



# 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 26

September 2012

### **Catch a Coach newsletter**

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

August was an amazing month and I hope you all enjoyed it too!!! It was dominated by the goings on at the Olympics. Unbelievable, and so many great memories to treasure. All is set for a great Paralympics as well. On the club training front I said last month that August would be a month of variety and I wasn't wrong. Variety on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sundays! Despite being in holiday season it was really refreshing to see so many of you out training and also new faces amongst the groups.

My personal favourite was seeing how many of you were prepared to try something a little different and the numbers taking part in the main Thursday sessions increased during the month. We had new faces at the Aston Hills session at the start of the month, even more new faces for the 1K intervals and then one of the largest groups I have seen for a long time for the lamppost session. Maybe because we didn't put hills after the lamppost in the title we had duped more of you into running it?!! I don't think so! Anyway, the point is that we all seem to be trying something new and we will benefit from that experience. It also reinforces the point that I have been trying to make for a long time that these sessions are for everyone in the club, all abilities. We are going to have even more variety in September, so enjoy it!

Going out with the Starter Group on Mondays was great fun. It also reminded me about how the darker evenings are drawing in. Please take a look at the article in this month's edition and have a read of our own 'Be safe, be seen and be a Spartan'.

The club has two more superb races coming up in September – the 5K on 9<sup>th</sup> September and the Paul Maguire 5 on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. These are both county championship races. Remember to tick the County Championships box if you are eligible – you never know, you could be walking away with a county medal! All of the details for these races are on the website. It would be great to see as many Spartans as possible running each of the races. The 5K race is only 1 of 2 races in 2012 that will raise funds for the club and this helps to ensure that we are able to benefit from great coaching, a great base to train from and to keep our membership fees as low as possible. The Paul Maguire 5 raises funds for the Garden House Hospice. Paul was a very popular member of the club and I am sure that all of you who had the pleasure of training and/or racing with him will remember his smile, wicked sense of humour but perhaps above all his zest for running. I have never seen another runner in the club put so much into his/her running as Paul did. He did this whilst he was battling against cancer, the disease that did finally overwhelm him. So, in memory of Paul I really hope that as many of you enter the race but also come along and help support the smooth running of the race if you are not able to run in it. Thank you. Remember also that you can take advantage of the free race entry if you helped out at one of the other club races earlier in the year. Details can be found here: <http://forum.fvspartans.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1339968991>

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*

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## **What's coming up - 10 13 of the best for September**

There is too much in September to keep it to 10 so we have made it 13 this month!! Here they are:

1. Our 5K race takes place on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September. This is also the County 5K race so please don't forget to tick the County box!! If you are a Herts resident you could be walking off with a County medal. This race raises funds for the club and ensures that we can keep our membership fees as low as possible. If you are not able to take part in the race why not come along for a couple of hours and give your time to making sure the race goes off smoothly and is a success. All of the details can be found here. [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/5k-race-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance\\_id=](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/5k-race-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance_id=) and on the Forum here <http://forum.fvspartans.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1345139653>
2. On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September we have the return of the Paul Maguire 5 after a two year hiatus. This race is in memory of Paul, a former Spartan who lost his battle with cancer in 2008. A much loved member of the club, Paul showed huge strength in continuing to train and race during his illness and he was a great example to all in the club. He won the prestigious Spartan of the Year award and could always be seen at training with a smile on his face. We want to see as many runners out for this race as possible and put it back on the local racing map. The race is also the county championships 5 mile race so please remember to tick the Herts Champs box when entering. Just like the 5K race above, if you are not planning to run the race please come along and help make it a success. All of the details can be found here: [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/paul-maguire-5-mile-race-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance\\_id=5465](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/paul-maguire-5-mile-race-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance_id=5465)
3. On the 16<sup>th</sup> September we are returning to Rowney Warren (Chicksands) for another Sunday training in the woods. This is off road training at its best with a variety of mini sessions to help build your speed endurance, running technique and strength. It is also a great introduction to cross country running. Please have a look at the details on [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/chicksands-training-session-all-groups/?instance\\_id=2736](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/chicksands-training-session-all-groups/?instance_id=2736). This is not a group specific run because it is suitable for all runners in the club.
4. On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September we have the return of the Out and Back tempo session. This is based on the classical 20:20 tempo run where we run out on a defined course for 20 minutes at a steady pace before turning and returning at tempo pace. If you get the pacing right then you will be getting back a minute 90 seconds quicker than you went out! The more that take part, the more enjoyable the run becomes. Further details on the run can be found in this newsletter.

