



# Fairlands Valley Spartans Running Club

UK's Best Running Club 2010

Affiliated to UK Athletics and the Association of Running Clubs

## 'Catch a Coach' ~ newsletter

Issue 14

February 2011

### Catch a Coach newsletter

Welcome to the February edition of 'CATCH A COACH', the publication from the coaching team for all members.

It is great to see the New Year resolutions being added to the Forum and even one or two already being met! Please try and remember to make your running targets SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound). You want them to be challenging but not so challenging that you injure yourself badly in the process, and put pay to the 2012 resolutions!

I hope you find the newsletter helpful. Remember if you have any questions about the material in it or on the 'Catch a Coach' section within the club's website just CATCH A COACH or send an e-mail to the team at [catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk](mailto:catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk)

Cheers

*Chris 'Coach' Leigh*

#### **Sunday Runs – parking at Sainsburys Coreys Mill**

Sainsburys have been signposting a two hour parking limit within their car park at Coreys Mill. Our Chairman has kindly sweet talked them into waiving that for Spartans training on a Sunday morning, **as long as we use the area of the car park towards the back, near the steps.**



### **What's coming up - 10 of the best for February**

Here's our ten of the best for February!

1. On the 4<sup>th</sup> February the club holds its annual presentation evening at the Knebworth Barns. This is a great opportunity for members to get together and celebrate all of the great achievements in 2010. The ceremony will also include presentation of the Spartan of the Year trophy, the award that is based on members votes for the Spartan that they believe is worthy of special recognition.
2. On the 10<sup>th</sup> February there is a tempo training session that starts from the Fairlands Valley Showground car park (the one opposite the football ground). The run consists of a steady 20 minute run out before turning and then aiming to run back to the starting point about 2 minutes quicker. The pace you set on the way out is a conversational one (great chance to catch up on all of the gossip) but the pace on the way back is tempo – definitely not conversational! (on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is your race pace, a tempo pace is 8).
3. The Handicap 5K series continues on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. Please let Paul Holgate know whether you are running this or not so that he can adjust the starting lists and make the start as smooth as possible. Either meet at Marriotts for 6:50pm or go start to the start. Please look out for all of the details on the Forum, including your handicap time and start time.

4. February sees a terrific range of track based training sessions at Ridlins on Saturdays. Starting with a session consisting of sets of 400m, 300m and 200m, there is a 300m parlauf (that is running in a relay pair – it is good!!), 8-12 x 400m before finishing the month off with a pyramid session. Don't know what a pyramid is? (no, it isn't one of the large structures built by Egyptian slaves!). Come along, join in and find out. We meet at 9:15am for a 9:30am session start.
5. We cannot go a month without a hills session!! On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February there is a speed endurance session which focuses on you running at consistent paces along undulating parts of the cycleways. It is a great session for developing running style and ensuring that you improve your ability to run at speed over longer distances (speed endurance). Whether you are training for a 5K, 10K or a marathon, this session is a must.
6. Sunday Bloody Sunday! I have heard many of you cry in the past and you haven't been singing along to U2s greatest hits! During February there will be our usual variety of training runs with mileage between 6 and 17. This will cater for all runners, with targets ranging from 5 and 10K races to those that are training for the Brighton, London or Edinburgh marathons. Please look out for all of the details each week on the Sunday Runs board of the Forum.
7. The final cross country league fixture is being held at Royston on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February. The club have made further progress in the league this season and it has been great to see more and more Spartans turning out to run in the races. A final push with as many stripey vests out at Royston as possible should see us finish in our best league position for years!!
8. The Tuesday training sessions will continue to see 5 groups go out running interval based sessions. During the month these will be build upwards from 2 min efforts to 4 min efforts. This is building block session for so many running objectives and develops your running technique as well as speed endurance and pace judgement.

9. February sees the start of a long line of great races, with the Watford half and Bramley 20 miler. Please make sure you continue to check the race calendar in plenty of time and get your entries in early for races so that you are not disappointed. If you are unsure how a particular race may fit into your training objectives why not have a word with a member of the coaching team first?
10. On the 11<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm at Marriotts, Jamie and April Drackford will be holding the next core training session. This promises to be extra fun as they will be incorporating swiss balls into some of the routines. Only £3 entry for the class. This promises to work all of the core muscle groups that you may not be reaching with your current run training.

