

Riverside Runners : Handicap (2021 and Beyond)

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of the Handicap Run is to provide you with a chance to measure your current form by comparing your time over the same course with that of previous months. It is also a competition in which members of all abilities can compete equally with each other regardless of sex, age or running performance. It is open to all fully paid-up members of the club aged over 18 on the day of the event.

The Handicap Run is not a race in the conventional sense. You don't have to be super fit or superfast to take part. The aim is to provide you with a measure of your current form, whether you're fit or unfit, a whippet or a tortoise, a new runner or a seasoned athlete.

Since resuming in 2021, the Handicap Run is normally during the second week of each month in the year from the Priory Park adjacent to the top gate on Rowley Road (by junction with Fydell Court PE19 1UJ). Because it is now self-administered using the app "MapRunF" runners can undertake the run when they want in the nominated week and furthermore do it as often during that week as they would like. The finish will be at the same place as the start.

2. The Rules of the Handicap

The Handicap Series starts in January and the Handicap Run takes place each month through to December. Handicap Times will be carried over from the previous month and will be adjusted throughout the season. If the Finishing Time is faster than the Handicap Time then the new Finishing Time will be the new Handicap Time. If the Finishing Time is slower than the Handicap Time, then the new Handicap Time will be increased by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the difference, subject to a maximum of 30 seconds per month. If the difference is greater than 10% of the Handicap Time, then no adjustment will be made to the Handicap Time.

For members competing in the Handicap Run for the first two instances no Handicap Time will be set and only one point can be earned for each run. The faster Finishing Time in these initial runs will become the Handicap Time for the next run. If the Finishing Time is judged not to be an accurate reflection of the member's current ability, then the Handicap Time will be set by the Organiser.

Points will be awarded each month based on Finishing Position. First place will receive 50pts, second place 45pts, third place 40pts, fourth place 35pts, fifth place 34pts, sixth place 33pts etc. Everyone who completes the course and posts a time will score a minimum of 1pt.

Additional points are available – after a competitor completed four Handicap Runs in a single year (not including time setting) every time a runner records a new fastest time on the course in the current year, they will receive 10 bonus points. As SB (Season's Best) times for the Handicap are based solely upon that year, no SB bonus can be earned for that runner's time in any calendar year until May at the earliest.

The series will be won by the person with the highest number of points from their best eight runs and all PB bonuses that they earned in the year. In the event of two or more members being equal on points at the end of the series, their position will be decided by the relative values of the eighth best scoring Handicap Run. If still level, then by the seventh best scoring run etc.

3. Handicap Route (This was slightly amended for resumption)

The route will be a standard 4.4 miles course, starting and finishing from adjacent to the top gate at Priory Park on Rowley Road (postcode PE19 1UJ). There is an online schematic of the route at : <https://www.plotaroute.com/route/939186> (Please note the schematic does not include the loop back into the park at the bottom of Priory Hill which must be undertaken. There is a detailed description of the route with photos as a separate single page document on the club website.)

Start adjacent to isolated tree between Covid Sign and Picnic Bench

Across Priory Park round “Turn Tree” to tarmac path then leave the park on path that emerges near the back of Heron Court.

Along tarmac footpath to Rowley Road and left down to bottom of Priory Hill, loop left into the park and emerge from the park at the emergency gate back onto Priory Hill then round to top of Longsands Road

Down Longsands Road turning right down footpath straight after Longsands School to the end of the refurbished element then into left Princess Drive and right to get to Kings Lane

Turn left into Kings Lane and then left again at the end up Cambridge Street

Follow the road past Spar around to the station and then turn left down the footpath to Longsands Road

Turn right up Longsands Road to the very top and then left to head down Priory Hill

Turn left in Rowley Road and then turn right, back along tarmac path and retrace route back into Priory Park, round “Turn Tree” and back to where you started at the tree.

There are not many rules but two are (and failure to observe will give a “DNF”) :

- 1. You must stay on the left hand pavement in direction of travel along Rowley Road at all times**
- 2. You must stay on right hand pavement in direction of travel on Longsands Road at all times**

4. Risk Assessment

The handicap poses no significant risks for the club or its members who take part when judged alongside normal training on and off-road. However it is recognised that there is a marginally different bias to the hazards than those normally encountered in training given that this is normally undertaken in race mode and therefore runners are reminded to take care crossing roads – principally crossing the end of Longsands Road between Kings Road and the Spar – and to be mindful of other users especially cyclists in some of the shared access areas.