

Helena Vigilante Runners "Tuesday-at-Noon" Orientation Document (Updated for 2023)

Introduction

2023 marks the twentieth year that 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 (second Saturday of June each year):

<http://www.govcupmt.com/>

- Phase II – summer training, culminating with the "Vig Scrimmage" one-mile time trial (8/29/23):

<http://vigilanterunning.org/our-events/vig-scrimmage/>

- Phase III – fall training, culminating with the Montana Cup race (hosted by Helena this year! 10/28/23):

<http://www.montanacup.com/>

In addition, the group occasionally meets for "Speaking of Running" lectures, community service projects, and social events (end-of-phase parties!). For more information on the Helena Vigilante Runners, please visit the HVR website at <http://vigilanterunning.org/>

Listserv

Club 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 can do so at: <https://runsignup.com/Club/160>

Once enrolled, members may post messages directly to the list (for distribution to all 185 subscribers) 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 mostly non-commercial in nature, and confined to running-related information relevant to the group. All messages should also be non-political, non-religious, in good taste, and suitable for all audiences.

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 can simply follow the instructions appearing 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." Runners interested in going after a [record](#) (either

for fastest single interval or fastest workout average) must complete the full workout in order to be eligible, and must adhere to Aspen-group rest intervals. Records may also be broken with **virtual workouts** (see below for more information about Virtuals).

In addition to the 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.**

Track Guidelines

- Roughly half of the workouts take place on the all-weather track at Vigilante Stadium (from which the group took its name), next to Helena Middle School on north Rodney Street. The "off-track" workouts take place at various locations around town (parks, hills, etc.).
- 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 dynamic 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 static 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 minutes continuously before joining the group. 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.
- These workouts are probably not appropriate for all runners. Each runner has the responsibility of modifying the workout to match their 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 run 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 appropriate rest 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). Generally speaking, Aspens are those runners who can break 6:00 for a single all-out mile, Birch 7:00, and Cedar everyone else.
- **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 water before, during, and after the workout). Sun protection 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!
- We are very fortunate to have access to the 10-lane, all-weather track at 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 takes 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 while helping to rejuvenate the runners’ bodies & minds by mixing up the training. (For the same reason, we try to alternate between traditional counter-clockwise direction workouts and “reverse” workouts run in the clockwise direction.)
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. We also try to coordinate with the Carroll College XC and track teams. The Vig group has reservations and permits for the 12:00-1:00 timeframe on track days.

Attendance and “Virtual Workouts”

Since 2004, HVR has kept a 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 can then go on to achieve BiCenturion, TriCenturion, QuadCenturion, Half-Millennium status and so-on!

<http://vigilanterunning.org/workouts/centurions/>

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, since 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 back in 2004 or 2005, during 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 night at 11:59).

- 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 must 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, assisting at the Vig Scrimmage, etc.) 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.

Final Thoughts

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!

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at: 406/459-5838 or pljudge@bresnan.net

Go Vig!