**All of this and there are still the regular Starter Group sessions at 7:30pm on Mondays and 7pm on Thursday from Marriotts and Ossies Angels on a Thursday and Saturday morning !!!!!!!**

**Remember: if you are feeling unwell in any way during or after your run please make sure that you speak to a member of your groups coaching team. They need to be aware of this so that they can monitor the situation during training.**

**If you are feeling unwell before the training session then you are advised not to run.**

## **Feedback**

Members of the coaching team really value feedback from members of the club. Feedback enables us to adjust training sessions and also create brand new ones!

Whilst we think we are taking the correct steps in the design and delivery of the sessions, without your feedback we don't entirely know! The way in which you give feedback doesn't have to be particularly formal. Just a quick word with the coach after the session has finished is enough. If you would prefer to put it in writing after further thought then go ahead and drop the team a line at [catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk](mailto:catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk)

We listen to all comments and it is a real help when we look at the forthcoming training schedules and sessions.

Thank you

## *Richie recommends*

### **Meal of the month:**

The classic lasagne, my all time favourite. Dawn will tell you that I make this more than any other dish, and I must say, my lasagne would give Gordon Ramsey's cooking a run for his money anytime. Simple and tasty...follow the directions bellow and you'll not go wrong.

### Ingredients

- Ground Beef 1 pound
- Onion (chopped) ¾ cup
- Olive Oil 2 tablespoons
- Crushed Tomatoes 1 can
- Tomato Paste 2 cans
- Parsley (chopped) 1 tablespoon
- Salt 2 teaspoons
- Sugar 1 teaspoon
- Garlic (minced) 1 teaspoon
- Black Pepper ½ teaspoon
- Oregano Leaves ½ teaspoon
- Lasagna Noodles 4 ounces
- Ricotta Cheese 1 cup
- Mozzarella Cheese (shredded) 8 ounces
- Parmesan Cheese (grated) 1 cup

### Method

- Heat the oil and add beef and onion to it. Let it cook, till the beef is light brown in color. Then add garlic and stir a little.
- To the beef add tomatoes, paste, 2 cups of water, parsley, salt, sugar, pepper and oregano and let it simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes. Do not cover the beef.
- Till the beef is cooking, cook lasagne as directed on the lasagne packet and drain it.
- In a baking pan, spread about 1 cup of sauce, then place alternate layers of lasagne sheets, sauce, ricotta, mozzarella and Parmesan cheese. Make sure the top three layers are of sauce, mozzarella and Parmesan cheese, so that you have the cheesy bite, when you dig into the lasagne.
- Bake the lasagne at 180, until lightly brown and bubbling.
- Once the lasagne is ready, remove it from the oven and let it stand for 10 minutes, cut into squares and serve it.

### Exercise of the month

Continuing from last months exercises, here are some more that you can add into your routine.

**Squat jumps:** Feet hip width or slightly further apart. Feet pointing forwards or just slightly turned out. Keeping back flat and head facing forward, bend knees until upper and lower legs are at 90 degrees. Ensure knees travel in line with feet and heels remain flat to the floor throughout. Avoid locking the knees when legs are straight. From the lowest point jump up and try to get a decent height on each jump.

**Tuck jumps:** Feet hip width or slightly further apart. Feet pointing forwards or just slightly turned out. Keeping back flat and head facing forward, bend knees until upper and lower legs are at 90 degrees. Ensure knees travel in line with feet and heels remain flat to the floor throughout. Avoid locking the knees when legs are straight. From the lowest point jump up and tuck your knees up to your chest.

**Side to side squats:** Stand with feet about shoulder width apart. Drop to one side so that your weight is being borne by that leg. You should be up on your toes on the other foot. Use your arms as if you were running. Rise up and drop to the other side and back up again. This is one repetition of the exercise. Try to do this rhythmically, as you would with a full running action.

If you have any questions regarding the above exercises, please feel free to email at [menscap@fvspartans.org.uk](mailto:menscap@fvspartans.org.uk)

**More exercise tips and another great meal, tried and tested by Richie coming in next month's edition.**

## *Richie*

### Mental Strength

A few weeks ago a group of Spartans ran an off road session of 7 miles. The course from Graveley Church to Weston was one we had used several times before. I realised it was

quite a tough course even when dry in August or frozen in December. However, there was only 1 hill after half a mile and you were then on the ridge east of Stevenage on fairly level ground. The last half mile was downhill. To some it may have appeared an easy course.

