

HVR Track Group Guidelines (Updated for Phase I, 2013)

Introduction

2013 marks the tenth year that the Helena Vigilante Runners (HVR) has hosted "Tuesday at Noon" interval workouts. These training sessions begin in mid-March and continue through the end of October. The workouts have been a positive experience for many Helena-area athletes, offering an excellent opportunity to train among friendly and supportive runners. The basic structure divides the year into 3 "phases":

- Phase I -- spring training, culminating with the Governor's Cup event (6/8/13): <http://www.govcupmt.com/>
- Phase II -- summer training, culminating with the "Vig Scrimmage" one-mile time trial (8/20/13): <http://vigilanterunning.org/track/results.php>
- Phase III -- fall training, culminating with the Montana Cup race (11/2/13): <http://www.montanacup.com/>

At the beginning of each phase, a calendar is circulated with the workout schedule and a list of races that some of the runners may be participating in. (These are gathered mostly from <http://www.runmt.com/> and <http://406running.com/>.) In addition, the group occasionally meets for Speaking of Running lectures, community service projects, and social events. For more information on the Helena Vigilante Runners, please visit the HVR website at <http://vigilanterunning.org/>

Listserv

Communication is facilitated by the "vig" (rhymes with "ridge") email listserv. The listserv is a member-benefit of the club. Helena-area runners interested in joining, should send a request to pljudge@bresnan.net

Once enrolled, members may post messages directly to the list (for distribution to its roughly 200 members) simply by sending an email addressed to vig@npogroups.org. (But note that the message must originate from the exact email address with which the member is subscribed.)

Messages should be non-commercial in nature, and confined to running-related information relevant to the group. As a courtesy to other subscribers, members are encouraged to be mindful of the overall quantity (and quality!) of emails. It's unfortunate when subscribers start un-enrolling because they feel overloaded. For those who do decide to drop (for whatever reason), they should simply follow the instructions appended at the bottom of each message that comes through the list.

Each week, specific information about the upcoming workout is distributed on the listserv. (Note that many of the workout descriptions contain information about "course records," but that these are kept primarily as fitness reference points & historical novelties. Workouts should be approached with a serious effort, but generally should not be "raced." Those runners who are interested in going after a "record" (either for fastest single interval or fastest average) must complete the

full workout in order to be eligible. Records may also be broken with virtual workouts.).

In addition to communicating workout descriptions, the listserv is used to inform the community about upcoming events, news items, etc. One frequent use is a "Call for Volunteers." **All HVR runners are encouraged to volunteer for at least one race or HVR event per year.**

Note that the running club has a couple of other listservs:

- The HURL list (Helena Ultra Runners League) is dedicated to ultra-marathoners & endurance trail runners:

<http://npogroups.org/lists/info/hurl>

Contact Alan Wintersteen at alan.wintersteen@gmail.com for more information.

- The H4 list (Helena Hash House Harriers) is facilitated by Russ Gates, who can be contacted at russgates85@gmail.com

Track Guidelines

- Roughly half of the workouts take place on the all-weather track at Vigilante Stadium, next to Helena Middle School on north Rodney Street. The "off-track" workouts take place at various locations around town.
- Unless otherwise noticed, intervals begin at 12:15 sharp on Tuesdays.
- Runners should be warmed up and ready to go by that time -- a good warm up would include some stretching, 1-2 miles of easy jogging, and 4 x 100 m strides (strides are accelerators to prepare the body for the faster-pace of the intervals).
- Also important is a proper warm-down -- 1-2 easy miles, and some gentle stretching would be good.
- The training schedule assumes a basic level of fitness & running-specific conditioning (runners should be at a level where they can comfortably run 40-60 minutes before joining the group). The program is designed to help fairly serious runners reach their competitive goals. Generally, each "phase" begins with longer, relatively slower, strength-building intervals and then transitions into some faster, sharpening workouts prior to some of the bigger races.
- In other words, these workouts may not be appropriate for everyone. Each runner has the responsibility of modifying the workouts to match his or her own conditioning and goals. For example, runners might choose to do an "every other interval" type workout, or run some of the intervals at an easier pace, or complete just the first half of a workout.
- Note also that the workouts are designed primarily for 5k-10k race distances, but also produce good results at the "shoulder distances" of 1 mile and half-marathon. Runners are encouraged to modify the workouts to meet their specific training and racing goals.
- The group is usually divided into 3 smaller groups of runners who are closer in ability to each other, to make sure that everyone gets an appropriate rest interval between the running intervals. Each of these sub-groups has a leader in charge of timing the rests, bringing everyone to the line, and starting the next interval. The groups go by the monikers "Aspen" (fastest), "Birch" (medium), and "Cedar" (not so fast). Sarah Slanger or Ann Seifert usually organizes the Birch group, Karen Powell started the Cedar group (but sometimes delegates to others when

she cannot attend -- Kyla Maki has agreed to be the 2013 Cedar Leader), and Pat Judge or Jeff Thomas usually handle the Aspens.

- Safety is priority #1. Runners are advised to listen carefully to their bodies, and to back off if they start having problems. If a medical situation develops, the track coordinator should be notified immediately (a cell phone will be present at all workouts). Many of the workouts are done at mid-day in the heat of summer, so it is extremely important to keep well hydrated (drinking some water before, during, and after the workout). And sunscreen is also important!

- The track coordinator is not a personal trainer or coach (but can offer suggestions about qualified local professionals, training manuals, etc.). And of course, runners should always consult a doctor before embarking on any strenuous physical fitness program!

