



AFTER FIVE MONTHS A REAL RACE

Still Flying

After five months some Fairlands Valley Spartans were able to compete in a real road race on Sunday. It was just down the road in St Albans.

There were 580 finishers but the start was superbly organised to comply with the latest Covid guidance. A result sheet was possible by the use of chip timing technology.

In wave one CRAIG WILSON was 67th with a brilliant 38 minutes 11 seconds. CHARLOTTE SMITH came storming in with a fantastic new personal best of 45 minutes 30 seconds for 202nd and DANNY SCANLON was 135th in 41 minutes 41 seconds.

There were some Spartan mishaps in wave two. After a really smooth start both occurred on a narrow and rough bit of pavement between kilometres 3 and 4. LIZ SMITH was going very well before she came to grief while JIM BROWN had covered the first two miles in 15 minutes 44 seconds before he did a pretty good superman impersonation but unfortunately without the special powers. Liz was picked up while Jim got up but slowed down a lot, particularly in the last kilometre, and walked over the line in 58:23 to be 146th in wave two.

Jim said, “Despite my tumble it was great to take part in a licensed event after so many weeks. The start format with the waves and ripples was unusual but showed what could be done while complying with the latest Covid guidance. It was a race and although we could not hang around and socialise, we kept our distance, we saw people we’ve not seen for a very long time.”

Virtually Flying For The Twelfth Time

Four Spartans joined 128 others for the twelfth virtual Fly 5K event.

Nick Kleanthous improved his 2020 time by six seconds to 25:37 (60th). Nicola Andersson was 83 rd in 27:59; Ken Jude 85th in 28:07 and Paul Holgate 106th in 31:52.

Not a Parkrun

Saturday saw six Spartans on the tenth (not) Stevenage ParkRun 5K.

In this virtual event, runners in different places at different times they were Nick Kleanthous 25:36; Marian Morley 26:45; Nicola Andersson 27:59; James McSweeney 28:43; Paul Jennings 29:40 and Paul Holgate 30:52.

A side effect of virtual racing is that you can be taking part in more than one event with the same run.

The Fairlands Valley Challenge Is Open

The Fairlands Valley Spartans off road challenge is up and running.

The Challenge is a virtual event this year and you can still run on a route you choose any day between now and Sunday 6th September 2020.

Just like the usual event you have multiple choices. They are 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, Marathon or 50k Ultra. You can RUN or WALK.

A difference from many of the virtual events is that at least 25% of your route must be off road.

The event ethos is that this is an individual challenge in a friendly non competitive environment and another difference is that on your route you must take eleven selfies, include a different item in the background of each. The initials of each item when put

together must spell out the word FVChallenge. You must abide by the current guidance on social distancing. All Entries are £12 (£10 for affiliated runners).

All finishers will receive a medal based on the Challenge banner. Go to www.fvchallenge.org.uk for more details and a link to the entry system.

Parkrun Roundup 22nd August 2020

Parkruns have restarted in some other countries but not yet in the UK.

Fairlands Valley Spartans and many others are looking forward to the 200th Stevenage Parkrun which will be the first local parkrun when the events can restart. The 199th parkrun was on Saturday 14th March. It'll be some party when they restart.

(Normally all the week's Spartan parkrun results can be found near the end of our release).

Dozens of events were cancelled in the Spring and Summer including the mass participation London Marathon but there are some glimmers of a return to "live" competition with entries being invited for events on 23rd August; 27th September; 4th October and 18th October amongst others.

Train Virtually With The Spartans

Despite the lack of races and coached club sessions the Spartans are keeping active even though they can only run in small groups and need to make sure they maintain the two metre separation from everyone else.

Brian White, the head coach, is publishing weekly training programmes for members to follow solo; many Spartans were almost marathon ready before lockdown and are relaxing with local runs from home to maintain fitness levels without over training.

Brian has also been organising a virtual relay for many weeks. This has taken the club to all four of Stevenage's twin towns and continues making its way home via the routes of

some of the world's famous marathons. The latest guidance is that people can run in small groups but socially distanced.

To join the Spartans visit www.fvspartans.org.uk now.

Coming Events

The Spartans are growing. At November 2019 FVS had 346 members, 177 women and 169 men – that's more than the previous year.

