



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 23

June 2012

Catch a Coach newsletter

Welcome to another edition of Catch a Coach, the monthly newsletter from the coaching team at Fairlands Valley Spartans.

You all kicked off the Midweek league season in style! A good result from the first fixture on the 15th May saw the club reach third position in the league, with a particularly strong performance from the boys! Laying it down to the girls! I would like to say a massive thanks to all of you who ran in the fixture but also to those that helped out in all sorts of ways to make the fixture run so smoothly – thank you! Bravo to Steve Smithson as our Race Director!

Whilst writing this we are preparing for the second fixture at Welwyn Garden City. There were some unexpected results in the first fixture which really is going to make the league even tighter than ever. We want to hold on to and even improve on our current position. That means getting as many runners out as possible on the 31st – 92 at the first fixture, we need well over hundred at Welwyn!

The good news in the midweek league has been matched up well with our teams in the EVAC competition and, dare I say it, we could be seeing both the ladies and men at the finals in September!? The next fixture is coming up on 13th June. On the subject of the track, it is great to see so many new faces appearing on a Saturday morning and joining the sessions. They are truly highlighting that the training sessions at Ridlins are for all ability of runner in the club – we can all benefit from them and have fun! If you haven't tried it then why not come along and join in!

Please can I give you a further reminder that annual subscriptions are now overdue. Full adult membership is only £27 of which £5 is for affiliation to UKA. There are reduced concessionary memberships. The on-line membership process is quick and easy to use. Just go to the website, click the box on the homepage and enter your details. Simple!

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the next midweek league fixture on 31st May.

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

Cheers

Chris 'Coach' Leigh

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What's coming up - 10 of the best for June

Here's our ten of the best for June!

1. Let's start with the midweek league! As I have already pointed out in the opening section, the midweek league is likely to be incredibly tight this year and we need to make every fixture count. The next fixture at Welwyn Garden City on 31st May promises to be just that! A flat, fast course where many Spartans have posted PBs in the past. Offers of pacing groups at 40 minutes and 50 minutes led by Jamie Drackford and Coach Leigh respectively. Nick Witcombe is also going to be covering a group at 60 minute pace. Please see all of the details on the Forum, including car sharing arrangements. Not too long after we go to Harlow on the 20th June and then finally St Albans on the 28th June. There will be car sharing for both fixtures, please look out for all of the details on the Forum and in the Calendar on the new website. Remember the only things you need for these races are a race number (same number for the whole series) and a stripey vest!
2. The men's and ladies' EVAC teams will be in action again on 13th June at Kettering. Further details will be available soon via the Forum and on the calendar.
3. The 24th June is officially Fun Day – Olympic Fun Day! Come along and join in at Ridlins Stadium from 2pm. Lots of fun and games plus a BBQ. Just bring your drinks and have a great time. The North Herts Road Runners v Spartans rounders match will be interesting(!) as too will the 'Spartans in the Stocks! – which Spartan would you like to thoroughly soak!!!? Tickets are only £3 and are on sale now. All of the details can be found on the Forum and in the calendar. Look out for details on our own version of the torch relay as well!
4. The Aston hills are alive.....with the sound....of Spartans! On 7th June we will be holding our first trip to the Aston Ford this year for this popular hill session. Just because it has the word hill in it doesn't mean that it is just for the quicker runners amongst the club. Far from it! We will be meeting at 7pm at the Aston Village hall for a warm up and mobilisations session before heading to the Ford. Just one of my favourite things!
5. There are some great track sessions coming up on Saturdays in June. Starting with the 2-3x(4x200m) session, we are going to have sessions over 600m and 80m before finishing the month in style with the popular 100m shuttles session. If you have never completed a shuttles session before then (1) you don't know what you have been missing and (2) you must come along for this – 30th June. All of these sessions

can be enjoyed by members right across the club and help to improve your running form as well as your overall running strength and speed.

6. With midweek league races on 31st May, 20th June and 28th June take care to ensure that you do not over train! Use the periods between the races to properly recover and, yes, rest! Remember to not leave your race on the training ground! The club have arranged a recovery run on 21st June after the Harlow fixture. Please remember to be sensible with the amount of running you complete in the lead up to the 7 mile MWL race at St Albans on 30th June too!
7. We have now introduced a third training group run option on a Sunday. The groups are now labelled Group A, Group B and Group C according to the relative long run training paces. It does now mean that the groups can cater for all runners within the club, whether you are running sub 6 min/mile on your long runs or running slower than 11 min/mile. Details of each groups run will be added to the club calendar by Thursday evening and also included in the What's On newsletter each week. Further details of the groups can be found in the newsletter below.
8. Don't forget it is time to renew your membership! I hope you agree that the club offers brilliant value for money. Over 10 training sessions a week, including a track based session where you don't need to pay track fees (its inclusive within your annual subscription) and affiliated membership entitles you to discounts on race entries. Who else can offer you so much per pound!!!!????? Oh, and not forgetting the great social side to the club and all of those non running activities we get up to!! You can now renew your membership on line. Just go to the club website and click on the box in the right hand corner. Simple!
9. Looking a little further ahead we have the next of the club's race programme on 15th July – the Fairlands Valley Challenge. This provides distance options of 12.3 miles, 18.7 miles and 26.2 miles as well as the extremely popular Ultra (50km). Please get your entry in and use the training being offered at the club to get you ready (particularly the Sunday runs). All of the details can be found by clicking the link on the club's website. If you do not plan to run on the day then your help with support of the race organisation would be terrific. If you can give up some time on 15th July to help please let us know by putting your details on the FVS events board of the Forum or by adding a comment to the Challenge event in the calendar.
10. All of this and also the Starter Group runs on Monday and Thursday and the Angels on Thursday and Saturday. June is going to be a great month of running! Please don't forget to get your diaries out and plan your race entries – places fill up fast!

