

Covid-19 and Runners

We have been close to announcing Rotherham Harriers back open on a number of occasions recently, with the opening of the stadium as a flag saying 'back to normal'. The latest virus 'spikes' that affected Leicester and Oldham have seen Rotherham move in and out of the top ten with consequent disappointment.

In the meantime we have continued to get fitter and less deprived; that's good in a way but it's also dangerous. We have got perilously close to saying "We've been fine so far, just carry on what we are doing....." but it's a plan which could well end in tears. Here's why, and what we are doing about it.

Covid has not gone away. It really could spike again- or it could be with us for years. Late, badly handled and sometimes contradictory advice or directions from central government have not helped at all, and usually advice from England Athletics has been slow to arrive to pass on the nitty-gritty of what has been said. But UK and England Athletics have had the same problems we had, and consulting their insurers in depth before advising clubs has been the norm before they feel safe to allow England clubs to act.

We have now reached some clarity, and I will now explain our position for you. But bear in mind that things are always changing, and as England Athletics says, "new government announcements can override anything we say...".

There are some different factors and requirements in the case where our coaches train athletes, young or old, and where we run away from the stadium in organised groups. Some are in the detail of venue and how they interact, some are obvious. One unifying problem is the limit on number: 5 athletes to one coach; a maximum of six runners in a group.

Although we have pushed the envelope a bit, those number still apply.

Latest information is that if we establish and maintain a covid-secure environment, that number can be increased. Any number in principle, as far as out-of-stadium groups are concerned. I will explain that below, whilst Steve Gaines will do the same for coached groups.

One of the things we have to do is to capture from each runner in a club group a statement of their health (ie. that they are covid-free, as far as known) before each activity. We have to allow government TrackandTrace to use the stored data.

That could be a major roadblock in the process, except that we have prepared a WebApp which makes the job easy. We hope. In simple terms, you have to install the WebApp, check your data is right, then use it. It can be used direct from the website, or at your choice, on your mobile.

Get the WebApp →

1 Using your laptop, desktop or mobile:

Go to the home page of www.rotherhamharriers.org , Click the 'Covid

Secure' alert panel, the WebApp will run

You can run it from there each time or better, using mobile add it to your home screen (ie "add to home screen")

2 Input your username and password on the first screen. (These will come to you in a separate email soon. If you don't receive such an email, look in your spam folders and if need be, contact Pete H or website at rotherhamharriers.org for help)

3 Check that your email address, mobile number, and kin or emergency details are correct- if not update them straight away. (There is a good deal of missing or wrong data in our database especially for members of longer standing; and the newsletter list of email addresses is a separate table)

4 Every time you turn out to run or train all you need to do is log in, select 'change screens' and confirm the 5 choices then click 'Confirm'

You have to do that on the day that you train/run.

Further explanation will be in the second email, or via the website.

This is a digest of public information

What are the Dangers of Covid-19 to Runners and Trainees?

The disease can be trivial, but it can also cause lasting damage, and it kills people.

What are the special problems or reliefs for runners?

When actually running, they are clearly in a relatively safe position. They are in the open air, which is safer, and they rarely find themselves face-to-face, but side by side or even better, fore and aft. You can often separate by 2 metres (though nearer to one seems far more attractive)

What about racing?

Individual running was never compromised, we carried on without pause, even running more often.

But race starts and finishes are a huge problem and competitive running looks doomed to be last of all to return.

Doesn't sound too bad?

No, but the worst dangers are before and after. Car sharing is NOT ADVISED and meeting in poor socially-distanced-places before running, or after, is a major concern.

How many can we have in a group? And are there any exceptions?

ONLY SIX. And YES, possibly (see below)

What do I have to do if I test positive for Covid?

You will be contacted by the testers; you have to respond to their queries and list your co-runners with their contact details. You have to inform UK Athletics <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/health-safety/covid-19-form/>

And you have to SELF-ISOLATE for TWO WEEKS.

And what if someone in my group tests positive?

You will then be contacted by TrackAndTrace and it is possible that you also will have to SELF-ISOLATE for TWO WEEKS.

