

STRIDERS NEWS

<http://www.stowmarketstriders.org.uk/>

Volume Five: Issue One

February 2004

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Do you have any news you would like to share with the rest of the club? Run any interesting races?

Let me have a few details and I will include it in the newsletter.

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WELCOME TO THIS BUMPER EDITION OF STRIDER'S NEWS.
I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT AND PAY HEED TO THE RUNNING TIPS AND ADVICE

FLORA LONDON MARATHON

At the last count we have thirteen (unlucky for some!!) Striders running in the London Marathon:

Les Basham	Ali Bunting	Rachel Champion
Sue Garrod	Andrew Green	Les King
Tracey Lee	Jeanne Lynch-Aird	Richard Marsden
Frank Moggan	Phil Rampley	Bob Ratliffe
	Alan Wells	

Good luck to you all. Read your free "cut out and keep" guide to preparing for and running a marathon – in this newsletter

Phil Rampley has booked the coach (and provisionally booked a second?). The cost for a space on the coach is £8 for members and £10 for non-members. Order forms to book places for runners and supporters are available at the club.
Book early to avoid disappointment

Tracey's Party

I'm sure you all know about this by now but just in case, here are the details again:

Onehouse Community Centre
Saturday 27th March

Dancing to "Luce"

Raffle and bar

Tickets are £4 each available from Tracey or Sue.

All proceeds to Anthony Nolan Trust

FIXTURES

7th March	Wymondham 10m
7th March	Wymondham 20m
14th March	Bildeston 10k
14th March	Bildeston Half Marathon
21 st March	Broadland 15 (Norwich)
28th March	Stowmarket Striders Joe Cox 10m (10m County Champs)
4th April	Bungay Marathon
9th April	Sudbury 5m fun run
18th April	LONDON MARATHON
9th May	Woodbridge 10k
23rd May	Jaffa 5 & 10m (5m County Champs)
28th May	Kirton Friday 5
4th June	Bury Friday 5
11th June	Jaffa Friday 5
13th June	City of Norwich Half Marathon
2nd July	Stowmarket Striders Friday 5
4th July	Newmarket 10k
11th July	Mutford Relays
5th Sept	Framlingham 10k
10th Oct	Martlesham 10k

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2004 championships will retain a same format as 2003 and will be run over six legs.

The legs will be held on the last Tuesday of each month between April and September.

Here are the dates for your diary:

- Leg 1: Tuesday 27th April 2004**
- Leg 2: Tuesday 25th May 2004**
- Leg 3: Tuesday 29th June 2004**
- Leg 4: Tuesday 27th July 2004**
- Leg 5: Tuesday 31st August 2004**
- Leg 6: Tuesday 28th September 2004**

Explanation of the Handicap System

The basic idea is to start runners off at staggered 15 second intervals so that all runners finish at the same time. This nearly always does not happen as some runners improve or have better days than others.

Points are awarded for finishing position and bonuses. The Strider with the highest accumulated score at the end of the year will be awarded the Club Championship. There will be a prize for the top Male and Female.

New runners will be given a scratch time and will be weighted for the first 6 runs to allow for their natural improvement in running for the first few months. This will mean that new runners who previously have been high contenders for previous club championships will not have a disproportionate advantage over longer term runners.

On top of this, there is Position Loading for those who finish 1st, 2nd or 3rd to spread the opportunities for other runners to finish 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

Points Scoring

Points are awarded in two categories, position and bonus.

Position points start simply at 20 for the winner, 19 for second place, 18 for third and so on down to a minimum of 1 point which everyone scores for completing a race.

Bonus points are awarded depending on how close a runner gets to their PB. If a runner equals or exceeds their PB, then a bonus is awarded.

The finishing times are aged-graded to a 5k time to ensure that veterans do not miss out on the bonus point awards.

Confused? This is the basic outline. There is more technical detail on the website but I don't think reading it will make it any clearer.

RESULTS

Woodbridge Cross Country 7th December 2003

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Sex	Name	Points	Time
13	13	Chris Starmer	105	35.34
14	14	Nick Stephens	104	35.43
23	23	Michael Jones	95	37.05
41	4	Tammy Jordan	59	38.30
60	55	Gordon Slack	63	41.32
63	56	Ben Whiting	62	42.10
69	62	Chris Oliver	56	42.31
70	63	Richard Fellingham	55	42.36
80	67	Colin Thomas		43.11
96	76	Laurence Forrest		45.02
101	21	Rachel Champion	42	45.28
102	22	Sue Garrod	41	45.29
108	83	Jim King		45.58
110	26	Sandie Pottage		46.15
111	27	Karen Goodwin		46.18
112	85	Richard Nash		46.19
122	93	Grayhame Fish		48.00
124	95	Glen Lee		48.19
132	33	Anne Fish		49.29
134	35	Ronel Van der Merwe		49.39
140	39	Jenny Relf		50.37
141	40	Jan Starmer		50.53
150	46	Maria Reynolds		53.24
152	48	Tracey Lee		53.57

There were 161 finishers.