Midweek League dates 2012

15th May - Stevenage (we are hosting!) Boys 1 Girls 0

31st May - Welwyn Garden City

20th June - Harlow

28th June - St Albans

11th July - MOB match

Please make sure they are all in your diary!!! We really want to see over 200 Spartans out at each of these fixtures - that would be really something!!!

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.



Coach development

I am pleased to say that the next member of the coaching team who will be taking on the challenge of the Coach in Running and Fitness (CiRF) course is Andy Prior.

Interested in joining the coaching team and helping to lead out our training groups?? If you are, please have a chat with Coach Leigh at any of the club's training sessions or drop him a line at chris.w.leigh@btinternet.com

Running trails – the benefits?

One of the biggest benefits regularly ascribed to running on trails is that the softer surfaces will reduce the impact on your body. This is true. But to me, the benefit to running trails is simple: they will slow you down. Following the adage take your easy days easy and your hard days hard, I still see loads of people at the club continuing to push a pace that isn't necessary on their easy recovery days, and they aren't allowing their body the full benefit of an active recovery.

Active recovery is an integral part of any training program for any distance. It aids in muscle memory, building your aerobic system, muscle endurance and obviously, recovery from a hard workout. Running an easy-intermediate technical trail--meaning a little curvy, rocky or rooty--forces you to slow down and take your time, putting a lighter training load on your system.

Of course, there's more to it than that. Trails have the benefit of changing your running gait, getting you up on your toes and shortening your stride through a technical section, and working on your balance through a winding section. Although we work for years to minimize side-to-side and up-and-down movement and we're often focused on going straight ahead as fast as we can, trail running can help activate and condition the ancillary muscle groups in our legs and core that provide stabilization and take the load off the main muscle groups used for forward motion. If we neglect those other muscles, our bigger muscle groups wind up compensating and overworking, and that can lead to injury or poor running economy.

Picking an intermediate trail with some hills and technical sections that force some of those movements is a great way to keep muscles activated. You can use these types of trails for long runs, slow recovery runs and fartleks, as long as you're aware that some of the hill sections can raise your heart rate enough to put you into another heart training zone. Think of it as cross training while still getting a run in.

For more advanced runners and racers, selecting a difficult trail that is hilly and/or highly technical can be a great workout for leg strength and power (similar to doing hill repeats on a road) and a plyometric workout rolled into one. Depending on the trail, this requires a developed sense of foot-eye coordination to avoid rolling a foot or spraining an ankle. But it can be beneficial to racing in which sudden pace changes are occurring, on hilly road courses, and in cross country races where good foot-eye coordination through a technical section can be a 3-second difference.

Quote of the month

“When you aim too high and don't fulfil it, your enthusiasm turns to bitterness. Try for a goal that's reasonable, then gradually raise it”.

Emil Zatopek, Olympic gold medallist at 5000m, 10000m and marathon

Race results - a reminder

Please remember to tell us all about your race results so that we can cover them within our weekly press release!!! **Send them in to results@fvspartans no later than 8pm Sunday evening for inclusion in the weekly press release.**

Meet the team

Tony Osborne



Q. When did you join the club?

A. 1988

Q. Why did you join the club?

A. The training times were more convenient than SNHAC or NHRR. I am still a life member of SNHAC.

Q. Why did you join the coaching team?

A. I am an experienced coach (47 years). I wanted to help other members.

Q. What are you hoping to do through your involvement in the coaching team?

A. Improve the overall standard of members from Group 1 to Group 5.

Q. When do we typically see you at training?

A. Tuesday, Thursday (Ossie's Angels) and Saturday (Ossie's Angels).

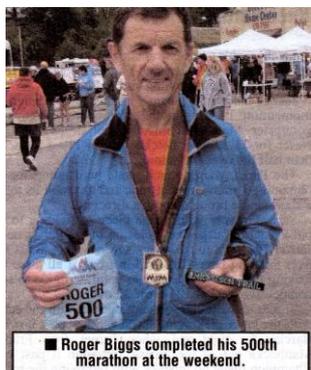
Q. What are your aims for your running and/or coaching?

A. Personal running: to keep healthy and stay running as long as possible. Coaching: to help other members to enjoy their running and to improve.

Q. Tell us something about you that other Spartans will not know!

A. I have a blue belt at Taekwondo, the Korean Martial Art.

Roger Biggs



Q. When did you join the club?

A. 1985

Q. Why did you join the club?

A. To run!

Q. Why did you join the coaching team?

A. Approx 10 years ago, to help other runners in the club.

Q. What are you hoping to do through your involvement in the coaching team?

A. Just encourage members to improve. Help where & when I'm needed.

Q. When do we typically see you at training?

A. Tuesday

Q. What are your aims for your running and/or coaching?

A. To carry on running at a reasonable standard as long as I can. I don't see my training going further at the moment, as I have involvement in the sport in other ways

Q. Tell us something about you that other Spartans will not know!

A. Many know about my marathons, but did they know that I've run 180 halves & 180 at 10 miles including my 100th 10, 100th half and 100th marathon in successive races, with my 100th marathon at the 100th Boston Marathon in USA

Sunday runs – a trio of Groups!