So what made the course tough even in dry conditions? The answer is in the uneven nature of the ground. The tracks are cut up by horse's hooves and the fields are naturally bumpy, made worse by the cattle walking on naturally soft ground. The effect of soft uneven terrain, cut up even more by horses and cattle, mean you work not only your legs but arms/shoulders and core, in fact almost every muscle. It was obvious to me as a coach that when it was wet and muddy those 7 miles were going to be really hard, or to use coach words "brilliant training".

So what actually happened on this particular Saturday and why is it of interest to other runners? Well the group ran well until about 5 miles when it became obvious that the hard going was beginning to bite. Comments such as "I am struggling with morale" from a front runner, and "what happened to regrouping?" from a runner at the back, added to the strained looks on a few faces, told their own story. Also the fact that a few runners were taking a rest at points instead of regrouping indicated very tired limbs. Oh, and the fact that one young runner (female) told me "You are a grumpy old man". Nothing new there and Rita agreed when I told her later!

This is where **mental strength** comes in to play. Everyone gritted their teeth and carried on running, at a good pace, until we got back to

Graveley Church in time for prayers 🙏. The lesson here is that training is not all about the physical, **mental strength** is just as important if not more so. This is acquired on every hard session when we continue to run even when outside our comfort zone.

**DON'T CONFUSE THIS WITH RUNNING WHEN INJURED WHICH IS JUST STUPID.**

Hopefully when these Spartans ran at the Watford cross country, or the Grim 8, or their next run where ever, this hard session and the **mental strength** they gained stood them in good stead.

Tony (Archangel)

#### FOOTNOTE:

On the Forum (Angels Board) are some motivational quotes from some well known personalities. This session reminded me of the TV series Fame. At the start the Dance Instructor always quotes the same lines. From memory these are her words.

"You want fame. Well fame costs, and this is where you start paying. You pay in sweat, blood and tears, and they don't take credit cards".

#### Coach development

In February four members of the coaching team will be taking part in the first pilot courses of the new Off track/road running Coach qualification. The qualification requires them to attend training over two weekends plus an assessment day at the end of the training and supervised practice. The training takes place over the period February to June. This is a considerable commitment to be making and our best wishes go to Richie Bate, Steve Smithson, Jamie Drackford and Jo Laing. We are confident they will all pass with flying colours!

There are also four members taking part in the Leadership in Running and Fitness qualification. Richard Sidlin will be attending the course, together with Andy Prior, Phil Rushton and Nick Whitcombe. This will lead to three new members of the coaching team!

We would also like to say a big welcome to Paul Marshall. Paul joins the team after completing the Leadership in Running and Fitness qualification.

#### The absolute basics

I am often asked about running by relatively new runners. I am not talking here about complete beginners who I would of course refer to Katrina or Tessa or one of the other Starter Group coaches. This article refers to members already joining in with Tuesday/Thursday sessions and looking to develop.

Running is of course a very simple sport, you just put one foot in front of the other and repeat the process. Once you move fast enough you will have both feet in the air at the same time, the difference between walking and running. Simple isn't it!

Seriously there are two basics before we get into any technical areas. We need **CONSISTENCY** and **BALANCE**.

**Consistency** means running a consistent amount each week and month. If you run twice a week then try to run twice every week. Of course you go on holiday, get sick, have extra work, family commitments and get injured. In fact it is amazing you have any time to run at all. OK let's get serious again. What you do NOT want to do is run once 1 week and 5 times the next week, or of course run for 5 weeks and then have 5 week not running. A good analogy might be feast and famine in dieting. You need to TRY to run a similar amount each week/month, both in number of sessions and mileage.

Sometimes it seems difficult to maintain the consistency of our running. Let's look 2 comments which are typical of those I frequently hear.

"I run on Tuesday and Thursday every week, but this week I am working late on Tuesday and cannot run". So I can only run once this week.

"I am working on Tuesday evening and have a PTA meeting at my child's school on Thursday evening". So I cannot run at all this week.

Now of course there are weeks we will not be able to train at all, as examples we could be ill, partners or children could be ill, work commitments might prevent us running. However, it obviously slips some peoples notice that there are 7 days in every week. So it is likely that we will be able to run on other days than our normal pattern. I am not forgetting the twin problems of children and partners, both need to be placated and possibly new arrangements made.

Another partial solution is the shorter training run. Just because you *always* run 6 miles or more there is no reason why you cannot fit in a shorter run, say 3 miles, if time is a priority. It really is a case of "half a loaf is better than no bread". I used to hate this idea, and most runner still do. A very recent conversation with an injured athlete from another club confirmed the same problem. Only allowed by the physio to run 3 miles the comment was "it takes longer getting changed and then showered afterwards than the running". Obviously she takes a long time in the shower or runs a lot quicker than me. Perhaps both.