Team: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
5	Men's	540
3=	Ladies	142
5	Overall	682

Team After 2 Events: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
5	Men's	1088
6	Ladies	242
5	Overall	1330

Bury Cross Country 21st December 2003

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Sex	Name	Points	Time
13	13	Chris Starmer	95	32.42
18	18	Nick Stephens	90	33.47
24	24	Michael Jones	84	34.41
37	35	Alistair Bunting	73	35.51
41	3	Tammy Jordan	49	36.15
50	46	Adrian Doig	62	37.13
58	53	Andrew Green	55	38.52
60	55	Gordon Slack	53	39.16
64	59	Colin Pitts		39.40
67	61	Ben Whiting		40.00
75	65	Colin Thomas		40.50
97	76	Richard Nash		43.17
98	21	Sue Garrod	31	43.27
100	22	Sandie Pottage	30	43.52
104	23	Ellen Broughton		44.38
106	82	Glenn Lee		44.51
112	86	Grayhame Fish		46.33
115	26	Anne Fish		47.07
123	32	Jan Starmer		49.21
126	91	Mike Goodwin		49.46
141	41	Tracey Lee		55.07

There were 142 finishers

Team: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
4	Men's	512
3	Ladies	110
4	Overall	622

Team After 2 Events: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
6	Men's	1600
4	Ladies	352
5	Overall	1952

Stowmarket Cross Country 25th January 2004

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Sex	Name	Points	Time
13	13	Nick Stephens	109	35:03
14	14	Chris Starmer	108	35:04
34	33	Ali Bunting	89	37:44
41	3	Tammy Jordan	56	38:31
53	50	Ben Whiting	72	40:03
54	51	Gordon Slack	71	40:07
59	55	Andrew Green	67	40:25
78	69	Chris Gladwell	53	42:52
85	12	Gail Sparkes	47	43:31
91	76	Rodger Sparkes		44:14
92	77	Richard Nash		44:20
96	81	Glenn Lee		44:35
97	16	Sue Garrod	43	44:38
98	17	Rachel Champion		44:42
126	99	Frank Moggan		48:51
129	101	Grayhame Fish		49:03
130	29	Anne Fish		49:09
139	33	Jenny Relf		50:41
143	107	Mike Goodwin		52:01
150	41	Jan Starmer		52:33
151	42	Tracey Lee		52:35
154	110	Stephen Clark		52:51

There were 161 finishers.

Team: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
6	Men's	569
3	Ladies	146
5	Overall	715

Team After 4 Events: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
6	Men's	2169
4	Ladies	498
5	Overall	2667

Well done everyone.

Bungay Cross Country 22nd February 2004

Pos	Sex	Name	Points	Time
7	7	Chris Starmer	109	33:19
11	11	Nick Stephens	105	33:32
40	38	Chris Oliver	78	36:52
42	3	Tammy Jordan	45	36:57
51	48	Gordon Slack	68	39:01
75	12	Gail Sparkes	36	41:55
80	67	Bernard Debney	49	42:27
91	74	Richard Nash	42	43:29
119	26	Anne Fish	22	48:10
120	94	Grayhame Fish	22	48:21
121	95	Mike Goodwin		48:26
130	29	Jan Starmer		49:43
134	30	Jenny Relf		51:53
138	33	Maria Reynolds		56:48

There were 144 finishers

Team: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
7	Men's	473
3	Ladies	103
7	Overall	576

Final Positions: (out of 12 teams)

Position	Team	Points
6	Men's	2642
4	Ladies	601
5	Overall	3243

Overall:

Tammy Jordan was second in the in the senior ladies category.

Anne Fish was first in the Vet 55 category.

Gordon Slack was second in the Men's Vet 55 category.

Jenny Relf, Jan Starmer, Ben Whiting, Richard Nash, Chris Starmer, Nick Stephens, Mike Goodwin, and Grayhame Fish all completed four races out of the series to be placed in the final individual results.

**West Stow Suffolk County
Championships
4th January 2004**

Men's Under 20's

Pos.	Name	Time
5	Ben Whiting	36:10

Men's Senior: (12km)

Pos.	Name	Time
8	Chris Starmer (Team A)	45:12
22	Michael Jones (Team A)	48:07
24	Martin Pottage (Team A)	48:23
30	Alastair Bunting (Team A)	50:36
35	Grant Molyneux (Team B)	51:51
37	Andrew Green (Team A)	52:21
41	Gordon Slack (Team B)	53:57
50	Colin Thomas (Team B)	57:53
52	Chris Gladwell (Team C)	58:43
53	Richard Nash (Team C)	58:48
56	Jim King (Team C)	1:00:38
58	Les Basham (Team C)	1:01:22
59	Les King (Team B)	1:01:29
60	Alan Wells (Team B)	1:02:46
61	Frank Moggan (Team C)	1:05:50

Out of 61 runners.

The team positions (out of 8 teams) are:

A Team 4th B Team 7th C Team 8th

Ladies: (6km)

Pos.	Name	Time
3	Tamara Jordon (Team A)	23:17
15	Ellen Broughton (Team B)	26:45
16	Sue Garrod (Team A)	27:24
19	Sandie Pottage (Team B)	27:34
20	Gail Sparkes (Team A)	27:38
21	Rachel Champion (Team A)	27:42
24	Ute Bride (Team B)	29:31
25	Anne Fish (Team C)	29:35
27	Heidi Bingham (Team B)	29:49
28	Kirsty Denwood (Team C)	30:10
29	Jan Starmer (Team C)	30:16
30	Tracey Lee (Team D)	30:18
31	Jenny Relf (Team C)	30:45

32	Maria Reynolds (Team D)	32:39
33	Katy Nash (Team D)	37:50

A Team 4th B Team 5th
C Team 6th D Team 7th

**Turkey Trot 10m
14th December 2003**

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Name	Time
63	Bob Ratliffe	1:15.08
109	Ronel Van der Merwe [3rd lady in age cat.]	1:26.29

There were 147 finishers.