We now have three groups offering training runs on a Sunday!

Group A – catering for runners at a long run pace of 8 min/mile or quicker;

Group B – catering for runners at a long run pace of between 8 min/mile and 10 min/mile;

Group C – catering for runners at a long run pace over 10 min/mile.

Details of the run and meeting points for each group will be advertised through the calendar (new website) and in the 'What's On' newsletter each week. The runs for each group will be continuous but will include re-grouping so that each group does not get to spread out during the course of the run. This may mean that the quicker runners within each group will cover an extra 10-20% in terms of distance.

A 'New approach' to marathon training – the results

In September 2011 I attended a workshop held by David Cheshire from Bedford and County AC. David is one of the UKAs Flying Coaches (they don't actually have wings!) who support coaching teams within the area. The workshop covered David's approach to marathon training and the programme that he has developed and refined for athletes in his club. Rather than just focussing on the high performance end of the club, David has applied the principles across the range of athletes training for marathons and has had great results across the board. That got me interested.

The timing was good for Spring Marathon and I wanted to try an approach similar to David's for a group of athletes within our club. I advertised this at the start of the year and had a few interested people!! I then sent them an overview of the approach and that soon whittled the numbers down to two!! (I never said it was going to be easy!)

The approach focussed on ensuring that the athlete was in very good 10K shape 9-16 weeks before their target marathon. David had been getting success from a 9 week training programme leading into the marathon but this relied heavily on the athlete being 10K sharp and fit. As this was the first time I was going to adopt a similar approach to the training I chose a slightly longer training horizon but stuck with the core principles.

David used some general guiding principles to all races above 10K:

- Train to always be in good shape for 5 -10K (all year round)
- Adapt training programmes to do a **9 week build up** for any
- specific events that are greater than 10k
- Races in between / that clash with a build up...ok to do but should in effect be done as sessions and without tapering
- Can compete at all distances but training is better focused on one distance as main event at any one time
- Allow extra time (for more recovery) with less experienced /more fragile athletes

The key to the marathon target time is the 10K time. The marathon potential time is approx. 5 x 10K – 10 minutes.

Without giving you chapter and verse and all of the micro details, the approach relies on the athlete increasing the volume of tempo based training over the period 9-3 weeks out from the marathon whilst reducing their general endurance (long, slow) runs respectively. Overall mileage increases at 10% PER WEEK from week 9 to week 3 from marathon. This means that for athletes running 40 miles per week 9 weeks prior to the marathon (as both of mine were and more some), they will be running at least 65-70 miles 3-4 weeks prior to the marathon. I didn't say it was going to be easy. Like the saying - you can't make a good omelette without cracking some eggs, you can't run a good marathon without putting in the miles. However, just running lots of slow/steady miles will enable you to complete a marathon, but slowly/steady. The blend of increasing the proportion of tempo

based training as mileage increases and putting in a higher proportion of race pace runs in leads to a quicker runner over the whole distance.

The one area that I drifted away from David's principles in was the number of long (20+ mile) runs within the programme. David follows an approach of trying to put only one 20-22 mile run into the programme. That just didn't feel right and I opted for more than that for both athletes.

So, who were the athletes?

The first was Chris Westcott. At the start of the year Chris came to me and said that he wanted to run a sub 3 hour marathon. He had had a very disappointing experience at the VLM in 2011 and wanted to make up for that. I asked him to send me a copy of his training log for that race and quickly understood why he had experienced difficulties. The first two weeks of the year did not start well as Chris was in a period of injury re-hab but we soon got started. By the end of January Chris was running 45 miles a week. The following week he went to the Bramley 20 mile race and clocked a PB of 2:14. I knew at that point he was getting into shape for it and was only a matter of a few seconds behind Dave Bowker who I had been helping and was capable of running close to 3 hours for a marathon. In marathon – 8 weeks, Chris completed a Yasso 800s session at an average of 2:55 indicating a sub 3 hour marathon was possible, just! We were now building in more and more tempo based running within the programme and Chris then went to the MK half and clocked up a PB of 1:23:17. He was getting into good shape for that distance, the question now was about pacing over a longer trek! A further Yasso 800s session in mid March saw Chris bring his average time down to 2:45 per 800m (he completed the session with Dave Bowker). His Sunday runs were now incorporating longer periods of tempo paced/race pace running and on the 8th April three weeks before his target marathon Chris ran 22 miles with 15 miles at 6:43 pace. The other 7 miles were at a not too sluggish 7:10 pace! I knew he was there! Chris went through the taper period unscathed and then went to Milton Keynes on 29th April to race the marathon. What happened next was truly unbelievable, even with Chris's approach to the training (which had been amazing!). Firstly, we saw simply the wettest race I think in history. Also, the temperatures plummeted. It was horrendous. Whilst MK was a flat course there were sections, particularly around the lakes, that were open with a fierce head wind. The result was that Chris clocked a time of **2:57:17**. What was so superb about this was that the mile splits he put in were so consistent. I was literally setting my watch to him as I saw him at different parts of the course! I have included an extract of Chris's plan below with his actual mileages and paces shown. He used to drop me a line each week (Monday) to tell me what he had done, how he had got in, that he was feeling rubbish (almost every week!) and then we would agree on what he would be doing next week. I would obviously see him at training Tuesdays and some Thursdays but would not get in his face. If he wanted to talk to me about things then he could and would.