COVID 19 FORM

Indicates required fields

Covid 19 Report Form 2020

Personal Details of individual testing positive for Covid 19

Surname

Forenames

Age

Club

Address

Post Code

Telephone

Email

Further Treatment or condition?

Date of positive test

Have you attended/taken part in a UKA event/club session etc within 48hrs of this test

yes

no

If yes, please provide details, date and location

I understand that I must not attend club or events at this time

Acknowledged

Home Territory

Select an item

Submit Reset

More than Six in a Group? Enter Covid-secure environments.

Obviously after consulting their legal advisers, UKA announced that establishing a Covid-Secure Environment would allow running groups OF ANY SIZE. There are CONDITIONS, STANDARDS must be met. (This explanation is made in the context of applying to RHAC)

1..COVID-19 coordinator is in place

Steve Gaines is our coordinator

2..A venue/ environment must develop a COVID action plan and risk assessments.

a. a COVID-secure environment can be any environment. It could be a track, indoor sports hall (25th July onwards), open space, such as a park, fell, trail or road.

Steve has written a general risk assessment which extends to specifics in terms of using the stadium (when available) and coaching areas, Pete Humphries has appended considerations for using areas more remote from Herringthorpe

b. An action plan is a document that outlines the process you are following to make your venue and activity COVID-secure, and would detail information such as the owner (COVID-Coordinator), risk assessments, tracking protocol and communication plans with all members and participants.

As in part (a), the documents have been passed on to and accepted by RMBC officers

3..All activity must comply with Government guidance around social distancing before, during and after activity.

The requirement is still for 2-metre spacing unless for some reason not achievable, in which case it is 1 metre. But it is not to be dismissed. This has lately been identified as a key cause of local Covid spikes

4..All clubs and coaches and event providers must capture pre-activity health questionnaires, including participant contact details which can be shared upon request with the government's TrackandTrace initiative

a. This could be through existing club membership forms, the RunTogether platform, updates to booking /forms or sign in processes which we would advise all members complete on a regular basis anyway.

b. As part of the club COVID action plan you should ensure any member or participant who has attended a session and subsequently tested positive for COVID completes the UKA COVID-19 tracking form

We ask everyone involved in running or training/coaching to assist by getting and always using the Covid WebApp which is available on the RHAC website. We have agreed that TrackAndTrace personnel can share the information that you provide to it.

5..Clubs, coaches, and event managers must ensure everyone at the session maintains good hygiene and that provisions are in place to allow for this.

This is not so applicable to out-of-stadium runners who are currently acting completely out of doors

6..Sessions that include children and young people under the age of 18 should be meticulously planned to ensure their needs are catered for. Young people sessions should have no more than 15 athletes in attendance. If there are more than 12 young people in any group you will need at least 2 coaches/ leaders to meet 1:12 coach/ leader ratio.

It is not common for us to consider under-18 members in out-of-stadium groups. We have taken the view that if the run leader accepts it they can take part but only running WITH, and under the sole responsibility, of their parent or guardian

Consequences for groups, runners and leaders

If the requirements are met group size is unlimited. In reality it will be limited by various factors, each of which might make adherence to the requirements more and more difficult. On the whole we are looking toward more flexibility in each of our fast, slow, and medium-paced groups to all such as 7-10 runners (which was fairly typical before the pandemic started)

There will be some **stipulations from RHAC** in addition to those above.

The main ones might be that the organiser of any running group must limit their group to SIX IN TOTAL unless they agree to adopt the Covid-secure clauses, including risk-assessing the intended route, consideration of emergency assistance, ensuring the compliance of other runners (especially distancing and health check declaration).

Bearing in mind that insurance will be in place for those involved in a covid-secure run, it has to be a run which is recognised as a RH activity- which raises questions about the personnel, the venues, the day and timing of the event, the accessibility of the event to general RH members etc etc

All of this is flagged for discussion.

Because anything happening on such a run will be ultimately backed by England Athletics (to the tune of up to £10,000,000), and difficulties in tracing or tracking will largely be handled by RHAC