climbers from Scotland this year: Keith Lynch (Edinburgh), Francis Winter (Edinburgh), Stuart Snedden (Falkirk) and Connor Smart (Cupar). Martin Heald (GB Para Team) from Preston won this category and Keith (also GB Para Team) gained second place as well as receiving the Scottish Champion title for the second year. Joanna Waterton from Guisborough won the female category with Kate Howden 2<sup>nd</sup> and GB Team member Esme Hart 3<sup>rd</sup>. Other climbers included two new to the comp from Scotland; both Hope Gordon (Edinburgh) and Rebecca Sellar (Livingston) climbed well on the routes but the boulders thwarted them.

The Upper Limb Amputation category saw Matthew Phillips from Guildford take the win with a resounding maximum score - the only person to achieve this (we will have to make it harder for him next time), despite the black Route on the slab being a very thin and technical 6b+/6c. James Thomson (Burntisland) came 2<sup>nd</sup>. The female comp in this category was won by Isabella Walsh from Leeds with Anoushe Husain taking 2<sup>nd</sup>.

There was a good turnout for the Visual Impairment comp. There were 4 competitors in the male category which was won by Lux Losey (London) whilst Richard Slocock (Derby) placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. Richard and Jesse Dufton (Loughborough; 3<sup>rd</sup>) climb regularly and were trying a para competition for the first time. Abigail Robinson (Sunderland) took 1<sup>st</sup> and Theresa Osbourne-Bell (Portsmouth) 2<sup>nd</sup> and Local Alison Fox (Alloa) who climbs regularly came 3<sup>rd</sup> in her first para comp.

There were only female competitors in the hearing disability category with Morag Eagleson (Dingwall) battling with Amarylis Elphick (Peterborough) to take the win. Morag also gained the title of Scottish Female ParaChampion.

Pip Rowlands (Carnforth) won the Learning Disability category and Anna Knight (London) the Mental Health Support category against Samantha Watts (Southampton). Finally Joshua Key (also Southampton) took the title in the Autistic Spectrum category.

Comments from competitors include praise for the 'awesome' venue, the fact that it was part of a bigger competition with a real mix of people and a great atmosphere.

Thanks have to go to EICA for hosting again, the route setters Jay Carr and Debbie Langan, the volunteers who helped belay and judge including Jamie Andrew, and our Board Director and Competitions Coordinator Avril Gall for manning registration and crunching the scores.

*My first competition at the age of 51, and it was very enjoyable - I am looking forward to my next one*

**Alison Fox, Alloa**

*It was awesome to see so much grit and determination on show, as usual Mountaineering Scotland have done Para climbing proud. Time to take the sport to the next stage!*

**Keith Lynch, Edinburgh (GB Para Team)**