**Snetterton 10k
14th December 2003**

This was a new race to the area organised by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), which given the distance from the sea seems on the face of it a little strange. The course was the Snetterton race circuit which was once a World War 2 US airbase so the expectation was the circuit would at least be flat. The circuit is 3.097 Km long so the race was three circuits and an extra 708 metres all on tarmac, no curbs or potholes.

The parking was excellent and facilities very good being geared for the races. Bags could be left in a holding area with a tag indicating your race number, in fact the organisers were clearly set up for more than the 90+ runners on the day. I kept looking round for Murray Walker but he wasn't to be seen (I would have settled for Suzy myself but don't tell Anne). Its strange running on a race circuit, even in the warm up I kept looking out for 150mph formulae Fords and Yamahas.

Anyway the start was the customary red and green lights and away we went without the smell of burning rubber, I didn't see who made it to the first bend, perhaps Chris Starmer did but wasn't saying. The race turned out to be more interesting than I thought it would. It was very 'open' and windy, however with the wind behind you we positively sailed along. Anne cut me up at the chicane but fortunately the gravel saved me from further injury and thanks to Daniel, Jo Anne and Daphne in the pits.

This ended up being a most enjoyable race and both Anne and I did PBs as did others. Jan Starmer did a PB of over 10 minutes, thinking she had just missed the 60 minutes she suddenly realised it was 50 minutes that she had just missed. The winners, when the organisers had tracked them down, were given Bubbly and something that looked like a horse's collar covered in leaves. (It's not surprising that Schumacher is difficult to live with if he has a house full of those). I got the impression they would have settled for a T-shirt or a water bottle, perhaps even an umbrella. We'll definitely consider running this event again next year, hope to see a few more Striders there. Footnote: the event is in Norfolk but you don't need a passport.

Grayhame Fish

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Name	Time
8	Chris Starmer	36.16
11	John Squirrel	38.20
32	Colin Thomas	44.15
47	Jim King	47.35
48	Grayhame Fish	47.54 [PB]
49	Anne Fish	48.04 [PB]
70	Jan Starmer	52.21 [PB]

There were 90 finishers.

Ely New Years Eve 10k 31st December 2003

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Name	Time
66	Chris Oliver	39:18

There were 461 finishers.

Wymondham New Years Day 10k 1st January 2004

A wet and miserable New Years Day at Wymondham, rain windy and in places signs of a wet slush that wasn't quite snow. Sportlink were in attendance with lots of offers to see in the 2004. The race start is almost 1 Km from the warm confines of the roomy headquarters and everyone was complaining about the cold.

Still, once the race was started all was forgotten (well almost). A very well marshalled race and cheerful marshals at that.

The course has a slight hill to start and more hills at 4 Km and 9 Km, the 9 Km one is particularly welcome!! This race is surprisingly well attended and good humoured - nothing like starting the New Year with a race to blow the cobwebs away. Anne and I ran together all the way, including the finish so it was so rewarding to see Anne's time posted at 20 odd seconds ahead of me!!! We both did 49 mins 42 seconds and Lorraine 54 mins 59 seconds.

Grayhame Fish

I was hoping that a few more from the club could have withheld from celebrating New Year's Eve for the sake of running in freezing rain in Norfolk. Now I know that to some people, Norfolk is like a foreign country, full of strange alien Norwich City supporters, but once you get there it is not that bad!

Despite the cold, the sleet and the brief hail storm at 7km, I actually enjoyed the run. Take note because I don't say this very often. As we all charged down the hill at 1km I was feeling great until a nice Bury Pacer informed everyone that we had to run back up it later.!

Later on at 9km I actually passed about 4 people going back up that hill, so perhaps I should have pushed a bit harder earlier on. Near the finish line the poor bloke in front had his friends screaming at him that I was coming up behind him as I attempted a sprint finish. My comment as I finished was that I could feel my belly button, but little else as the girl at the end tried to push a medal into my very numb hands. That said, it was a good turnout, and I'm sure we all felt sooo much better for not having hangovers!

Lorraine Phillips

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Name	Time
119	Anne Fish	49.42
120	Grayhame Fish	49.42
170	Lorraine Phillips	54.59

There were 212 finishers.

Bungay Black Dog New Year 10k 11th January 2004

A dry but windy day, the organisers were happy at such a large field of runners (95 finishers) its the most they have had for ages. Since the last time Grayhame let Anne go over the line first his official time was 22 seconds slower than Anne, this time he nipped in front. (always the Gentleman).

Grayhame Fish

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

Pos	Name	Time
15	Alistair Bunting	39.11
65	Grayhame Fish	50.29
66	Anne Fish	50.30

Bungay 10k & 20k 15th February 2004

The Stowmarket Striders results were:-

20k Race

Pos	Name	Time
13	Nick Stephens	1:15:34
46	Stuart Green	1:21:29
116	Bob Ratcliffe (PB)	1:31:22
117	Richard Fellingham	1:31:26
204	Joe Naughton	1:40:24
240	Rachel Champion	1:44:27
295	Denise Naughton	1:54:42

There were 364 finishers.

