

## PADDOCK WOOD AC – WINTER TRAINING SURVEY 2011 – EVALUATION

Paddock Wood AC has a membership of just over 200 and around half of these are senior distance runners who attend and participate in regular training sessions. A smaller number also represent the club in local, area, national and international running events. There are 11 qualified coaches for the senior runners but only two are present at practically every session. There are a few issues regarding capacity and control of the numbers who report for training sessions and there is a need to review what we do and how we do it for the benefit and safety of the majority of those who attend.

The coaches agreed to devise and implement a survey and to invite all members to use the form to indicate their views regarding the current arrangements. Runners were requested to complete the survey to indicate their needs and to contribute their ideas in order to keep future winter training sessions meaningful and manageable. All of the questions were optional and the coaches agreed that they would not be offended by any constructive feedback received. All additional comments received have been included at the end of the survey.

The following is a summary of all responses to the survey handed out to the senior runners group and published on the club website during April 2011. **Total of 30 completed surveys were received.**

Participants ...

Male under 20: <b>01</b> , Senior: <b>02</b> , Over 35: <b>02</b> , Over 40: <b>03</b> , Over 50: <b>04</b> , Over 60: <b>01</b> , Over 70: <b>0</b>
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Female under 20: <b>01</b> , Senior: <b>03</b> , Over 35: <b>0</b> , Over 40: <b>04</b> , Over 50: <b>04</b> , Over 60: <b>05</b> , Over 70: <b>0</b>
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The age range of the participants was from under 20 to over 60. There were 13 men and 17 women taking part in the survey. The majority of replies were received from masters over 40 (21 replies).

### Question 1

It was encouraging to note that 20 runners (**66%**) saw themselves as either ambitious or competitive athletes compared to the other categories of health and fitness, social or supporter runners.

### Question 2

It was encouraging to note that 26 runners (**86%**) said the training provided was very good. A further three runners were kind enough to rate the present arrangements as excellent and no-one rated the training as less than good. This indicates a good level of satisfaction with the present arrangements.

### Question 3

Runners were asked to award eight different types of training session a score between zero and 3 for both the amount of enjoyment and the fitness benefit. Everyone seemed to grasp this concept and the total scores have been converted to an average for the purposes of this evaluation. The most popular sessions for enjoyment were Sustained Pace Run (2.53), followed by Pyramid Sessions and Speed Sessions (2.50). The most popular sessions for fitness benefit were Pyramid Sessions (2.76) followed by Hill Sessions and Speed Sessions (2.66). However, by combining both values the most popular sessions overall were Pyramid Sessions (5.26); Sustained Pace Runs and Speed Sessions (5.16) followed by Speed Endurance (4.99) and Hill Sessions (4.89). The least popular sessions overall were the Stamina/Recovery Run (4.66), Pace Judgement Run (4.46) and Self Timed Time Trial (4.22).

#### Question 4

Runners were asked to indicate sessions they would prefer more or less of and invited to propose new types of training sessions not currently included in the schedule. The most popular choices for increased frequency were Hill Sessions, Pyramid Sessions and Sustained Pace Run. The most popular choices for reduced frequency were Stamina/Recovery Run, Self Timed Time Trial, Sustained Pace Run and Pace Judgement Run. Suggestions for inclusion in future included circuit training, longer intervals, harder sessions, combination sessions and team or relay events.

#### Question 5

Runners were asked to indicate their preferences regarding future training arrangements. There were a total of 57 responses and 42 of those (**74%**) preferred to split into two or more groups according to ability and/or to add a steady run alternative to every session. Only 5 replies (**9%**) selected the option to stay as we are – we all want to train together. Other suggestions included appointing a designated coach for the slower runners and there was a request for a dedicated marathon/long distance coach.

#### Question 6

The final question asked runners to indicate their main interests in competition. An encouraging 90 responses were received, indicating an overwhelming desire to represent the club. The most popular choices were the Kent Road Race Grand Prix and Championships (19 replies) followed by the Kent Fitness Cross Country League (18) and the London Marathon and other long distance races (17). However, only 20 runners expressed any interest in representing Paddock Wood AC in Kent Cross Country Championships (11) and Area, Regional and National Championships (9) and there were only seven replies in favour of supporting the Kent Men's and Women's Cross Country League.

#### Additional Comments

Runners were invited to add any additional comments not already covered in the survey. A total of 23 (**78%**) of the surveys received had additional comments included. The comments are reproduced in full and have only been edited where necessary to ensure clarity. The majority add weight to the arguments in favour of splitting the group and offering an alternative steady run on each training night. A number of comments were received in relation to warming up and general timekeeping. Overall, the comments were very constructive and supportive of the efforts of the coaches. There were a number of useful suggestions that will now be considered and implemented where possible.