5th March	6 mile easy run	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:01	9 mile steady@7:35	Club training session - Out and back. Out @7:20, Back@6:30	8 mile steady run@7:35	Rest	15 mile long run @7:35	52 miles
Actual W/C 5th March	6.2 miles steady @ 7:14	Club training session (8x4mins / 90secs) - 8.2 miles. Efforts at 6:00, 5:30, 5:57, 5:52, 6:10, 5:57, 5:56, 6:11	9.1 miles steady @ 7:11	Work Event	Out and Back Session. 2.89 miles @ 6:55. Back in 18:10 @ 6:18	8.25 miles steady @ 6:57 (got caught by Andy P, so had about 2k @ sub 6:40)	15.2 mile long run @ 7:07	55.4 miles
12th March	5 mile easy run	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:50	7 mile steady@7:35	Club training session - 200m shuttles. Efforts at 6:00. 5 mile steady run after session @7:30.	10 mile steady run@7:30	Rest	17 mile long run@7:30 with 8 miles at race pace of 6:52	56 miles
Actual W/C 12th March	Sick	Sick	Sick	Sick	Sick	Sick	4.5 mile @ 7:24, 8 miles tempo @ 6:25, 4.9 miles @ 7:34	17.2 miles

19th March	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:50	5-6 miles with 3 miles at 6:00 pace	12 miles with 8 at 7:00 pace	15 mile steady @ 7:30	Rest	Yassoo - Target 2:50	at least 15 mile long run@7:30. Include 10 miles at race pace of 6:52	60 miles
Actual W/C 19th March	2 sets 8 * 2 mins/1min - 3 mins between sets. Efforts @ 5:47, 5:36, 5:38, 5:39, 5:41, 5:38, 5:57, 5:53, 6:05, 6:10, 5:55, 5:58, 5:53, 5:34, 5:28, 5:48	5.5 miles with 2.5 miles @ 5:54	2 miles @ 7:29, 8 miles tempo @ 6:42, 1.9 miles @ 7:29	15 mile steady @ 7:14	Rest	Yassoo - 2:49, 2:47, 2:49, 2:48, 2:48, 2:47, 2:49, 2:44, 2:46, 2:40	4.25 mile @ 7:31, 10 miles tempo @ 6:40, 3.1 miles @ 7:56	68.3 miles
26th March	6 mile easy run	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:50	10 mile steady@7:30	Club training session - speed endurance/3 hills. 5 mile tempo run after@6:30	10 mile steady run@7:30	Rest	Club 20@7:30. Include 13 miles at race pace of 6:52	64 miles
Actual W/C 26th March	6.5 mile steady @ 7:02	Reverse Ladder: 6/5/5/4/3/2/2/1/1. 2 mins recovery after 6-3 mins, then 1 min. 5:47, 5:47, 5:52, 5:50, 6:06, 6:01, 5:55, 5:23, 5:58. Tight hamstring so eased back over last few reps	Rest - Hamstring still tight	3 miles steady @ 7:11, 2.5 miles tempo @ 6:15, 2 miles steady @ 7:18, 2 miles tempo @ 6:08, 2.6 miles steady @ 7:20	11.8 Mile Steady @ 7:12	Rest	4 miles @ 7:19, 13 miles tempo @ 6:41, 3.9 miles @ 7:36	59.3 Miles
2nd April	6 mile easy run	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:55	10 mile tempo@6:30	Club training session - 4 x 1 miles @6:00. 5 mile tempo run after @6:20	10 mile steady run@7:30	Rest	22 mile long run@7:30 include 15 miles at race pace of 6:52	68 miles
Actual W/C 2nd April	6.6 mile steady @ 7:14	3 sets (7x90secs / 45secs) 3 mins between sets. 1st set (5:36, 5:41, 5:44, 5:45, 5:41, 5:39, 5:50). 2nd Set (5:45, 5:37, 5:38, 5:30, 5:33, 5:42, 5:44). 3rd Set (5:40, 5:36, 5:36, 5:41, 5:31, 5:30, 5:24). Overall average 5:38	10.9 miles @ 7:11. Had to stop tempo at 3.8 miles (6:27).	4 x 1 miles (6:00, 5:53, 5:55, 5:59). Then 5 mile tempo @ 6:19	10.3 mile steady @ 7:14	Rest	4 miles @ 7:29, 15 miles tempo @ 6:43, 3.5 miles @ 7:48	71 miles
9th April	6 mile easy run	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:50	8 mile tempo@6:20	Club training session - steady run option @6:20	9 mile steady run@7:30	Rest	15 mile long run@7:30 with 8 miles at race pace of 6:52	56 miles
Actual W/C 9th April	6.1 mile steady @ 7:07	2 sets 8 * 2 mins/1min - 3 mins between sets. Efforts @ 5:50, 5:38, 5:35, 5:25, 5:46, 5:30, 5:35, 5:55, 5:44, 5:36, 5:36, 5:50, 5:35, 5:54, 6:34, 5:46	7.3 miles @ 6:55. Stopped tempo at 4.1 miles (6:15)	6.8 miles @ 6:40. Included 4 mile tempo @ 6:11	9.2 mile steady @ 7:05	Rest	4 miles @ 7:09, 8 miles tempo @ 6:34, 3.4 miles @ 7:10	53 miles