As one Spartan was heard to say when changing for training "it is not worth getting laced up for less than 5 miles". Well it jolly well is worth while. Even if you run less than your plan you are still running and helping to maintain your fitness.

So what I have said above is to try to be **CONSISTENT** and be **FLEXIBLE** in your planning. How to **BALANCE** your training can wait until next month when we can look at all those lovely things such as Long runs, Interval sessions, Tempo sessions, Hill sessions etc.

Tony Osborne

## Swanage

Some may say that they are the club's elite athletes going on a key training weekend ahead of the London/Brighton/Edinburgh marathons?

Some may say that they run 15 miles first thing in the morning and another 10 in the evening, every day?

Some may also say that they get through a pair of running shoes every month?

I'm not sure of all of that but looking at the list of members going on the trip to Swanage I know that they will have a great time and the hotel bar will see a fair bit of trade!!!

Best wishes to all taking part in the Swanage training weekend at the end of the month. This is a great initiative and a chance to share time with another road running club in a different part of the country. For those taking part, here are 10 things that you probably don't know about Swanage (and probably don't want to/need to!!!!)

1. While fishing is likely the town's oldest industry, quarrying has been important to the town and the local area since at least the 1st century AD. During the time of the Roman occupation this industry grew, with the distinctive Purbeck marble being used for decorative purposes in buildings as far away as London. When the Romans left Britain, quarrying largely ceased until the 12th century.
2. The town is first mentioned in historical texts in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 877AD. It is stated as being the scene of a great naval victory by King Alfred over the Danes: "*This*

*year came the Danish army into Exeter from Wareham; whilst the navy sailed west about, until they met with a great mist at sea, and there perished one hundred and twenty ships at Swanwich."*

3. A hundred Danish ships which had survived the battle were driven by a storm onto Peveril Point, a shallow rocky reef outcropping from the southern end of Swanage bay. A monument topped (historically incorrectly) by cannon balls was built in 1882 by John Mowlem to celebrate this event and is situated at the southern end of the seafront promenade.
4. In contrast to the decorative Purbeck marble, Purbeck limestone, or more commonly 'Purbeck stone', has been used in construction locally since the early days of quarrying in Purbeck. Its use is less well documented as it was taken for granted as the default construction materials in the area. However, the arrival of more modern quarrying techniques in the 17th century resulted in an increase in production. The Great Fire of London in 1666 led to a period of large scale reconstruction in the city, and Purbeck stone was extensively used for paving.
5. John Mowlem (1788–1868), a Swanage resident, became a successful builder in London, creating the Mowlem construction company, which still existed as recently as 2006, when it was acquired by another company.
6. Swanage Lighthouse was built in 1880, on the clifftop at Anvil Point, not far away from Durlston Castle.
7. Through the years Swanage had suffered from flooding, with severe flooding occurring as recently as 1990. In 1993 a large-scale flood alleviation scheme was completed, ending in the banjo-shaped 'new jetty' outletting rainwater. This in itself created a new problem, disturbing the natural northward drift of sand up the bay, with a buildup on the southern side and reduction of sand on the northern. This reduction of sand levels exposed the foundations of parts of the seawall threatening to damage it. As a result the beach was improved in 2005–06 by construction of new greenheart timber groynes and the placement of 90,000 m<sup>3</sup> of sand as beach nourishment.

8. The Purbeck limestone was extensively quarried with several sites to the south west showing evidence of former quarries, particularly Tilly Whim Caves and Dancing Ledge, a man made rock shelf used for loading ships. Natural erosion has formed stacks along and at the end of the northern headland, in particular the notable Old Harry Rocks. In part through the process of quarrying, fossils from the dinosaur age have been discovered in the local rock, and as such the coastline up to and including Swanage Bay has been included in the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.

9. Swanage is stated as the hometown of John Cleese's character Basil Fawlty in the sitcom *Fawlty Towers*.

James Blunt's video "Carry You Home" was filmed in Swanage.

The first episode of the second series of the British comedy, *The Inbetweeners*, is based mainly in Swanage. The episode is titled "The Field Trip", although this episode was filmed in Littlehampton, not actually Swanage.

10. Swanage is called Knollsea in Thomas Hardy's novels.