The coaches would like to thank the athletes for their time and trouble in completing the survey and for their efforts in training and competition throughout the year.

The full survey with collated responses follows this executive summary...

**Alan Newman, UKA Level 3 Performance Coach (Endurance); Fellow British Association for Physical Training**

**Richard Elliott, UKA Level 3 Performance Coach (Endurance, Conditioning)**

**20th May 2011**

### Question 1

I would describe myself as (tick just one statement that describes you best):

- (06) Ambitious athlete (keen to realise my ultimate potential, whatever that may be)
- (14) Competitive athlete (keen to do well but keeping my performance in perspective)
- (06) Health and fitness runner (keen on improving my fitness through running)
- (03) Social runner (keen to use running to meet friends and maintain my fitness)
- (01) Supporter runner (occasional runner who supports others)

### Question 2

I think the present training arrangements are (tick just one statement that applies to you):

- (03) Excellent (no change needed whatsoever)
- (26) Very good (but could be fine tuned)
- (01) Good (but in need of improvement)
- (00) Fair (but in need of a major rethink)
- (00) Poor (and in urgent need of review)

***NB: There will be opportunities later for you to suggest specific improvements.***

### Question 3

In the current winter training schedule we use eight different sessions over a four week cycle. Please score each type of training from 3 (highest value) to 0 (lowest value). Each value can be used more than once. Note it is acceptable for the scores to differ for personal enjoyment and fitness benefit:

Enjoyment of Session	Average	Fitness Benefit	Average
Sustained Pace Run	2.53	Sustained Pace Run	2.63
Stamina/Recovery Run	2.43	Stamina/Recovery Run	2.23
Hill Sessions	2.23	Hill Sessions	2.66
Pyramid Sessions	2.50	Pyramid Sessions	2.76
Speed Endurance	2.36	Speed Endurance	2.63
Self Timed Time Trial	1.96	Self Timed Time Trial	2.26
Pace Judgement Run	2.20	Pace Judgement Run	2.26
Speed Sessions	2.50	Speed Sessions	2.66

#### Question 4

If you feel there should be more of a particular type of training session (taken from the current eight types of session only) please indicate below together with which type of session/s you would reduce to allow this change:

Increase frequency of which sessions?	Reduce frequency of which sessions?
1. Hill Sessions (08)	1. Stamina/Recovery Run (06)
2. Pyramid Sessions (07)	2. Self Timed Time Trial (05)
3. Sustained Pace Run (05)	3. Sustained Pace Run (04)
4. Speed Sessions (03)	4. Pace Judgement Run (04)
5. Speed Endurance (03)	5. Pyramids (02)

If you feel there are any other types of training sessions not currently included in the winter schedule that should be added please list them here (together with any necessary description):

1. Some harder sessions e.g. pace judgement run (22mins) <u>plus</u> 2mls fast or 4mls steady run.
2. Circuit training plus a run. 3. Long intervals like 3x10mins or 3x8mins. 4. Team/relay events.

#### Question 5

On winter nights there can be 50 runners on the roads spread out over a considerable distance due to the wide range of ability levels we welcome in our friendly club. This represents a health and safety risk for the small number of coaches present. A general schedule cannot benefit all ability levels equally and not everyone is training for the same reason, event or activity. Therefore some will train at a greater intensity than others and some will be undertaking training that is not ideally suited to their personal requirements or preferences. How would you recommend we resolve this as the club continues to expand? Please tick no more than three solutions that you would prefer:

- (05) Stay as we are. We all want to train together
- (21) Split into two or more groups according to ability levels
- (21) Add a steady run alternative to every session so we can choose
- (07) Alternate one quality session with one steady run session each week
- (01) Keep the quality sessions going until Christmas; concentrate on mileage in the New Year
- (02) My suggestion is... (Complete below)

Designated coach for the slower ones looking to improve. Dedicated marathon / mileage coach.
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## Question 6

The main purpose of joining an Athletics Club is to compete. Which of the following do you support or you are willing to support with a good representation from the club (tick all that apply to you):

- (18) Kent Fitness Cross Country League
- (07) Kent Men's and Women's Cross Country League
- (11) Kent Men's, Women's and Masters Cross Country Championships
- (19) Kent Road Race Grand Prix and Championships
- (09) Area, Regional and National Road Race and Cross Country Championships
- (17) London Marathon / other marathons / long distance races
- (07) Indoor Track and Field Events
- (02) Other events... (Specify below)

Road or cross country relays. Southern or other track and field leagues. Other road races.
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### **SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED**

The popularity of the sessions I have attended suggests you are getting most things right so perhaps "if it ain't broke don't fix it" applies here.