5. Whilst we all have our own running and training objectives, many runners in the club will be training for a half marathon in October or November (Peterborough and St Neots respectively). The Tuesday training sessions have a focus on intervals that build up from 4 minutes to six minutes during the month with a pyramid session at the end of the month to test your pace judgement. The length of the intervals (efforts) will mean that you can work in your tempo pace area, developing a better pace judgement and preparing yourself for forthcoming races where that is appropriate. These sessions are also great VO2 max development sessions so just because you are not racing a half marathon in the Autumn then you will still get great benefit from them.
6. There is great variety in the sessions we are holding at Ridlins Stadium each Saturday. These focus on developing your running technique, and with that comes improved speed and running efficiency. This means that all runners within the club can benefit from the sessions, whether you are focussing on your shorter distance running or are building to a half marathon. These longer sessions also mean that we can focus on the technical elements of running so you can better understand how you should run and the areas you need to focus on for your own running development. During September the sessions range from 300 metres pairs running (parlauf) to 800 metres. Just come on down to Ridlins for 9:15am and get involved!
7. On 30<sup>th</sup> September the club will be supporting the 5K Rotor Run in Fairlands Valley Park. Funds go to the Herts Air Ambulance. This is a vital charity and we can all help by volunteering some of our time to ensure that this event is as popular as ever and runs smoothly. Details can be found here: [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/herts-rotor-run/?instance\\_id=](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/herts-rotor-run/?instance_id=)
8. As a prelude to our own cross country season why not join in with the relay teams that we plan to put out at St Albans on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September? The men's race consists of 6 x 2.5 mile legs whereas the ladies race consists of 4 x 2.5 mile legs. This is a great introduction to cross country for those that have not done it before and it should be great fun, running in a team. Details can be found here: [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/st-albans-relays/?instance\\_id=5452](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/st-albans-relays/?instance_id=5452) If you would like to take part then please let the ladies or mens team captains know and/or add your name down by adding a comment to the thread.
9. Don't forget our Stevenage half marathon on 4<sup>th</sup> November. This is the County Champs race (notice the theme here, Fairlands Valley are the club to support County racing!!!!). Entries are well and truly open and are coming in fast so please get your entry in early. As we move through into October there will be a chance to get out on different parts of the course as part of or Tuesday and Sunday training sessions so you can see what it is all about if you have not run this race before. Full details can be found here: [http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/stevenage-half-marathon-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance\\_id=](http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/ai1ec_event/stevenage-half-marathon-incorporating-the-herts-county-championships/?instance_id=)
10. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September there is the re-scheduled 5K and 10K race for life in Fairlands Valley. The club support this race each year by setting up and marshalling the course. If you can spare your time on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> please let Gary Dempsey know. For details see here: <http://forum.fvspartans.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1329952433>
11. The Sandy open track meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September has a wide range of distances and events to choose from and is usually the last opportunity to race in this way and particularly the last opportunity to post an official time for the 1500m in the club championships. Details are at: <http://www.biggleswadeac.org.uk/downloads/Beds%20Open%20Sept%202012%20Entry%20Form.pdf>.
12. Don't forget your race entries! Two forthcoming races that are going to have lots of guest appearances from Spartans are the Standalone 10K on 6<sup>th</sup> October (Herts Vets championship) <http://www.nhrraceentry.org.uk/index.php> and the Wolverton 5 mile race on 22<sup>nd</sup> November <http://mcs.open.ac.uk/mkac/w5info.htm>.
13. Finally, and by no means least, we all wish the ladies track and field team a massive GOOD LUCK in the EVAC final on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Give them your support!!!

**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

On 8<sup>th</sup> August Andy Prior completed the Emergency First Aid course. This now means we have nearly reached a 50% coverage with this form of first aid training within the coaching team. More significantly it means that we will have at least one coach who is emergency first aid trained within each of our training groups. Well done to Andy and the rest of the team!

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](mailto:chris.w.leigh@btinternet.com)

## The nights are drawing in!!!

Many of you will have already noticed during the later stages of our training sessions that the light is fading fast. Over the next few weeks we are going to see night time conditions during our training sessions, particularly on Tuesday evenings. This will mean that we will start to switch our training routes/areas to our more traditional autumn routes (I didn't use the word winter because that would be depressing!). We all also need to ensure that we are wearing bright/hi viz clothing to the evening training sessions so that you can be seen by other cycleway users. Flashing armbands are also a very cheap and effective way of complementing the hi viz clothing you wear. The club have a stock of the armbands as well as a range of suitable club tops. Please let the club kit team know and I am sure they can help you out!! Go to : <http://forum.fvspartans.org.uk/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?board=KitInfo> or e-mail [kit@fvspartans.org.uk](mailto:kit@fvspartans.org.uk)

This is also a timely point to read/re-read are now infamous (!) Be Safe, Be Seen and be a Spartan!!! <http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/2012/04/03/be-safe-be-seen-and-be-a-spartan/>

## Look out for the signs!!

Over the coming weeks and months you will gradually see a number of symbols appearing in the training session details when you use the club's training programme.