16th April	Rest	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 5:50	7 mile tempo@6:20	6 mile tempo run@6:20	7 mile steady run @7:30	Rest	10 mile long run@7:30	38 miles
Actual W/C 16th April	Rest	10 * 3mins/1min. Efforts @ 6:03, 5:42, 5:35, 5:56, 5:46, 5:48, 5:56, 5:50, 5:51, 5:39	7 mile good pace @ 6:28	Rest - work enforced	6 mile good pace @ 6:32	7 mile steady @ 7:20	10 mile slow @ 7:24	38.8 miles
23rd April	Rest	Club training session - Group 3. 7 miles. Efforts at race pace of 6:52	Rest	4 mile steady run @7:30	Rest	Easy run of 3 miles. Slow. Test kit, race prep etc.	Race	40 miles
Actual W/C 23rd April	Rest	7 * 4mins/2mins. Efforts @ 6:42, 6:46, 6:43, 6:48, 6:49, 6:42, 6:35	Rest	4.5 miles slow @ 7:22	Rest	Rest	Chip Time 2:57:17. Garmin miles in: 6:57, 6:33, 6:38, 6:38, 6:35, 6:40, 6:43, 6:38, 6:40, 6:38, 6:35, 6:41, 6:47, 6:40, 6:41, 6:38, 6:44, 6:47, 6:46, 6:53, 6:45, 6:43, 6:49, 6:49, 6:53, 6:42	37.4 miles

The second athlete was Pete Smith. Pete had attended the same marathon workshop with David Cheshire as myself and freely admitted he was becoming frustrated. He had run a sub 3:30 marathon in the past but successive marathons were becoming slower. He was tending to follow standard RunnersWorld type training plans. He was open to a new approach and came to me to see what we could do. The approach we took was very similar to Chris's above in terms of mileage and training profile. Because of Pete's occupation and shift working, he had developed a very flexible approach to get his running in. We started Pete's programme from marathon (Edinburgh) – 12 weeks and at a base of 35 miles. This meant that he would be running about 65 miles a week 3-4 weeks from the race. Pete cranked up the volume of tempo and race pace efforts within sessions as he moved towards the Edinburgh race and he stuck with the programme, recording target times that were on schedule. Pete ran a 43 minute 10K at Regents park on 1 April and by 15th May ran a 41:39 at our MWL fixture. He completed a total of 2 20+ mile runs in the lead up to the race. Pete went to the Edinburgh marathon and, just like Chris a few weeks earlier, was faced by some very odd weather. This time, very hot. What did he do? He went and **smashed his PB and recorded a time of 3:14** and a good for age qualifying time so I am sure we will see him at the VLM in April 2013! Here is an extract of Pete's programme.

26th March	4 mile easy run @8:25	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 7:02	9 mile steady@8:25	Club training session - 6 x 800 metres @ 6:20 (3:10 per 800)	8 mile steady run@8:25	Rest	Regent's Park 10K Target time = 43 minutes	40 miles
	5.5	7.39	10.36	4.51	8.45	3.11	8.55	47.87
	1st mile 8'43" then 7'55" to 8'15" Average 8'11"	6,5,5,4,3,2,2,1,1 at 6'44", 6'50", 6'46", 6'40", 6'55", 6'47", 6'43", 6'17", 6'02".	Average 8'17"	Kenyan Hills. 5 laps of 2 hills (Grace Way and Fairlands Way) at pace of 7'26", 7'09", 7'13", 7'21", 7'15".	Average 8'13"	Easy run with Karen at 10'06" pace	A couple of miles warm up and cool down. Race completed in 43mins exactly. About constant pace of 6'55"	
2nd April	Easy	Steady	9 mile steady@8:20	5 x 1 mile efforts with 2'30" jog recoveries	8 mile steady run@8:20	Rest	15 mile long run (1 mile warm up then 13 miles at 8:20, 1 mile warm down)	52 miles