A good balanced schedule exists – personally I would not like to see any great change.

Personally I feel quality sessions are easier done in the group environment and prefer the choice of either/both evenings to attend.

A steady run alternative would be of use if a reasonable number of the health and fitness/social runners requested it. Anybody coming back from injury/illness might then join this group earlier than when they could rejoin the "quality sessions" group.

I agree the main purpose of joining a club is to compete but feel too many of us compete on a personal level rather than commit to a series of races (Grand Prix, Cross Country, etc) as a Club team. Could we not prioritise at least one event series each season and give the Team Managers the support they deserve?

I think the winter (and summer) training should not get harder throughout the year. The programme and distances run in March should be the same in September.

I think we should warm up together as one group. The warm up needs more stretching and less shuttle runs, I am always worried about pulling a muscle on the shuttle runs. After the warm up, split into two groups for the session – we don't run with each other in the sessions anyway. Make the sessions slightly harder. I would like a summer programme – like we have in the winter and for the track. New runners should be paired off with existing members in the first two weeks.

Maybe the fitter/quicker runners could do longer or add to the pyramid, etc.

I would not favour the idea of having one session of each type each week as steady runs are easily done alone.

During the summer training sessions it would be nice to get out on time so then everyone benefits on completing the whole session. Just do a bit of stretching. None of the drill work we do as that takes up quite a bit of time.

Still the issue of there being runners of different levels and therefore I feel some of the sessions we do in winter especially need to be made longer for the more distance runners instead of us all doing the same. Also, now the summer schedule is here we need to get out on time or earlier so that everyone can do the session that's been planned. We only need to do some stretching before going out. It's frustrating sometimes when we run out of time and cannot finish the schedule.

Please keep the quality sessions – we can do mileage or whatever independently if we want. I have enormous respect and gratitude for our coaches, who give up their time to support us so selflessly. The schedules are carefully thought out, enjoyable and as challenging as we choose to make them. They clearly benefit us – you only have to look at the 'PB' beside so many names to see this. I hope things don't change too much – but appreciate the desire to go on trying to improve, if that's possible. Thank you very much.

In the summer maybe we could do some training that involves equal ability teams so that the teams have a mixture of abilities to try and make the teams equal. Relay races or something similar are good fun and build team bonding.

The publication of a summer Tuesday/Thursday training schedule is very useful – it is good to see a formal structure to training which, personally, I like. Once weekly speed/hill sessions, etc, are useful to keep going over summer training nights. The balance feels about right at present. The option to stay as we are (we all train together) may not be ideal for 'newcomers' to the club. Some of us already do a longer run at weekends – perhaps we can try to 'formalise' this for the club in general. Many thanks for doing what you do – it's much appreciated.

I personally cannot think of any way you can improve on the 'winter training' sessions – they work well and we all benefit – yes, there are often a large amount of runners present, but as we are all at different levels we get spaced out and frequently lapped ... but encouragement is given from the faster runners to the slower ones and 'vice versa' and that way provides a real 'club' atmosphere and adds to the enjoyment of the session. I fully appreciate all the time and effort put in by the coaches and love it all!

Some sessions that sprinters can adapt would be beneficial. Some members need to have sessions explained as many do not do the recoveries correctly; therefore they are not getting the full benefit.

Perhaps the runners that only wish to run to keep fit can form a group of their own?

This winter has been my first with a club and structured training so it is difficult to suggest what I think we should do more/less of along with any other types of training. Many thanks to the coaches for the winter training 2010/11; I certainly feel that I have improved over the past 6 months.

I would appreciate the opportunity to do circuit training in the hall to improve core muscles and stamina/fitness in a different way. Occasional team relay events? Teams split with good/slow runners in each so fairer.

The only problem (if we split into two or more groups according to ability levels) is if you are in between groups, i.e. faster than the slow group but not fast enough for the fast group!!

All in all, the coaches do a great job and the sessions are largely fun and good value in terms of what I get out of them. The winter training can be difficult due to the weather and the dark, but there is nothing you can do about that! Running round Paddock Wood streets can get a little boring... maybe vary the location of sessions – once a week in Pembury, or East Peckham?

Add a steady run alternative to every session so we can choose – the “slowies” are probably best suited to these sessions on their first year or so.

Warm ups – more stretching, less drills. Thank you to the coaches – very appreciative of all your hard work.

**Alan Newman, UKA Level 3 Performance Coach (Endurance); Fellow British Association for Physical Training**

**Richard Elliott, UKA Level 3 Performance Coach (Endurance, Conditioning)**