- Pat's Pet Peeve #2 (second only to the possibility of being sued -- see disclaimer above!) -- we are very fortunate to have access to a magnificent facility like Vigilante Stadium. Please show it respect by following the posted rules. In particular, **PLEASE STAY OUT OF THE INSIDE LANES WHEN NOT RUNNING INTERVALS -- THIS INCLUDES WARM-UP AND WARM-DOWN LAPS ON TRACK DAY -- the longevity of the track is primarily determined by the wear and tear that take place in the inside lanes.** In this spirit, the schedule tries to emphasize "track saving workouts," which spread the impact across multiple lanes. Similarly, the aforementioned "off-track" workouts aim to lessen the impact on the track, and also help to rejuvenate the runners' bodies & minds by mixing up the training. (For the same reason, we try to include some clockwise direction workouts to balance out the counter-clockwise direction track races and workouts.)

One final point of emphasis -- during school months, it is very important to be mindful and respectful of the middle school students and teachers who sometimes run a couple of laps on the track as part of their gym class. By starting at 12:15, the group usually fits in nicely between the class periods.

Attendance and "Virtual Workouts"

Since 2004, the Helena Vigilante Runners has kept an attendance record of its Tuesday-at-Noon workouts, so be sure to look for the clipboard and sign in! This practice serves a number of purposes. Primarily, it provides some additional incentive / motivation for people trying to reach their fitness goals. Runners with perfect or near-perfect attendance each phase are afforded full bragging rights! (Runners who reach 100 workouts are honored as "Centurions," and 200 workouts qualifies runners for "Bicentennial" status.) Second, it can help people get to know their fellow "**Vigers**" (**note that this term has one "g" only**) -- by perusing the "Track Report" sent out on the listserv after the workout, a runner can sometimes deduce that one person's name they didn't catch. This helps build a more closely-knit team and community.

Also, from the beginning, runners have been able to earn attendance credits for workouts performed in absentia. (The concept of the "virtual workout" started with Laura Holien, who did her workouts in Spokane while completing her final year at Gonzaga.)

The following set of rules has developed to govern what does and does not qualify as a virtual workout:

- 1) The virtual workout may be completed anytime during the week of the workout (a "week" is defined as starting Monday morning at 12:00 am and ending Sunday at mid-night).
- 2) The virtual workout may involve a variation of the scheduled workout, but must include up-tempo running of some kind (hill repeats, fartlek intervals, steady-state / tempo running, etc.) and represent a good-faith substitute involving an appropriate workload. Treadmill running DOES count (if done sufficiently fast), but non-running activities do NOT (pool workouts, elliptical trainers, cycling, etc.).
- 3) If injured or otherwise unable to participate, showing up at the workout to give moral support to the other runners DOES count as a virtual workout.
- 4) Performing some activity "above and beyond the call of duty" in service to the vig community (such as clearing snow from the track, or assisting at a Vig Scrimmage event) also counts.
- 5) Races, however, do NOT count.
- 6) A runner may only get credit for one workout per week.
- 7) The runner must "self-certify" to the track coordinator following the completion of the virtual workout, based on the honor code.
- 8) Virtual workouts are primarily intended to accommodate people who must miss the regular workouts due to work conflicts, travel, etc. There is significant value in participating in the group workout, so every effort should be made to attend in person when possible (i.e. don't abuse the virtual workout system!).

Vig Bios

Runners are encouraged to complete "Vig Bios" to allow people to get to know them better. The form asks 10 questions and includes space for a photograph. About 50 runners have completed Vig Bios so far, which are available for downloading at the HVR Shutterfly Site (scroll to the bottom of the page):

<http://helenavigilanterunnygroup.shutterfly.com/>

Please contact the track coordinator if you are interested in introducing yourself to the club. It's fun! We need more!

Photos

Samsara Chapman, Mary Van Gilder, and Michael Chapman have done a superb job of creating a photographic record of numerous local races and HVR workouts. Those photos can be viewed at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/samnrye>

Training Tips

The general principle for most of these workouts is to run "as fast as can be sustained" throughout the workout -- i.e. if a runner is slowing down substantially as the workout progresses, they probably started out too fast. On the other hand, runners should not hold back so much that they finish the workout without having stressed the body sufficiently. The ideal workout is similar to the ideal race, in that the pace should be as even as possible, with a fast finish. In reality,

it is not uncommon for people to get a little overzealous at the start, causing them to slow down a bit later on.

Starting out faster than goal pace is common in races as well, and isn't always a mistake (sometimes early positioning counts for a lot, and establishing an early fast pace can sometimes lead to surprising outcomes -- after all, it's good to lay it all on the line sometimes, to test limits & pre-conceived notions).

But more often, it is physiologically and psychologically preferable to run an even or better second half, as opposed to suffering through to the finish after scorching the start. Watch the Kenyans and Ethiopians -- they almost always run "negative splits". In the end, there is no simple answer -- it's something each runner should experiment with to see what works best for them. Some of the greatest runners in history were notorious "front runner" types (Steve Prefontaine, for example, and Anthony Famiglietti), while many others were patient at the beginning and more tactical.

By the way, an even-paced, maximal effort 5k usually feels something like this:

- first mile, pretty easy
- second mile, definitely starting to work it
- third mile, feels like hell!

It probably goes without saying that if a workout involves a combination of distances (for example 4 x 800 meters followed by 4 x 400 meters), the shorter distances should usually be run at a faster pace.

The schedule includes several low-key, recovery or "taper" type workouts, especially before races. But most workouts should be approached with a combination of intensity and enthusiasm, tempered with an awareness of what the body can handle without risking injury.

Best wishes for the training and racing season, and remember: Get fast, stay healthy, and have fun!

Pat

P.S. I know this is a lot of information, so thank you for your attention and cooperation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me: Patrick Judge, 406/459-5838, pljudge@bresnan.net