	6.22	8.54	10.48	7.71	8.13		13.75	54.83
	Average 7'56"	Average 7'40"	Average 7'58"	Mile efforts 6'43" to 6'54"	Average 8'03"		Average 8'34" including chocolate stops!	
9th April	5 mile easy run@8:20	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:50	7 mile steady@8:20	Club training session - 200m shuttles. Efforts at 6:10. 5 mile steady run after session @8:20	10 mile steady run@8:20	Rest	17 mile long run@8:20 with 8 miles at race pace of 7:26	56 miles
	5.6	7.75	7	10	10		17	57.35
	Completed on Tuesday morning. Average 8'11"	15 x 2/1 Efforts from 6'11" to 6'58", but most around 6'45" pace						
16th April	6 mile easy run @8:15	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:50	10 mile steady@8:15	Handicap 5K. Run at target pace of 20:25	10 mile steady run@8:15	Rest	20 mile long run@8:15. Include 10 miles at race pace of 7:26	60 miles
	6.26	7.73	10	5.4	10.21		20	59.6
	Average 7'28" - Last 3 miles at 7'15" (Felt good)	1 mile warm up and cool down. 10x 3min/1min efforts at 6'33" to 6'50". Mainly around 6'40"	Forgot watch but done in 78 mins	5K done in 20'34"	Average 8'02"		Average 8'00". Miles 3 to 12 at faster pace, but lots of hills and against the wind	
23rd April	6 mile easy run@8:15	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:45	10 mile tempo @7:15	Club training session - speed endurance/3 hills. 5 mile tempo run after@7:15	10 mile steady run@8:15	Rest	17 mile long run@8:15. Include 13 miles at race pace of 7:26	61 miles
	7.22	8.35	10.17	11.44	10		17.21	64.39
	Average 7'28" - Miles 3-7 at 7'15" to 7'25"(Felt good)	6 x 5/2 efforts at 6'41" to 6'52"	Tempo run at average 7'11"	Ladder 11,22,33,44,5 at 6'18" to 6'48"with jog recoveries.5 mile tempo at 7'04 to 7'15". Total average 7'18"	Average 7'45"		Miles 2-14 at 7'27" or below	
30th April	6 mile easy run@8:15	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:45	10 mile tempo@7:10	Club training session - 4 x 1 miles @6:45. 5 mile tempo run after @ 7:10	10 mile steady run@8:15	Rest	22 mile long run@8:15 include 15 miles at race pace of 7:26	66 miles
	6.05	7.05	12	4.73	10.3		22	62.13
	Average 8'15"	Club session. 2 x 4K loops. About 7'00" pace	Tempo run at average 7'23" Miles 2 to 10 at 7'07" to 7'18"	6 x 800m efforts at 6'32" to 6'02" pace. Getting faster for each effort.	Average 8'05"		Quite hard Managed about 8 miles at race pace. Rest at 8'00" to 8'40". Overall average 8'00"	
7th May	6 mile easy run @8:15	Club training session - 8 miles. Efforts at 6:45	8 mile tempo@7:05	Club training session - steady run option @ 7:05	9 mile steady run@8:15	Rest	15 mile long run@8:15 with 8 miles at race pace of 7:26	52 miles
		7.98	8.38	5.68	9.09		15.03	46.16
		5 x 2k loops at 6'49" to 6'57"	7 miles at 7'10" to 7' 31"	5 miles at 6'58" to 7' 15"	Average 7' 51"		8 miles at race pace. Overall average of 7'	

The approach I took with Chris and Pete to the training went against many of the approaches used by other coaches. I like to use a plan to show how we are going to get from A to B, from where we are now to the race. It is like a roadmap. The idea of just drip feeding a training plan a week at a time makes me uncomfortable, particularly as we adults who are training adults. Just because the overall picture has been painted does not mean that parts of it won't change. Both Chris and Pete had sessions within their programme that changed or had to be dropped altogether to ensure that things were done in the right way for them. Just like any plan it needs to be flexible enough to cope with a change in situation. The risk of showing the whole picture is that it can be overwhelming and de-motivating. This was not an issue in either Chris or Pete's case. One thing they both showed was great amounts of sheer determination.

So, could this approach work with anyone in the club? I would say that with the right refinements in certain circumstances/places, yes. I haven't spoken to Pete yet after Edinburgh (will see him at the MWL in WGC) but certainly Chris and I are going to take the approach again into his preparation for the Abingdon marathon in October. I am also going to use it for my own training for the Abingdon marathon.

I am grateful for the insight that David Cheshire gave to me and others last year (I am going to write to him and tell him just that!) and the amazing results they have produced. The programme is tough but it is not as prolonged as many programmes you will see or use. Coincidence or fluke with the results? I don't think so at all but one (or two) Swallows don't make a Spring so the real proof is in coaching more athletes in the club towards their marathon targets. Interested? Just let me know!

Coach Leigh

A guide to.....the Aston Hills session



Each month during 2012 we will focus on a session that we regularly schedule within our training programme. We will explain how we run the session and the benefits of doing it. All the sessions featured are suited to any member of the club who is able to run at least 5K continuously and has been training for at least 3 months. This month it is the Aston Hills session.

What is the session?

The session is run in one group using the natural features either side of the Ford at Aston (just past the Aston Village Hall). After a warm up and mobilisations session the group run to the Ford at the bottom of the hill. The Ford is at the bottom of a steep valley so there are hills either side of it. The hill that faces Benington is steeper and shorter than the opposite hill facing back to Aston. This means that the group will get a mixture of steep, shorter hill training and longer hills in the session.

The group start by running up the hill on the Benington side. When the fastest runner is at the top, the whistle will be blown and all runners will turn and go down the hill back to the Ford. They run through and then start up the hill opposite. Again, once the fastest runner is at the top the whistle is blown and all runners descend to the Ford. The group continue to run each hill in continuous repeats until they have completed either 4 or 5 of each of the hills. The aim is for each runner to reach a similar point on each side of the hill as they repeat the efforts.

What are the benefits of completing the Aston Hills session?

The benefits of the session are really those that you would get from any hills based session. The great advantage of the Aston Hills is that they differ in nature (as above) so you get a mixed hills session within a session. The session will develop your strength and running efficiency as well as your running style. Hill training of this nature is a disguised speed session. Whilst you may not be going up the hills quickly, the way in which

you activate your legs and arms is very similar to the running form you would use on any track based session. Just see how your legs and shoulders feel after the session and then the day or two after the session. You will have worked muscles that you will not have worked as well on other training sessions.

Who should do it?