10k Race

Pos	Name	Time
13	Chris Starmer	38:34
14	Chris Oliver (PB)	38:37
24	Tammy Jordan (1 ST Lady)	39:34
44	Adrian Doig (PB)	41:45
64	Chris Gladwell	44:47
82	Adam Miller (PB)	46:00
88	Sandie Pottage	46:54
93	Gail Sparkes	47:33
126	Anne Fish [1st V55 Lady]	50:38
132	Grayhame Fish	51:10
143	Jane Fellingham-Boyce	52:22
144	Anne Fellingham	52:30

190	Ronel Van der Merwe	56:54
198	Rosemary Thurston	58:21

There were 264 finishers.

Gt Bentley 10 mile 22nd February 2004

Pos	Name	Time
96	Bob Ratcliffe	73.02
109	Chris Gladwell	73.31
125	Ronel van Der Merwe	89.11

I include all race results from the website and any others that I am told about.

If you have raced and it's not here – or you've set a PB and it's not here you haven't told me or Richard.
(We never make mistakes!)

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Congratulations to:

	MEN	LADIES
1 st	Andrew Green	Rachel Champion
2 nd	Les Basham	Tamara Jordan
3 rd	Peter Tricker	Karen Goodwin

See page 2 for details of this year's championship.

STRIDER OF THE YEAR

Male Strider of the Year: Peter Tricker

Female Strider of the Year: Tamara Jordan

Voting was close for Strider of the Year was close with a worthy mention going to Richard Fellingham, Andrew Green, Rachel Champion and Sue Garrod who narrowly missed out.

Running as a Group

It was raised at the AGM that on Thursday evenings one or two people have been left by the group to run alone through Stowmarket. Apart from the obvious security issues for lone runners, the club always prides itself on being a sociable club. When leaving the leisure centre please leave as a group. Also be aware of who is around you and try not to leave anyone running alone. Your help in this is very much appreciated.

Club Coaches & Beginners Training

As mentioned at the AGM, the club is proud to boast 3 coaches. For those who are not regulars, they are Richard Fellingham, Chris Starmer and Peter Tricker, all qualified to level 2 coaching per UK Athletics standards. The committee would like to hear from any other members who wish to become an athletic coach. As about half the club is female, a lady coach is being sought.

Peter Tricker is intending to hold beginner courses again this year starting in a few months. Peter will need help during these sessions and has suggested that he will help train any budding coaches during these beginner sessions. There is a Level 1 coaching course in Ipswich on the 15th August 2004 and will be fully funded by the club. If you are interested, please e-mail your interest to Richard Nash.

Annual Membership Subs & Membership Directory

In case our Club Secretary hasn't already collared you, the annual membership subscription of £12 is now due. David is also bringing round a membership renewal form. The purpose of this form is to ensure that the records the club hold on you are accurate and complete. There is also an option on the form where you can agree to have your name included in a membership directory. This membership directory is available to all other club members so that you may contact each other to arrange weekend runs or car share to races. So tick the box if you wish to be included. Contact David for any queries on this or on the membership fees.

Race Event Helpers Wanted – Joe Cox 10

Chris Chaplin and Chris Starmer are looking for people who are willing to shadow them and understand how to organise a race. The Chris's may not always be available on future races and

needs your help in assuring that all Strider races go smoothly.

Committee Meeting Minutes

It was raised at the AGM as to whether the minutes of the committee meetings would be made public and pinned to the notice board. As promised at the meeting, the committee have met and discussed this at length. The committee has decided not to make a copy of the minutes available on the web, newsletter or notice board. This is principally due to information contained within that may be misinterpreted without the benefit of being present at the meetings. However, the club rules do state that the minutes *“shall be open to the inspection of any member of the Club applying to the Secretary.”* Therefore if you wish to see a copy of the minutes, please contact David.

Treasurers Report & Accounts

A copy of the summary accounts can be seen on the website. See Bob Ratcliffe for further information.

Running Achievement Awards

Raised by Chris Oliver at the AGM, the idea is to have bronze, silver, gold, and diamond achievements for runners achieving age graded times at particular distances. Chris is in the process of putting this idea into a workable format. Watch this space.

Running Track

And finally... The committee is looking into convincing Mid Suffolk District Council that an all weather running track would be a great idea to replace the grass one behind the leisure centre. Richard Nash has already had a short meeting with a Stowmarket Town Councillor and there appears to be some support for the idea. The total cost of the project will be in the region of £500,000 which is a little out of the price range for the Stowmarket Striders Running Club. We are hoping for the support (for both the project and financially) of the Suffolk Athletics Development Committee, Suffolk County Athletics Association, UK Athletics, Stowmarket Town Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, the National Lottery or a Russian Oil Billionaire. If anyone has any ideas on how to help with this project, please send Richard Nash, Chairman, an e-mail.

HOW TO LOSE A STONE

Losing weight is a simple process, if difficult to adhere to. The best way to do it is through a combination of increased exercise (running is the most efficient calorie burner around) and sensible eating. Here are a few ways to meet that goal:

Keep a food diary. If you want to lose weight or eat more healthily try keeping a food diary for 3 or 4 days. Write down everything you eat and drink. The results might surprise you. It's easy to assume that you eat 5 portions of fruit/veg or drink 2 litres of water a day but this may not always be the case. Once it's down on paper you can see where you are eating too much or eating the wrong foods. People who keep a food diary are more likely to lose weight than those who don't.

Change your diet gradually. Don't cut out everything at once. Eating healthily doesn't mean cutting out all indulgences. You can still have a few treats.

Plan your meals in advance and do the shopping. This should stop you going to the chip shop or take-away when you have no food in the fridge.

