



## **Stevenage Phoenix Run Leader Guidelines**

### **Background**

This document is designed to give our run leaders the background information and guidelines to lead out groups of runners in a safe and enjoyable manner. Following the contents of this document will ensure that the run leader and the club are protected by the insurance policy which is provided via the club's affiliation to the Association of Running Clubs (ARC).

As a club, we follow the guidance provided to us by ARC and this requires us to ensure we are satisfied that the run leader understands how to lead out a group of runners in a safe manner and is competent to do that. We do this by providing mentoring and briefings within the run leader groups rather than using expensive, 'one size fits all' courses.

### **Run leader guidelines**

These are mainly simple, common-sense steps which all run leaders should adhere to.

#### **Leader role**

- If you are the nominated run leader for the group, make sure that the group know you are leading and introduce yourself
- As the run leader you should be running well within your capabilities for that group so you are comfortable enough to observe other runners, deal with any risks etc. For example, if the group pace is advertised as 9 min/mile or faster you should be a runner who is capable of a steady run pace of 8:30 min/mile or better.
- If possible, appoint a 'leader buddy' within the group to help you manage the group and learn from you. They don't necessarily have to be a club run leader.
- At the beginning of the run you should explain to the group an overview of the route you will be using, any risks associated with that route (eg surface you will be running on, look out for unlit cyclists etc) and that runners must regroup on recovery periods so that the group stay together. Make sure that the faster runners within the group keep the group together by looping back to the back of the group on the recovery periods.
- As the run leader make sure you have access to a mobile phone within the group (ideally carrying one yourself) and set an example to the group in terms of wearing hi-viz and lights. You will also need to carry a whistle to signal to the group for re-grouping, stopping etc.
- Before you start the run, check everyone is well (not carrying an injury that will effect their run within your group). Ensure that they have mobilised (this is usually done within all groups together).

- Lead the group from the middle or the back, avoid leading from the front (where you can't see the rest of the group or anyone who is struggling). Try to only be at the front of the group during periods of recovery to ensure that runners are running slowly enough.
- Call out hazards as you approach them and encourage all other runners within the group to do the same. When running on country roads and a car is approaching (from in front or behind), give clear instructions to the group E.g 'car in front, stay left single file', 'car behind, stay left single file'. When running on the road in a group, the group should stay to the left with the lead and back runners acting as look outs. The group should only run on the right when going around a blind left bend.
- For the club's group fartlek sessions, the run uses a series of timed efforts and timed recoveries. The pattern of those efforts and recoveries are shown in the club's Team Up session booking. Some run leaders programme their watches with the timed patterns. This can make the timing process easier on the run but does take away any flexibility if the group have to stop/pause when encountering any hazards or delays.
- Make sure runners in the group let you know if they intend leaving the group before returning to the club. Do not allow people to go off alone. If necessary assign another runner in the group to return with them.

### Routes

- The club has a wide range of routes available in the routes and training session plans page of its website. Specifically, it has the winter and summer route options for each group within its speed endurance sessions.
- Do not under any circumstances try out an untried route with a runner who is new to the club or who has capabilities you are unsure of.
- Don't be persuaded by a member of your group to do a different route that you don't know.
- Circumstances may require you to make small tweaks to the route as you run it with the group and that is fine. Try to stick as close as possible to the advertised distance of the run.

### Road safety/cycleways

- Cross any roads as a group. Ask lead runners to wait at roads until the whole group is together.
- Use head torches and body lights.
- When re-grouping on cycleways, ensure that the group do this sensibly on the left hand side and are not spread across the whole cycleway.
- Run no more than two abreast when on cycleways following the normal conventions of the road. If passing a runner, pass on the right. Check over your shoulder before moving out.
- Encourage the group to look out for any other road or cycleway users as you run. At night time, look out for unlit obstacles and other unlit users such as cyclists without lights, pedestrians etc. make sure that the whole group are warned with a clear instruction.

### When something goes wrong

- If something happens such as a fall or an injury assess what action you need to take. If the fall creates an emergency situation then use your mobile phone to call the emergency services. They will guide you on the steps to take whilst waiting for assistance. You may then need to stay with the injured runner whilst another run leader or runner within the group continue the run. In the case of an injury with a runner, ensure that another runner within the group is assigned to return to base with that runner. Depending on circumstances, this may involve a slow run back, walking back or waiting with the runner whilst they get assistance to pick them up.
- Never allow an injured runner to remain alone.

### After the run

- During the warm down phase, encourage the group to run slowly enough. Stop them running back too fast.
- Ensure that the group use a range of static stretches when they get back to base (the club has a range of these on the website). If you have new runners in the group, demonstrate the main static stretches to them.
- Chat with your group and make sure they enjoyed the run. Ask what they enjoyed and what they didn't enjoy. Is there any feedback you have got that you need to share with any other run leaders in the club? Are any of them capable of running in a faster group or do they need to be running in a slower group. Have that conversation with them so they can get the best out of their next run.

**Run leader signature**

**Date**

**I have read the document 'safety guidance for endurance training group leaders' and the guidelines above and will follow them when leading club runs and other activities.**