Subject to the caveat above about ensuring that you have developed a base of training first, all runners in the club will benefit from this session in developing their strength, running technique and speed. I would recommend that new runners who have been running training for less than 12 weeks should wait until they have completed about 12 weeks of training before taking on this session. Other than that, all runners will benefit from doing the session and should come along.

When should you do it?

Come along to the next session on Thursday 7th June at Aston Village Hall!!! It's the session of the month!



Coach's A to Z of running letters W to Z

Continuing the series from the last edition, here are the last four letters.

W is for warm ups (pre race)

Few runners warm up properly for races. Just tugging at your toes a few times and jogging to the start isn't enough! Without a sufficient aerobic warm up you're asking your body to go from a standing start to full race speed within a few seconds. To do this safely and efficiently you need to make a transition from just hanging around getting nervous to race mode/speed. A proper warm up gradually increases the heart rate, reducing stress on the heart as you increase speed. It dilates blood vessels, allowing for more efficient transportation of oxygen to the leg muscles. A key part to the warm up is to actually warm up the muscles, raising their temperature to improve flexibility and function. A cold muscle is so much more likely to pull. A good warm up will also help you to focus on the forthcoming race and should help you feel more relaxed.

After a short walk around jog slowly for 15 to 30 minutes, finishing about 15 minutes prior to race start. On cool days, maintain an additional layer of clothing right up until the start of the race to help keep the muscles warm.

After your aerobic warm up complete a set of mobilisation exercises and dynamic stretches. A typical set of these were featured in the June edition of Catch a Coach

<http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/catchacoach/newsletter/june-2011/>

Finally, alternate between easy jogging with five to ten short, brisk strides right up until just before the start of the race. Don't sprint but run just fast enough to make you feel more comfortable. Strides are more beneficial for short races - you can skip then for distances such as full marathon and half marathon.

An effective warm up is important in all conditions but it is particularly important in cold weather. In the cold muscles are tighter and the risk to them is heightened particularly over short distance races when you will start off at a quicker pace.

X is for X Country running

The benefits of cross-country is both mental and physical. The runner who is experienced in cross-country is more robust, more versatile and less likely to be thrown by a sudden change in the weather (an event surprisingly common during XC season!!!)

The benefits of training and competing in the cross-country season provides tough physical training, working over a wide range of speeds, without the damaging effects of the cumulative jarring that results from track or road training.

To give a balanced view point, however, cross-country does have its drawbacks, the chief one being that it develops a style of running which is not efficient for the high speeds of track and road racing.

As the going is softer and often slippery, the stride length must naturally be shorter. If you use the road-running action, with the heel striking the ground well in front of the body, you are likely to skid. Similarly, if your back leg is too far back, you will lose something in the push-off. A shorter stride requires greater leg speed made more difficult by the fact that there is less elastic return. In road and track running energy is stored by compression of ligaments and tendons in the ankle and knee joints. When running on soft surfaces, much of the energy is lost in compressing the ground underneath, so less is stored in the joints. This means that the runner has to bend the legs slightly more at the knees and ankles and use more effort in straightening them. The runner will have to make a more deliberate effort to pick the thighs up, which requires more work from the muscles that run from the pelvis to the thigh, and this in turn imposes a greater strain on the abdominal muscles, which have to hold the torso rigid while all this effort is going on.

Where as the efficient road or track runner can glide along relying on bounce and balance to make the work easier, the cross-country runner has to muscle their way along. As the ground beneath their feet is uneven, the runner has to make constant adjustments in balance, using more muscles. Even the angle of the foot will be different. When running on hard surfaces the straight line from heel to toe should be pointing in the direction you are running. On soft surfaces it is necessary to point the toes slightly outwards, so that you slip less. This is less economical than running in a straight line, but the wetter and softer the surface, the more it is necessary.

Above all, X country running and racing can be great fun. The training and running is tough, no doubt, but the benefits from going through a season can be immense in terms of a much stronger running ability. This added strength can then be taken into post X country season training and running, making you a more efficient and faster runner.

Look out for all of the details on the upcoming cross country season on the Forum, but in the meantime please put these league dates into your diary:

28 October 2012 - Cheshunt (Broxbourne Runners)

25 November 2012 - Grovelands Park (Serpentine)

9 December 2012 - St Albans (St Albans Striders supported by GCR and Harpenden Arrows)

13 January 2012 - Royston (Royston Runners)

17 February 2012 - Cassiobury Park, Watford (Watford Joggers)

Y is for Yasso (Yasso 800s)

Named after Bart Yasso, Yasso 800s are a popular workout among runners who are trying to achieve a specific marathon goal. Here's how to do Yasso 800s:

- Take your marathon goal time in hours/minutes and convert this to minutes/seconds. For example, if your marathon goal is 3 hours and 10 minutes then convert that to 3 minutes and 10 seconds.
- Try to run 800 metres in your converted time (3:10 in this example).
- Recover after each 800 by jogging for the same amount of time (again, 3:10 in this example).
- Repeat the 800 metre repetition aiming for the same target time. Jog the recovery.
- Start with four or five 800 metre repetitions in the first week.
- Continue with Yasso 800 workouts once a fortnight alongside your regular marathon training and try to add one more repetition each time until you reach ten repetitions. The first few should feel pretty easy, but you'll notice that they'll start to get more difficult as you continue to add repeats.
- Ensure that you complete your Yasso 800 sessions at least two weeks prior to your marathon race i.e. avoid doing them during a period of tapering.