Exercise is the major part of any weight loss plan and there are lots of ways to adapt your training to lose weight. You can run more miles per week, increase the intensity of your runs or add weight training. Regular fat burning exercise will make your body better at burning fat all day, not just when you exercise.

To lose weight you need to **burn more calories than you eat**. But, don't try to increase the rate of weight loss by drastically cutting back on what you eat as well as increasing your training. The fat stored around your body is energy waiting to be used, but your body will not turn to it unless you can create a calorie deficit. That occurs when the energy demands on your body through daily living and exercise become greater than the energy you are putting in to it as food. To shed a stone of fat you need a calorie deficit of 49,000 calories, which may sound like a huge number but works out at little more than 500 calories a day over a three-month period.

Running is one of the best sports for weight loss. A 12-stone man running at nine minutes/mile burns 500 calories in around 35 minutes. Your key fat burning session, however, is the long run, because you usually run for a long time, albeit at low intensity. Another great fat burning workout is the am/pm run. Go for a 20-30 minute run between supertime and bedtime; then, without eating in between, go for a second run for about 45 minutes the following morning.

However, taking in too few calories will cut the amount of energy you have to run which can cause your metabolism to slow down and increase the risk of injury, illness and exhaustion.

Eat little and often to avoid low blood sugar levels and tiredness. Make sure you have snacks readily available which are high in carbohydrates but low in fat, such as bagels, crispbreads, bananas and dried fruit. Keep them in your desk at work or in the car to avoid the temptation of snacking on high fat products like crisps and chocolate.

Right nutrients Any diet changes should compliment your exercise routine and the main objective of any diet is to get the right nutrients into the body prior to training sessions. Carbohydrates and fats give you your energy supply, whereas, protein is important for muscle and cell repair.

Timing is also important, but different for each person. In a nutshell carbohydrates need to be digested and turned into muscle glycogen ready for the session, about three hours before rigorous training as a general rule. A full stomach will prevent good training, as the fuel is not ready to be used. Protein can be eaten closer to training as it doesn't bloat your stomach too much.

Only eat when you are hungry and your body needs it. Your body can trick you into feeling hungry when, in fact, you are just dehydrated so if you drink enough fluid throughout the day you are likely to feel less food cravings. Running often makes us feel more hungry and therefore eat a lot more. Try to stop eating when you feel satisfied, not stuffed.

YOUR FREE “CUT OUT AND KEEP” GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR AND RUNNING A MARATHON

TRAINING - ARE YOU OVERDOING IT?

Your daily schedules are a training guide. They are not a routine carved in stone that has to be followed to the letter. It is possible to push too hard and to take on a training load greater than your body can cope with. If you feel tired all the time, it is possible you are training too hard, and in the long term that could lead to a marathon breakdown. Here are some of the other signs to watch out for:

1. HEAVY LEGS

Your legs are starting to lose their snap and speed. A run at eight-minute miling starts to feel like seven-minute miling, and every run starts to feel as though you're treading water. Depleted muscle glycogen could be the cause.

2. INCREASED PULSE RATE

Most runners already know that taking their pulse every morning is a good way of monitoring fitness. Just as a decreasing pulse rate is an indicator of improved fitness, sudden increases suggest a problem. Don't train on days when your pulse appears higher than normal.

3. SLEEP PROBLEMS

Sleep dysfunctions are a sign of over-stress. So, if you have trouble going to sleep, wake repeatedly during the night and have problems dragging yourself out of bed in the morning, think about temporarily cutting back on your training load.

4. SORE MUSCLES

Some muscle damage is inevitable during a heavy training regime, but if it persists and you find that your muscles are constantly stiff and sore, then you're probably not giving yourself enough recovery time.

5. FEAR OF TRAINING

Do you have trouble pushing yourself out of the door in the evening, do you keep putting training off until later in the day, and do you sit and stretch for longer and longer? These are all part of the psychological effects of overtraining.

TRAINING - BEATING THE BURNOUT

If you're suffering from mid-marathon training blues, here's how to put the spring back in your schedule

In the last few weeks of a marathon build-up, fatigue of body and mind can play strange tricks, and, at a time when you should be training your hardest, you can suddenly lose your enthusiasm.

If the thought of going out on a cold night for another hill session is unappealing and you dread your long Sunday run don't give up.

There are three ways round this: rest; change; or a race.

You need a rest if you really are getting over-tired. Treat yourself to a day off, a swim, or a massage, and make sure that you are eating enough carbohydrate. You should eat within an hour of a long or hard run because the muscles rebuild their fuel stores fastest at this time.

If boredom's your problem, make an effort to change your routine. Get away for the weekend, or recruit a new training partner. Find an event in a picturesque area and incorporate this into your schedule.

Races are quite different from training runs - and more fun, too. If you are a novice, entering an event will enable you to practice your pre-race routine. Get into the habit of packing your gear, making sure that you are prepared for both wet and cold weather. At the very least, try to do one 10K and one half-marathon as part of your build-up. Many people race every weekend.

Another way to rekindle your interest is to fantasise! What is your ultimate dream marathon? Could it become reality? To work out the feasibility of your fantasy coming true, multiply your best 10mile time by three - you can certainly run faster than that. Then multiply your best five-mile time by six - this too is a possibility. Now multiply your half-marathon PB by two and add ten per cent. This is definitely do-able. And if you're a strong endurance runner, with a good mileage background, you might even manage twice that half-marathon time plus five per cent.

