

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR CLUB ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING COVID-19 SPECIFIC RISKS

Introduction

This risk assessment includes risks to training in all settings taking place at the club, but goes on to consider the handling of Covid-19 specific risks applicable to road runs, grass and track sessions. Some of these risks are common across the various settings but others are specific.

General Risk Assessment

a) Road

This includes Wednesday evening runs which are exclusively on road in the winter months but include off road sections such as local parks and trails through woodland during the summer months.

Risks arise from weather conditions, difficult ground conditions, avoiding collisions with pedestrians and traffic accidents.

Weather

Risks can arise as a result of rain, snow and ice. Heavy rain can result in difficult conditions, particularly on off road sections, while ice and snow can be dangerous particularly on pavements. Mitigation measures include verbal warnings given before runs to avoid particular areas or take care, particularly on wooded trails, choice of appropriate footwear and in certain circumstances where there is ice or snow, cancelling runs or switching to the grass fields outside the clubhouse.

Pedestrians

A number of Wednesday night runs go through busy streets, for example past shops and restaurants. To mitigate these risks, runners are asked to be polite at all times, give pedestrians a wide berth, slowing down where necessary, but

at the same time taking extreme care when moving out into the road.

Traffic

With road running, traffic accidents are a critical, though fortunately, rare hazard. These are mitigated through choice of routes whereby major road crossings are where there are traffic lights or zebra crossings. High visibility clothing such as jackets are encouraged during the winter months.

b) Grass sessions

These include grass sessions taking place on Tuesdays and Thursdays and in some cases these may be combined with track sessions. These take place in fields in the Dulwich area as well as a number of parks in south east London.

Risks can arise as a result of ground conditions and interface with other park users.

Ground conditions

After heavy rain, particularly in the winter months, grass areas can become muddy and slippery. Mitigation measures include choice of parks and areas within parks that are better drained, and wearing of appropriate footwear, such as trail shoes or cross country spikes. A specific risk in dry summer conditions can arise from rutted or cracked ground and holes in the ground concealed by the grass. Mitigation measures include a slow paced warm-up ahead of the session, with marking of concealed holes with sticks and verbal warnings, where necessary.

Other park users

Parks can be busy particularly during the summer months, resulting in issues with other park users. The main mitigation is appropriate choice of venue to avoid areas frequented by other park users. Those taking part in sessions are asked to be polite

and give other park users a wide berth. With the large number of parks in south east London this has rarely been a problem in practice.

c) Track Sessions

Track sessions usually take place on a Tuesday evening, but may be arranged for other days of the week. Risks arise from interfaces with other users of the track, the condition of the track and weather conditions.

Other track users

Other clubs as well as individuals are often using the track at the same time. It is the responsibility primarily of coaches to ensure adequate spacing between groups but also of runners to be aware during warm-ups, for example. Good lane discipline should be followed, with care taken in switching between lanes. In particular where there are large mixed ability groups on the track, it is important that runners of similar pace should start together, and not too far ahead. The size of groups of mixed ability has caused logistical problems, and in future steps will be taken to reduce the size of groups training, for example by staggering start times.

Condition of track

A well maintained track is used for winter sessions, but the track used in the summer is in poorer condition. This risk can be mitigated by using the track only for a limited period with most of the session on the surrounding grass, and by limiting the numbers on the track at any one time, so that only the inside lanes which are in better condition are used.

Weather

Rain, ice and snow can make tracks unsafe. In addition to use of appropriate footwear and taking care on bends, these risks can be mitigated by switching training to the grass area inside

the track or cancelling sessions, where tracks have not already been closed.

COVID-19 SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

This covers the same three settings operating in training groups of up to 6, allowed under the current rules. The additional hazard relates to spreading and transmission of Covid-19 through contact on surfaces and through airborne transmission by an infected person. To mitigate these risks in all three settings, it is necessary to maintain social distancing between both runners and members of the public, with runners keeping at least one metre apart at all times, and to maintain good hygiene with hand washing where necessary..

To mitigate the risks associated with injuries or illnesses that may occur during training sessions, at least one member of each training group should carry a mobile phone, or have one close to hand, in order to contact the emergency services, where necessary.

This Covid-19 specific advice is subject to update in the light of changes to Government regulations and new advice from England Athletics.

a) Road

Meeting points

During current restrictions Wednesday night sessions will no longer take place en masse starting from the club but groups of up to 6 of similar pace will start from different local venues. It will be important to maintain social distancing at meeting points with other runners and members of the public.

Routes

Routes including pinch points and busy areas, for example where there are shops and restaurants should be avoided, as well as narrow pavements. Where possible parks should be

used, keeping on the grass rather than narrow paths, but ensuring that social distancing is maintained between runners and the members of the public, for example on narrow paths through wooded areas. This means that group leaders have discretion and should not automatically follow the Wednesday route published in Shorts.

Groups

Runners in individual groups should stick together and avoid individual runners becoming isolated to mitigate risks arising in the event of injuries or accidents.

b) Grass

Choice of venue

With more members of the general public using parks at the present time and some private fields temporarily open to the general public, quieter venues that avoid any conflicts with members of the public, including children on bikes and dog walkers, should be used. These include the fields outside the clubhouse and other fields in the Dulwich area open to the public, but not busy, as well as the larger parks where space is not at a premium. The fields and track where normal summer training takes place are currently open to the public and busy at certain times. These may be suitable for a small group in the evening but it is important to maintain social distancing and take action to avoid accidents.

Condition of grass

During the summer months this is usually not an issue, but can be after heavy rain, in which it will be necessary to use alternative venues or part of the same fields where drainage is better, as well as using appropriate footwear. This becomes more of an issue in the winter months, but fortunately in south east we have a range of fields and parks available, with a number having good drainage. The same applies on rutted and

cracked ground during the summer months as indicated in the general risk assessment.

c)Track Sessions

Social distancing

In addition to the general risks associated with track sessions, described above, it is necessary to ensure that social distancing is observed at the start, during and at the end of the sessions, with no more than 6 runners in groups. Where total numbers exceed 6, start times can be staggered with groups divided up. With track as opposed to field training, handling of equipment should not be an issue, but where benches are used to place surplus clothing or bikes have to be secured, hand sanitisation is recommended.

Choice of venue

Tracks in a poor state of repair should be avoided, where possible, to minimise the risk of injuries, as well as tracks used by members of the public, including children on bikes. For these reasons the track at Edward Alleyn Sports Ground is currently being used by some groups for track training in preference to the Dulwich College track which is currently open to the public and is in poor condition.

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