

Pentathlon Cup Competition 2015-16

Paddock Wood AC has supported participation in road running for many years through the well established Pentathlon Cup. This trophy is awarded annually to the best athlete over five different race distances through an age-grading system. Races can be run anywhere at anytime but results must be recorded to be included.

This season, from 1st September 2015, a few changes have been agreed by your Committee to enhance the competition. Miriam Dorrity is standing down as Pentathlon Cup co-ordinator and has passed the baton to John Tolhurst.

It has been agreed that the internationally recognised World Masters Athletics 2015 age-grading calculator will be used instead of the previous in-house system. This has a number of advantages but primarily it will save the administrator an enormous amount of time as all calculations will be fully computerised. It will also be possible for athletes to quickly assess their own performances and use the system to set realistic and achievable goals. It is hoped that in time this will lead to improved standards in all age-groups in line with the overall aims of the club's 'Raising the Bar' project.

The Pentathlon Cup guidelines have been published on the PWAC website together with a direct link to the WMA 2015 age-grading calculator. Please address any enquiries to John Tolhurst, Alan Newman or any Committee member but here are a few FAQs.

Q. Why change from the existing scoring system?

A. The existing system is not automated, takes up a huge amount of administrator time and excludes some athletes as the entry standard is quite high at 60% for Bronze 1, plus some athletes can score more than 100% at the top levels. We have lowered the entry standard to 35% and introduced a challenging new Platinum level to give our top competitors a target to aim for. As 100% is world record equivalent, adjusted for gender and age, we do not expect to see many scores in excess of 90%!

Q. Why are parkruns not included?

A. The PWAC Committee has decided that parkrun results will not be included because the events are officially a run not a race and the distances are not guaranteed to be completely accurate. Additionally, parkruns have their own excellent website with detailed statistics and the results are also shown on the PWAC website.

Q. Why does my parkrun age-grading look different to my WMA 2015 age-grading for 5k?

A. There are earlier WMA age-grading tables (2006, 2010) in use and some organisers have not yet adopted the latest version. Also parkruns use a tailored version for their age-grading results.

Q. Why is my age-grading slightly different to my friend's when we ran the same time and we are both in the over-40 category?

A. The WMA age-grading tables include factors for every single year of age as well as gender adjustments. Therefore, if two athletes achieve the same time the older athlete will always receive the higher score.

Q. Can I check my own age-grading for a variety of different distances?

A. Yes. This is one of the best features of the new system. You can now use the link to the WMA 2015 age-grading calculator and by putting in your age, gender and result for any distance you will immediately see your age-grading percentage. Another way to use the system is to enter an age-grading level you feel capable of (e.g: 75%) then go through all the distances to see what times are necessary to achieve that standard at a range of events.

Q. Why are my age-grading results different this year to last year?

A. No comparisons can be drawn between the bespoke PWAC system that was previously used and the WMA 2015 tables. The new scoring system is likely to produce a lower percentage but a higher standard (Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum). This is because in order to be fully inclusive yet sufficiently challenging the entry standard for Bronze 1 has been lowered to 35% and three new Platinum levels have been added from 80% to 90%.

Q. Where can I find the WMA 2015 tables to check my own results?

A. There will be a link to the WMA age-grading calculator on the club website: <http://www.howardgrubb.co.uk/athletics/wmalookup15.html>

Q. Do I have to do anything to be included in the competition?

A. Yes, you have to be a fully paid-up club member and race the relevant distances. Normally your results will be noted and published on the website but if one is missed you have one month to report the result yourself so that it can be included. Full details are available in the Pentathlon Cup guidelines.

We hope you enjoy the revised Pentathlon Cup competition.

Alan Newman and John Tolhurst