These figures give you something to aim for - provided that you keep up your long runs. You can also challenge yourself over shorter distances. For example, if you're under 50, see if you can run 10K in fewer minutes than that figure. If you're over 35, can you run a half-marathon in less than twice your age?

Always keep in mind the event for which you're training, to remind yourself just what it is that you're working towards. Tailor-make your training to match that goal and keep your motivation high.

For instance, practice race pace on easy training days, when you have time to do a warm-up run and can then change into your racing shoes for a two or three-mile spin. Choose somewhere which has accurately measured miles or kilometres, preferably from a recent road race, or run your miles on a track. A continuous two mile run is more accurate than doing single miles, because in a single mile you tend to start and finish that little bit faster.

What keeps most of us going, though, is ambition, pride and self-respect. So look beyond your day-to-day training and think ahead to the big day. Always remember that what you will be able to do then depends on what you are doing now..

MARATHON STRATEGY

Adapted from "The Competitive Runner's Handbook" by Bob Glover and Shelly Glover

A marathon can be unforgiving. Start too fast or don't take proper fluids, for example, you blow your race. Not only do you suffer physically and mentally in order to make it to the finish line you cannot redeem yourself in another marathon in a week or two. Nor can you try again in a few days if you finish feeling you could have pushed harder and run a faster time.

Here are some strategic tips to help you reach your marathon goals:

Pacing

This is where many runners make a common mistake. You'll suffer for a long time if you do not pace wisely. You must combat three things, lactic acid accumulation, dehydration and glycogen depletion. These may work individually or in combination to affect your race. Most runners run at a pace that is about 95 to 97 percent of their lactic threshold pace. If you start too fast, or surge too quickly, you will exceed your threshold and waste glycogen supplies. You will also increase body heat, which can contribute to dehydration, which in turn increases heart rate and accelerates glycogen burning. Going out too fast can set you up for failure. Do not think you can build a time cushion by starting faster. This strategy usually backfires and can lead to a long struggle over the last few miles.

What's a good starting pace? Statistical studies show that runners starting a marathon at more than about 10 seconds a mile faster than their average pace slow significantly over the last 6 miles compared to those who run with even pacing or negative splits. Most experienced runners should start at their goal pace. Determine this from predicted times from build-up races and experience in previous marathons. Most fit runners race at a pace that is 1 to 1½ minutes per mile faster than their long run training pace.

Some runners benefit from starting slow (up to 10 seconds a mile) for the first 2 or 3 miles and then picking it up. Others prefer to start slightly faster (no more than 5 to 10 seconds) than goal pace in order to run more by equal effort. Some prefer running the first half of the race a minute or two slower than they will run the second half (negative splits). If you go out a bit too slow, you have adequate time to make up for it so it's better to err on the side of caution.

If it is a warm day, be prepared to start slower than your original goal pace. If starting with a friend or a group of friends, promise each other to keep the starting pace reasonable.

What about pacing by heart rate monitor? A good goal for runners who will be out there for over 3 1/2 hours is to start out at about 70 percent of maximum heart rate (MHR) for the first three miles and then gradually increase to about 80 percent by the finish. Faster runners should start out at 70 to 75 percent of MHR for the first 3 miles and gradually increase to about 85 percent by the finish. Some elites may be able to handle heart rates of 85 to 90 percent of MHR without exceeding their lactate threshold. These ranges take into consideration the phenomenon known as "cardiac drift"--a natural increase in heart rate with prolonged running.

Crowded Start

Due to crowded conditions in a field of 30,000 runners, it will take a few minutes just to reach the starting line and a mile or more to settle into your pace. Don't panic. Weaving through runners to get back lost time will waste energy. Stay calm. Ease through as best you can while gradually picking up the pace. Once you hit your intended rate of speed, settle into that rhythm. If, for example, your goal was an 8-minute opening mile and you hit 9:30, look to run the second mile in 8:00, not faster. Stay at this pace until you feel relaxed and in a groove. Now you have a choice to make, accept the time lost at the start or try to make some or all of it up. If you didn't lose too much time you can make it up by gradually quickening the pace. Aim to make up no more than 5 seconds or so per mile. At that rate, you get back a minute lost at the start over 12 miles. In a popular event like the London Marathon, you just need to accept the inevitable. Count on losing time at the start and factor that into your time goal.

Try looking at a slow start as a blessing, preventing going out too fast and setting up lots of runners to pass along the way. Make the best of it. A bad start doesn't mean your race is doomed to failure. You have a long way to go. Stay calm and get to work.

Watch Your Watch

Be prepared, keep an eye on your watch and don't panic if some mile markers or splits seem to be off. By regularly consulting a watch, you help yourself concentrate on the race; you keep in tune with your goal pace. Play a little game: See how close you can come to running mile after mile at the same pace. It's not always the same effort to run at the same pace. Be prepared for slower mile splits when running up hills or into head winds as well as faster times with downhill and tailwinds.

Walking

If you're training hasn't been sufficient, the weather is very hot, you're struggling on hills, or you're just having a bad day, take walk breaks if necessary. Most likely you won't be alone. Over the last few miles, walk breaks may be the key to surviving. Try alternating running with walking if your body just can't keep running. Better to finish than to stubbornly run until you can't take another step, or cause serious injury. But it's better still if you've trained and paced yourself properly and don't need to walk.

The First Few Miles

Test the Water. Ease into the race in terms of your both running pace and emotional involvement. Look at the first two miles as a warm-up run, shortening your race to 24 miles. Slow down gradually and remain calm if you find that your first mile or two are too quick.