The Spartans are looking forward to a busy programme of races, social and training events when it is possible for events to start again, maybe in late August, including (please check as, obviously, race dates may change depending on government and UKA guidance):

- Fairlands Valley Challenge in Stevenage from 4th July until 6th September (VIRTUAL).
- Milton Keynes Marathon Weekend Re-Imagined. Run in MK between 6th and 19th September (CANCELLED).
- Peterborough Marathon on Sunday 13th September (CANCELLED).
- Brighton Marathon Weekend, Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September (CANCELLED).
- Stevenage 10K on Sunday 20th September (VIRTUAL EVENT).
- EMAC (Eastern Veterans) Track and Field League Final in Bedford on Saturday 26th September (CANCELLED).
- Hitchin 5K on Sunday 27th September (STILL ON at 1st August).
- Dorney Lake Marathon on Sunday 4th October (A real event and still on at 8th August).
- London Marathon on Sunday 4th October (VIRTUAL EVENT).
- Standalone 10K (including County veteran championships) on Sunday 4th October (CANCELLED).
- Great Eastern Run (half marathon) in Peterborough on Sunday 11th October (CANCELLED).

- **Great South Run 10 miles in Portsmouth on Sunday 18th October (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Bedford Autodrone Grand Prix 5K, 10K, half marathon, 16 miles, 20 miles and full marathon on Sunday 18th October (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Beachy Head Half Marathon on Sunday 18th October (NEW DATE. STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Chelmsford Marathon on Sunday 18th October (CANCELLED).**
- **Beachy Head Marathon on Saturday 24th October (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Hitchin 10K on Sunday 25th October (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Beachy Head 10K on Sunday 25th October (NEW DATE. STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Stevenage Half Marathon (including County senior championships) on Sunday 1st November (CANCELLED).**
- **Silverstone Half Marathon, 5K and 10K on Sunday 15th November (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **St. Neots Half Marathon on Sunday 15th November (CANCELLED).**
- **Hertfordshire Half Marathon at Knebworth House on Sunday 22nd November (STILL ON at 1st August).**
- **Bass Belle ten miles on Sunday 29th November (STILL ON at 1st August).**

Tables

Spartan Parkruns on Saturday 22nd August:

Full results for all Spartans will normally be listed below – back soon.

Join The Spartans

Live in or near Stevenage? Like running? Fairlands Valley Spartans is your local running club and is on the up! In June 2019 they were promoted to division one in the mid week road race league. At November 2019 FVS had 346 members, 177 women and 169 men – that's more than the previous year. The Spartans encourage participation by all. They have a varied training programme to suit those who want to run 5 kilometres through to

full marathons. It puts back into the sport by organising events such as the Stevenage Half Marathon, Fairlands Valley Challenge, the Relays in the Park and events for the Mid Week and Cross Country Leagues.

In “normal” times the Spartans weekday training sessions are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Go along to the new sports centre at Marriotts School – a Sports College, Brittain Way, Stevenage (SG2 8UT) at 7p.m. Up to five running groups go out on training nights – there will be one to suit you!

The Spartan Starter group starts from Marriotts at 7.30p.m. every Monday (except public holidays) and 7p.m. every Thursday.

Most long Sunday morning training sessions start 9a.m. sharp. Spartan track training sessions are held at Ridlins Athletics Track, Woodcock Road, Stevenage most Saturdays from 9.15a.m. There are events to enter every Sunday. Newcomers are very welcome – those who have not yet done very much running might prefer to start with a Thursday, Saturday or Monday session.

Watch out for when the regular training sessions and events start again.

Membership is only £28 per year for 2020/2021 which includes UKA affiliation. Concessions are available (£21.75). Membership forms are available on the Spartans website www.fvspartans.org.uk Please ask if you would like a paper copy. You can also join online.

If you want to know more about the Spartans please contact Jim Brown (0793 968 7509); Ken Jude (07783 597182); Claire Pullen 0790 001 6094 or visit their website www.fvspartans.org.uk

E N D S

More from Jim Brown (Press Officer) 0793 968 7509; Ken Jude 07783 597182 and 01438 816889 or Claire Pullen (Secretary) 0790 001 6094.

www.fvspartans.org.uk