

# Riverside Runners Senior Handicap : Resumption

## Background

The Handicap was set up in January 2010 and ran continuously until Lockdown meant that the last run was in February 2020. There had been 115 events and a few thousand runs by our members. Whilst it might have been possible to begin to recommence the Handicap using its previous format, there is currently no telling if there would not again be restrictions that cause it to be curtailed and so we now have a novel way to facilitate its operation again. Using a self-administered app on an iOS or Android phone, members will be able to get up and running again and enjoying the benefits of this activity, when it suits them.

It will continue as a points based event but where sex, age, existing fitness level etc are not discriminators. Set up as a light-hearted training run (a once a month tempo training run) it was held on evening in the month, in daylight or darkness, in warm, sunny conditions, or in bitterly cold pouring conditions. By its very nature it had to take place at a set prearranged time. Furthermore, because of its nature and needs, it did mean that it had to exclude some of our slower paced runners. Those days have gone and it is now open to all members (excluding juniors) and can be run at a time that suits the runner. We are holding a ten day *familiarisation period* to enable members get used to the app and the course and then going for it monthly from the second week in April. It will use the same course as operated since Sept 2019 with one very minor change. [See Detailed Course Description](#).

## How?

- Download “MapRun7” app to your phone.
- Register.
- Read anything you fancy from the associated website but nothing is essential.
- When you want to run the Handicap course, go to Select Event  
Down to UK  
Down to West Anglia
- Down to Riverside Runners
- Select “Riverside 2023 April Handicap” (this name will change slightly for each month but will be in the same place).

All that can be done in advance in the comfort of your home – even in the days before you want to run. The Handicap start is from near to the entrance to Priory Park off Rowley Road. Make sure you know the route and it is recommended that you are very familiar with the start point and the first turn. Both these points are trees that are described on the route map page and have green ribbons around their trunks at about 7ft off the ground (at the time of writing), everything after that is on paths / roads. The one change to the course is that at the bottom of Priory Hill you do not double back, but instead take a left into the park and come back up the side of the park to emerge onto Priory Hill at the emergency entrance gate just where the gradient picks up.

## When you are ready to run

- You will then see on the Menu Screen, under name – your name; and under select event – Riverside Runners Handicap Familiarisation PXAC.
- When you are going to tackle this, select “Go to Start”. You can do this when at home or when you are at Priory Park. The main thing to remember is to give your phone time to obtain a GPS signal before you get near the start / finish area. You will know if you have sufficient signal because your position will be shown by a red dot which moves as you do and the bar at the bottom of the screen will change from red to green. When you are happy you have the signal, you can start your approach and get going. The actual start is at tree roughly halfway between the Covid Sign and the Picnic Bench.
- You can take this at speed if you wish and have a flying start, the timer will automatically start as you approach (close to) the tree.

- Just carry on and do the course the same as normal but without the help, support and jeering from the marshals! No more buttons to press at all.
- Each time you pass a control point your phone will alert you. You don't need to do anything – but don't put your phone to sleep. With some phones this may be a problem and you may need to adjust or cancel your "Sleep" settings. If your phone does go into sleep mode, you may miss collecting a control point and therefore be disqualified.
- To maintain a decent GPS signal, it is recommended you carry your phone in your hand rather than have it in a bum bag etc. Even better than carrying it in your hand is one of those upper arm holders, but do make sure you put the phone in the right way up.
- Just as you approach / pass close to the same tree at the end your time will be recorded. Again, nothing to do at that stage.

Provided you stick to the course from the start to the finish, you'll have a time that will upload with no more input from you.

During the familiarisation period from now until Saturday 10 April, you can make as many practice runs at whatever pace you want. This is especially recommended if you have had a problem with your pacing, the route or the app itself. It is best if you are confident about all aspects before we start the competition proper again in the second full week of April.

The app will then be open during the second week of each month for the rest of the year. More detail about that and the scoring system will be published as the familiarisation week comes to a close.

### Advice

- About the app operation
  - Make sure your phone will not go to sleep
  - Make sure it can get a decent GPS signal
- About the course
  - Know the course before you start
  - Identify the two important trees (the start / finish tree and the first / last turning point tree) before you set the app to run
- Your run itself
  - Warm up before you tackle the Handicap
  - Press the "Go to Start" on the app from the immediate vicinity of the Covid sign at the entrance to Priory Park and get assurance you have an adequate GPS signal before proceeding
  - Then commence your run up towards the start tree from the sign listening for your phone indicating it has captured the start control when very close to the tree
  - If you go through this process close to the start or you do so and approach the tree in the wrong direction (from the interior of the park) your time may be compromised or your phone may never capture the start in the first instance
  - Your phone will bleat and vibrate as you go through the various GPS control points. You don't need to do anything – everything is now out of your control other than your run itself. Just take confidence from hearing the occasional trill.
  - Established Handicap runners, remember to continue to run to the very bottom of Priory Hill before doing a loop back parallel and out on to Priory Hill again
  - Do not cross and recross Rowley Road and Longsands Roads when on them seeking a shorter course. You will be penalised.

This is open to any and all of our senior paid up members. There is no restriction on pace any longer. You can choose when to do it and you can have several attempts. In the familiarisation phase, there is no need to try for your own fastest pace, rather use this period to gain confidence in your own ability, the use of the app and the course. Take care crossing the roads and do be an ambassador for the club – don't assume right of way and do please be polite. Finally, there is a public bin at the gates to the park but no toilets!