Emotionally, stay as calm as possible. Save your mental energy for the second half of the race when you'll need it to convince your body to keep going. Try to get in with a pack of runners who are flowing comfortably and help each other. You have some room to let your mind wander, but don't let the pace slip. Don't be lured into chasing other runners if they're going too fast. Let them go. Most likely you'll catch up to them later - at your pace.

By 5 miles you should be into a good flow. From here to 10 miles is a good test. Hopefully, you'll feel comfortable at goal pace. But it's too early to get cocky! If your goal pace is already tough, you're in trouble. Either your goals were way higher than your fitness, the course or weather too difficult, or you're just having a bad day. Try slowing the pace slightly. Perhaps you'll feel better later in sufficient time to get back on pace. Stubbornly pushing ahead during the first half will lead to an even slower, more miserable second half. Look around you. You may still be doing well compared to your peers even if you're not able to hold your desired pace.

Halfway Analysis

This is a critical point psychologically for most runners. If you hit the halfway mark at or slightly ahead of goal time and feel pretty good, you get a mental lift. If you are a slightly behind schedule, don't panic. You may still be able to run a negative split and reach your goal. If you're on pace but struggling, or way off your mark, readjust your time goal. You can still finish in a respectable time if you keep your wits and keep working.

The Second Half

This is where the race begins. Where you need concentration and mental toughness as fatigue tries to capture you.

Concentrate on pace, good form, and the runners around you. Keep relaxed, and remain confident and goal - directed. Occasionally change form a little to provide relief: drop your arms to your sides for a few yards, thus using muscles differently. When you hit bad patches where you are physically and mentally fatigued (and you will) hang in there. Don't give in to periods of self-doubt and discomfort. Have faith in your training program. Think about all the work invested in the race. Accept discomfort. It's real. Use all of your mental resources to keep it from slowing you down

Move from runner to runner to help you maintain a good pace, or "hitch a ride" when a competitor goes by you. Don't be satisfied with just holding your place. Most likely many of the runners around you are slowing down. This presents a mirage. You think you're on pace but you may not be if you're slowing with them.

If you trained properly and do not feel ill or are not hampered by an injury, keep going. Dig down deep for extra strength. Everyone feels like quitting many times; you are not alone. No one said it would be easy. That's why so many people want to take on the marathon.

The Wall

This is mostly a myth if you are properly prepared. Most likely you will experience a taste of it somewhere around 20 miles - the approximate point where glycogen supplies run low. But if you trained well, tapered, carbo -loaded, didn't start too fast, and took in sports drinks since just before the start of the race you will pass through "the Wall" in reasonably good shape.

10K to Go

You pass two key mile markers in the marathon: halfway and 20 miles.

13.1 miles is half-way in distance, but the final 10K seems like half the race or more in effort. Running 20 miles is something you've done several times in training. You know you can do it. But few runners

have run 26.2 miles in training, nor should they. Here is the reason I recommend a few training runs of 22 to 23 miles. They put you on your feet for the approximate time period as your marathon, better preparing you physiologically and psychologically for the rigors of the last 10K of the marathon.

From here on it's a new race, a 10K. Of course, it isn't the same effort as starting a 10k race without already logging 20 long miles. But convince your mind that you are familiar with the 10K distance and use that now as a distance goal. Now, the mind must take over from the body. You have come this far and your body certainly will be tired. Use the willpower that forced you to train through heat, cold, rain, and snow. Keep pumping the arms and picking up the feet. Somehow, you will keep going forward if you can keep the arms and legs in motion.

Break up the course now mile-marker by mile-marker, street by street or lamp-post by lamp-post but keep knocking them off, counting down the miles to the finish line.

Work on the runners around you; use them to push or pull you along. Think in terms of time left until the finish. First get under the 30-minutes-to-go barrier, then 20, then 15, and finally 10: You know you can suffer for these amounts of time, which may seem less threatening than mileage to go.

Establish a time goal for the 25-mile mark and the time you'll need to run from there to the finish to meet your goal. It'll give you something to aim for. For example, if you're trying to average under 8-minutes per mile for the marathon, with even pacing you'll hit 25 miles in 3:20. That'll give you 10 minutes to get to the finish line. Hit that mark in 3:19, you'll have an extra minute to spare; arrive in 3:21, you'll have to push it in under 9 minutes. This mental game gives you a boost to help spur you to the finish.

The Finish

As you cross the 26-mile mark you have only 385 yards to go. Use the noise of the crowd and the spirit of the runners around you to give you one last push. Keep the push steady. Work the arms and lift the knees.

Keep this in mind as you're getting close to the finish: In marathons seconds don't count as much as minutes, but seconds can make the difference in being, for example, a 3:59 runner or at 4:00 runner. Run 3:59:59 and you can say you're a "3:59 runner." As you catch sight the digital clock over the finish, use it to pull you in to your personal victory. Don't forget to stop your watch when you cross the line but try to do it while not looking down or you will ruin photos of you finishing. Unbelievably, tired runners often forget to stop their watch, and then they don't remember the exact time that was on the finish clock.

Most importantly don't forget to congratulate yourself on a job well done.

ACHING ALL OVER

So after the marathon you'll feel great but by Sunday evening you'll be a little tired, but that's understandable. Then on Monday morning your legs are screaming at you, and you can barely walk! This is delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS).

DOMS is the pain, tenderness and stiffness that occurs in muscles a day or two after exercise. This soreness generally peaks 48-72 hours after exertion, then gradually diminishes.