Do they work? The simple answer is yes. I have built them into my marathon training for the last two seasons. In 2009 I was running the Yasso session in 3 minutes 40 secs for each of the 10 800s and I ran a marathon in 3 hours 42 minutes. In 2010 I was running the Yasso sessions in 3 minutes 30 secs for each of the 10 800s and I ran a marathon in 3 hours 36 minutes. In addition to a good marathon speed based session they are also a great psychological training session. You will complete a total of about 8 miles in running by the end of the session (10 x 800m = 5 miles plus additional miles completed during the recovery running).

If you are training for a marathon why not try them!?

Please have a chat with me at training if you would like more details.

Z is for Zatopek

Emil Zatopek was a Czech long-distance runner best known for winning three gold medals at the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. He won gold in the 5000 metres and 10,000 metres runs, but his final medal came when he decided at the last minute to compete in the first marathon of his life. Zátapek's running style was distinctive and very much at odds with what was considered to be an efficient style at the time. His head would often roll, face contorted with effort, while his torso swung from side to side. He often wheezed and panted audibly while running, which earned him the nicknames of "Emil the Terrible" or "the Czech Locomotive". His running achievements are unquestionable and renowned but what made Zatopek so astonishing was the way in which he trained for them.

Zatopek was probably one of the first exponents of interval training but he completed huge volumes of intervals. A typical session would consist of anything between 40 and 60 400m intervals with jog recoveries. Some reports also refer to Zatopek completing sessions of 100 x 400m during his marathon training! Whilst there are differences in reports about the sort of pace he was running the 400s in (there clearly was variation in pacing during his sessions and some of the recoveries moved from being jogs to virtual walks as fatigue set in), what is not in question is that Zatopek's training was based on high volumes. I think it is fair to say that his training methods sacrificed quality for quantity but it worked for Zatopek!

Athletes and runners since the 1950s have taken much of what Zatopek was doing and adapted it into their own interval regimes. The philosophy in the UK and Europe with training over the years has been based on interval sessions but in nowhere near the quantity that Zatopek ran. For many runners his brutal style of training would have led to injuries and complete breakdown. Zatopek had an army based training and could stick with it (there are well known stories of him running many miles in the winter months in army boots!).

I attended a session in 2010 at Lee Valley where a well re-known endurance coach with the USA team spoke about the training methods he adopted for his athletes. His were based on volume, much like Zatopek's in terms of overall quantity. However, the intervals he was getting his athletes to run were typically 1 mile repetitions rather than 200/400m repetitions. He also advocated the importance of recovery runs that had volume in them.

So, Zatopek definitely left a legacy within the athletics world. He smashed records and his performances at the 1952 Olympics were phenomenal. However, he also left the framework of a training philosophy that so many have copied, adapted/refined and based their successful performances on. Zatopek for me shows that sometimes you have to leave what appears to be the well respected vies and approaches and create your own. They may not be acceptable to all but if they work for you then what the heck!!!

Zatopek quotes

"Why should I practice running slow? I already know how to run slow. I want to learn to run fast."

"When a person trains once, nothing happens. When a person forces himself to do a thing a hundred or a thousand times, then he certainly has developed in more ways than physical. Is it raining? That doesn't matter. Am I tired? That doesn't matter, either. Then willpower will be no problem."

"A runner must run with dreams in his heart, not money in his pocket."

"To boast of a performance which I cannot beat is merely stupid vanity. And if I can beat it that means there is nothing special about it."

"What has passed is already finished with. What I find more interesting is what is still to come."

"There is a great advantage in training under unfavourable conditions. It is better to train under bad conditions, for the difference is then a tremendous relief in a race."

"If you want to win something, run 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run a marathon."

Emil Zatopek describes his marathon win at the Helsinki Olympics, "I was unable to walk for a whole week after that, so much did the race take out of me. But it was the most pleasant exhaustion I have ever known."

When asked about his tortured expression during races, Emil Zatopek said, "It is not gymnastics or ice skating you know."

Emil Zatopek on Interval Training, "Everyone said, 'Emil, you are a fool!' But when I first won the European Championship, they said: 'Emil, you are a genius!'"

"It's at the borders of pain and suffering that the men are separated from the boys."

"He does everything wrong but win."

Larry Snyder, Ohio State track coach, about Emil Zatopek's contorted style of running.

"Great is the victory, but the friendship is all the greater."



Feedback

I read the following feedback from Jo Cahill recently on the Forum. It was great to see that, whilst initially having nerves about doing a session at the track, Jo came down and had a great time. The Saturday morning track sessions are aimed at all members of the club, not just those wanting to train for specific track competitions. If you haven't tried a session at the track with the club before then June is a great month to do it – see you there!

First time ever at the track today - don't mind admitting that on leaving home I felt I was going to be out of my depth and I was also very nervous BUT I absolutely loved every moment. Thank you Paul Holgate for a fantastic session and all the encouragement and to everyone for making me feel so welcome (and that includes Jack he loved every minute). Totally different session felt so good. Left thinking don't feel I've done that much tonight I can't move every muscle in my body aches. Great morning. Thank you again everyone. I would recommend the track to everyone - you don't have to be an elite. That's a misconception! It was fab and very welcoming so immediately felt at home. So proud to be a Spartan!!!! 😊

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

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

Thank you