The club's training programme contains all of the session details for each of the club sessions whether you are interested in coming along to the Starter Group, a long slow Sunday run or want to know what an Angel is! The programme can be easily found by going to the club website and hovering on the club calendar link at the top of the page. This generates the training programme link option – just click on that and you are in!

The screenshot shows the website header with the club name and tagline 'UK's Best Running Club'. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Club, Members, Calendar, Races, Gallery, Forum, Contact Us, Site Map, and Old Website. A search bar and social media icons are also present. A dropdown menu is open under 'Calendar', showing 'Training Programme' and 'Club Races & Events'. A 'PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION' section features a 'CLICK HERE' button with a note about a £1 charge for online transactions. Below this, a 'RECENT TWEETS' section contains two tweets. The main content area features a 'ENTER OUR RACES HERE' banner and a large graphic for the 'Paul Maguire 5 mile race (incorp. Hert County Senior and Vets Champs)' on Sunday 23rd September 2012, with a 'SPORT:ON' logo and a 'CLICK HERE' button. A 'LATEST IMAGES' section is visible at the bottom left.

Once into the training programme you can select any 'event' within that programme for further details:

**FAIRLANDS VALLEY SPARTANS**  
UK's Best Running Club

HOME CLUB MEMBERS CALENDAR RACES GALLERY FORUM CONTACT US SITE MAP OLD WEBSITE

**FAIRLANDS VALLEY SPARTANS TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Chris Leigh – Head Coach  
07954 552024

Charlie Paterson – Assistant Head Coach  
07855 795325

Enjoy your running. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries concerning the training.

Example of notation used: 2 x (5 x 2 / 1 min) / 4 min or 5 min – 2 sets of 5 reps of 2 min effort, 1 min recovery with 4 to 5 min between sets.

Where there is more than one coach named for a session, the lead coach is named first.

Date	Session	Where	Time	Coach(es)	Detail
Tuesday 28th August 2012	Tuesday session - 3 min efforts	Marriotts School, Telford Ave, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 0AN, UK	7:00PM	Group 1 - Nick, Group 2 - Barbara and David C., Group 3 - Chris and Andy J., Group 4 - Graham Group 5 - Liam and Todd	<a href="#">Event</a>
Thursday 30th August 2012	Ossies Angels	Manton Rd, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4, UK	9:30AM	Tony Osborne	<a href="#">Event</a>
Thursday 30th August 2012	5K handicap	Marriotts School, Telford Ave, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 0AN, UK	7:00PM	Paul Holgate	<a href="#">Event</a>
Thursday 30th August		Marriotts School, Telford Ave, Stevenage	7:00PM		

This then expands the view so that you can see all of the details on the item – what the session is, who is coaching it and where to go for the session, including a map (usually including a google map to the venue).

We are now going to be including some additional symbols within each session view that better signpost the areas that the session is designed to help you with your running. A selection of these are shown below.

- Endurance
- Hill training
- Multi-terrain
- Improve your running strength
- Running technique
- Speed Endurance
- Improve your speed
- Tempo pace development

More details of each of these symbols and what they mean will be included in our packed Catch a Coach section of the website over the coming weeks. You can find this and much, much more at:

<http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/club/coaching/>

### Quote of the month

*“All glory comes from daring to begin”*

Eugene F Ware, author

### Tuesday training groups

Over the last month it has been really refreshing to see a number of runners moving up a training group on Tuesday, particularly between Group 3 and Group 4. This will undoubtedly stretch the runners but I am sure they will see improvements in their own running as they train with runners at a higher tempo and get the benefits from that move. Transitions such as this may seem quite challenging at first but persevere and after a few sessions it will be really worth it. It would be really good to see some of our quicker Group 2 runners now make the transition to Group 3 where I will be waiting with open arms for them! ☺

We want our training groups on Tuesdays to be relatively flexible so that you can move between groups to suit your own running objectives and level of fitness. This means movements up and down groups. Here is a reminder of the current group structure:

Group number	10K indicative race/run time	Typical total repetitions/efforts
Group 1 – red	57 minutes +	20-24 minutes
Group 2 – yellow	52 to 56 minutes	22-26 minutes
Group 3 – blue	46 to 51 minutes	25-30 minutes
Group 4 – green	42 – 45 minutes	28-32 minutes
Group 5 - black	Under 41 minutes	30-35 minutes

In addition to using the indicative times above, Paul Holgate also includes an indication of the training group you should be in within the monthly training plans he e-mails to each paid up member of the club.