The exact cause of DOMS is unknown. Lactic acid often mistakenly - gets the blame. Lactic acid does stimulate pain receptors during activity, but is removed quickly from the muscle once the activity stops - it's usually cleared after an hour or so.

A combination of factors are more likely to cause DOMS. Overuse causes inflammation or swelling in the muscle tissue; this reduces blood flow, which leads to muscle spasms. Spasms cause additional inflammation, which continues the cycle and can lead to structural damage to the tissue, hence the belated soreness.

Follow these simple tips and DOMS won't have you ruining that hard run for long:

- **Stand in cold water.** The restorative powers of cold water are well documented. Ice or cold water reduces inflammation, a cause of DOMS, so immersing your legs in cool pool, a cold bath, or even a rainwater barrel in the back garden, is well worth a try.
- **Give yourself the hot/cold shower treatment.** If you'd rather hop straight into a steaming, hot shower when you get home, try following it with a cold one. Start by spraying your legs with hot water for five minutes, and then turn off the heat for five minutes. Do this for 25 minutes (always ending with cold) as it expands and contracts the blood vessel, which helps to whisk away waste products without increasing inflammation.
- **Exercise.** The temptation after a hard race is to take a few days off. You might, though, actually recover faster if you do an easy run or some light, aerobic or cross training in the day following the race. A 25-minute jog is enough to flush the blood through your aching muscle and clean out some of the waste that builds up after an extended effort.
- **Massage.** Light massage gets your blood moving and breaks up scar tissue, which speeds proper healing.
- **Stretching.** DOMS can limit your joints' range of movement. Continue a programme of light stretching after your race to help keep you supple.

SPECTATOR GUIDE

(Originally produced in the newsletter a few years ago but I thought it could be worthwhile bringing it up again, and it fills a space).

Why is my marathoner acting funny before the Marathon?

After months of intense training, marathoners "taper" in the weeks immediately before the race, meaning that they cut back on mileage and intensity in order to ensure they'll be in top form on race day. This manifests itself in daily life as mood swings, excess energy, occasional irritability, and other unpleasantness. On top of that, the pre-marathon jitters set in, complete with dreams about missing the bus to the start, losing the Champion Chip, tripping just before the finish line or running such a slow time that they miss the coach home. All in all, your marathoner might not always be fun to be around. Be patient and supportive, just as you've been all along. Pre-marathon anxiety is actually a good sign - it means your marathoner's done everything right.

What nice things can I do for my marathoner in the days before the race?

Give massages, cook carbohydrate-rich meals, and tuck your marathoner in early. You can also sneak a nice surprise into your marathoner's race-day bag—a note, a photo, or a good luck charm that they'll come across when they get to the start on Marathon Morning.

What will I need during the marathon?

Definitely wear comfortable layers of clothes and comfortable shoes. Be sure you're prepared for all possible weather conditions - you'll be outdoors most of the day, and shouldn't have to suffer! And you will notice that rain more than your marathoner. Bring some money for snacks and transportation. Don't forget your camera and a watch, and your mobile phone to keep in touch with your marathoner after the race. A rucksack is probably your best option for carrying all this and more (see below).

What should I bring for my marathoner?

Snacks and beverages of their choosing, as well as anything they'll want for after the race. Find out exactly what that might be - the right flavour energy bar, the exact ripeness of banana, which fleece jacket. Some kind of pain-relief medication could come in handy (find out the right kind), as could plasters, Vaseline, extra socks, a hat, gloves, stretcher, wheel-chair etc etc.

What should I cheer?

Many marathoners wear their names on their shirts. This means they want you to cheer for them. Some suggestions:

"Go Strider!" (A bit corny, impersonal & American); "Way to go Strider!" (Even more corny, impersonal & American); "You're doing great Mary!" or "Keep it up Nick!" are good calls, (Change the name as appropriate). Marathoners will appreciate almost any words of encouragement (including "Looking good!" even if they're not). Just don't try to tell them it's all downhill from here (it isn't), or that they're almost there (unless you're in The Mall).

How can I see the Finish Line?

Well the only real way to see the finish line is on television! The chances of seeing your marathoner cross the line are, well, "Nil".

How will my marathoner and I find each other after the race?

The Reunion Area in Hyde Park is set up to reunite thousands of runners with their fans. It's a heaving mass of sweaty, knackered runners and tense spectators. To find your runner, you need to agree a really specific location from the map in the marathon magazine. Your marathoner will actually have an easier route to the finish than you will. You may have to fight through vast crowds or cross the course (which can be almost impossible). Mobile phones are handy in case you get held up – your marathoner won't want to stand around for ages waiting for you, nothing takes the edge off that feeling at the end of the marathon more than waiting for ages to tell someone about it. You could also meet at Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment – there will always be other Striders and spectators at this point.

Will my marathoner's moods return normal now?

After the race, your marathoner is likely to have runner's high for several days. They soak in the experience. Then they'll come down, and may even sink into the "what now?" state known as marathon depression. Help them to recover by setting new goals to work towards. A suggestion that they can now decorate the bathroom in their spare time should get them out running again. With the solid base of marathon training behind them they should be able to cruise the summer's 10ks and 5 milers.

What if I want to do the London Marathon?

This feeling, too, is normal, and you should go with it! Many spectators start out wondering how their friends could ever want to run 26.2 miles, and they end up so impressed and inspired that the next they know they're entering the ballot and reading training guides. It's called marathon fever, and it's highly contagious!