

Straggler Running Groups: Guidance for Leaders and Runners

The Stragglers have a number of runners who have completed the England Athletics Leadership in Running Fitness Course. Where possible groups will be led by one of these runners. Currently it is not possible to guarantee this, and we are continuing to encourage volunteers to lead groups. If there are regular leaders who have not completed the course, we would like to encourage them to consider doing so. It's one day, on a weekend, is enjoyable and rewarding, a great opportunity to develop your own running and, importantly, the cost of which will be covered by the club. Please speak to Kevin Price, Phil Davies or Kev Best if interested.

Below are a few points for both run leaders and those taking part in group runs to consider. This is so runners know what they can reasonably expect from their group leader, and leaders can be confident runners will support them.

Before the Run:

- Where possible a short warm up should be completed – consisting of mobility exercises such as take place on a Thursday evening;
- Start times of runs will be clearly advertised and those wishing to join should arrive in time – you are welcome to contact the group leader to inform them you are running late, but waiting will be at the discretion of the group leader;
- Groups should be kept to manageable sizes. Where groups are more than 10 runners, another experienced runner should volunteer to support the group leader.

Leaders will where possible:

- Ensure runs are achievable for all in the group;
- Make sure the distance and pace is explained to all runners before the start and, where changes need to be made, the leader will consult with the group to ensure needs are met;
- Nobody will be left behind – the needs of the slowest runner will always be considered, with faster runners doubling back where necessary;
- When regrouping, slower runners should be given time to recover if required;
- Carry a mobile phone, or make sure someone in the group has one;
- Check on everyone in the group to ensure they can keep with the advertised pace and distance;
- Note the number of runners at the start and finish and at any regrouping points;
- Ensure that a runner taken ill or injured is suitably supported and where necessary, accompanied back to the start, and make sure any incidents are reported.

Runners must:

- Wear high-vis clothing on dark evenings;
- Carry some form of ID/emergency contact details and bring appropriate medication if required;
- Inform the run leader of any injury or illness concerns;
- Ensure the run leader is informed if you are leaving the group at any point;
- If requested, wait/loop back to support slower runners;
- Warn other runners around you of potential hazards;
- Support each other and ensure nobody is left behind.

Where sessions are advertised as fast or tempo, there is flexibility in some of these guidelines, such as for doubling back, however this will be clearly outlined by whoever is leading the session so that all runners know the expectation of the group.