There will be occasions where you may wish to drop down a group. This may include following a recent race or ahead of a forthcoming race, part of rehabilitation from injury or simply part of a short period where you want to reduce your training intensity (active recovery/rest). When you do this, however, please be mindful of the pace that that group will be expecting to run. For example, if you usually run in Group 4 and are a 43 minute 10K runner and drop into Group 3, please be prepared to reduce your training tempo so that it fits into the Group 3 target of 46 to 51 minute 10K running. Otherwise you will be defeating the object of dropping down a group.

If you are unsure about the training groups, please speak to one of the club coaches and they will also be able to advise you as to the most appropriate group for your own training objectives.

Enjoy the sessions!

Coach Leigh

### 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.**

## **A guide to.....the Out and Back tempo 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 Out and Back tempo session, and it is our session of the month!!

### What is the session?

The session consists of a '20:20' run. Runners run out following a defined route for 20 minutes at an effort level of 6-7 out of 10 where 10 is their race effort. This should feel like they can hold a conversation with the runner next to them albeit being a little breathless. After 20 minutes the runners then all turn (at whatever point they have got on the route) and follow the route back to where they started from but this time their running pace is tempo. This is an effort level of 8 out of 10. They should not be able to hold a conversation and probably only be able to say 1-2 words at a time. The aim is for runners to be able to run back in about 1 minute to 1.5 minutes quicker than they ran out.

### What are the benefits of completing the tempo session?

Tempo runs offer many advantages. Although your lactate threshold can be improved with shorter, faster intervals, tempo runs allow for a higher quantity of threshold training per workout, and at safer speeds. Since the pace of tempo runs is not as hard as other types of speed training, recovery is quicker and injury less likely. It's less stressful than intervals. Tempo running by its nature is controlled so it guards against the tendency to train as hard as you can. Tempo training will help you develop a feel for even pace (hence the term 'tempo') so you'll run more evenly in races.

You should be running hard enough for breathing to become faster but you should not be gasping for air. You should be able to think clearly and talk, but not in full sentences. You should be running in some discomfort but not so much so that it causes you to bring your run to an abrupt end. Tempo pace is usually approximately 15 to 30 seconds per mile slower than your 10K pace or 30 to 45 seconds slower than your 5K pace. If using a heart rate monitor the training should be at approximately 80-85% of maximum heart rate.

You won't get it right first time! Practice is the key until you find the pace that you can maintain throughout the tempo run that is hard enough for you to get the benefits in respect to your lactate threshold.

### 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 pace judgment, running technique and speed endurance.

### When should you do it?

**Come along to the next session on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September!!! It's the session of the month!**

## **The 5min/2min interval session**

A regular feature within our own training programme, runners in a University of Copenhagen study used the 5 mins on (effort)/2 min recovery interval session and seven weeks later found that they were running new PBs and had improved their VO2 max levels (the maximum amount of oxygen you can transport around your body – a key aerobic measure). As we keep on saying, our training programme is backed by science!!!!

## **Training for a half marathon?**

At this time of the year many Spartans are turning to one of the popular half marathons. Namely, Peterborough, St Neots or our own fabulous Stevenage half!

The club's training programme can be utilised to fully support your training objectives in this area. The Sunday

LSRs (long, slow runs) help to build the overall running endurance you will need to complete the 13.1 mile distance and the training runs in this area will offer slightly longer variations to help build up to the events. If you complement this with what is offered by the club on our core Tuesday and Thursday training sessions then you can be well prepared for a race of this distance.

The club's training programme is not a personal training schedule/programme. It offers a huge number and variation of sessions but is not designed for every runner to complete every session (physically not possible and you would be running every day but Wednesday and Friday if you did try it!). What it does offer are great sessions that will improve your running technique, speed, endurance, lactate threshold, tempo and race pace.....I could go on! But you need to think about how you are putting your own training together to meet your training/running objectives. The coaching team at the club can help give you advice about this and point you in the right direction. Just speak to one of them at training. You can also e-mail them at [coach@fvspartans.org.uk](mailto:coach@fvspartans.org.uk)

OK, so you are going to run a half. If you would like to meet others that are doing a similar thing to talk over your own training progress or simply want some advice on what you are doing, please come along to the Q and A/discussion session **after training on September 11<sup>th</sup>**. We will meet in the drama room after our training session (c 8:20pm). It is informal so you don't need to confirm you are coming or wear your best clothes!

In the meantime, why not have a look at the half marathon material in the Catch a Coach section of the website! <http://www.fvspartans.org.uk/club/coaching/>

See you on the 11<sup>th</sup>!



## **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