

## **History of Cross Country**

As a competition sport, Cross Country running began in England with a game called “Hare and Hounds” or “The Paper Chase” in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Initially, a group of runners would mark out a random course by dropping paper or other markers and a second set of runners would then follow the trail.

The game soon became popular in schools and universities and developed into a competitive pastime. During serious competitions, courses were then pre-marked.

The first English cross country championships were held in 1876 and soon the sport made its way to the USA. In the late 1800’s England and France competed against one another, and by the early 1900’s England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and France were competing in the unofficial world championships.

In 1912, 1920, 1924, Cross Country was included on the Olympic programme, but was later removed because it was deemed unsuitable for summer.

In 1962, Cross Country was taken over by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF). – *Source: Runner’s World – July 2003*