

# Parramatta Park Runners and Walkers

## Handicap Competitions 2021

From 2021 it has been decided by the majority of members that the 5 Kilometre Handicap Competition should continue, and that the duration of the competition will be eleven months, beginning in January and finishing in November each year.

### Rules of the 5 Kilometre Handicap Competition

A runner cannot compete in the 5 Kilometre Handicap Competitions unless they have **three recorded times** for completing the **relevant 5 kilometre course** while making a reasonable effort. From January 2021, as voted by the members, the official 5 kilometre course will be slightly longer and closer to a correct 5 kilometre distance. The 5 km course starts in the pedestrian lane of Railway Parade at the junction of Railway Parade and the very Northern end of Long Avenue. Competitors must run a complete lap of Parramatta Park, in the pedestrian lane, whenever possible, via Railway Parade, the unnamed road past Lachlan's Restaurant, and Byrnes Avenue back to the starting point. Runners must then continue along Railway Parade for another half circuit turning left into Long Avenue at the second left turn (closer to the top of the hill and the round, arched, Governor's Bathhouse). Competitors then complete the course by running the entire length of Long Avenue, past the Dairy, to finish at the Northern end of Long Avenue just a few metres from the start line. To compete in the Handicap Competition all competitors ***must be fully financial on Handicap Day***, usually the fourth Friday of the month.

On the **1 January each year** all the recorded times over the 5 kilometre course from and including 1 January in the previous calendar year, will be reviewed. The fastest time recorded during that period will, automatically, be selected to determine a person's handicap time.

**If, on any Friday, a competitor completes the 5 kilometre course in a time faster than the time upon which his/her handicap is based, their handicap time is immediately re-calculated, using the faster time.**

No allowances will be made for illness or injury in determining Handicap times. Resetting the Handicap Time, at least, every January will hopefully help to even out Handicap Times that seem to be either too generous or too harsh because of a previous injury or illness.

The aim of the Handicap Competition is to have all runners competing on an equal basis. In actual fact the Handicap Competition is like a most improved competition. On the day of the Competition, what we call "Handicap Day", each competitor should be trying to run as fast as they can over the 5 kilometre course.

The aim of each competitor is to run a time as close as possible to 100% of their handicap time, or, if they can, even faster than their handicap time. All times recorded for the Handicap Competition will also be displayed, in the WordPress Handicap Results Report, as a Percentage of each competitor's Handicap Time. An elapsed running time slower than their Handicap Time will be displayed as a percentage above 100%. An example might be 101.2%. On the other hand, all elapsed running times completed faster than the competitors Handicap Time will be displayed as a percentage under 100%. An example might be 99.3%. The competitor with the lowest percentage will be the winner of the Handicap Competition for that month and will be awarded maximum points for the competition that month. The next lowest percentage of their handicap time will be awarded the second highest points for the competition for that month, and so on.

This percentage method of determining the places in the Handicap Competition is designed to reward the comparative effort and improvement not simply the fastest time or the number of seconds a competitor improved by.

### Compare Handicap Calculations

Runs **Faster** than Handicap Time

Examples	Runner	Best Time	Result	Time Under HC	% H'cap	Improved %
1	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>19:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	95.00%	1/20 = 5.00%
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>39:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	97.50%	1/40 = 2.50%
2	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>19:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	95.00%	5.00% 1st
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>38:59 m:s</b>	1:01 m:s	97.46%	2.54% 2nd
3	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>18:59 m:s</b>	1:01 m:s	94.92%	5.08% 1st
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>39:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	97.50%	2.50% 2nd
4	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>19:01 m:s</b>	0:59 m:s	95.08%	4.92% 1st
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>39:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	97.50%	2.50% 2nd
5	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>19:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	95.00%	5.00% 1st
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>39:01 m:s</b>	0:59 m:s	97.54%	2.46% 2nd

## Runs **Slower** than Handicap Time

Examples	Runner	Best Time	Result	Time <b>Above</b> <b>Handicap</b>	% <b>H'cap</b>	<b>Slowed %</b>
<b>6</b>	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>21:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	105.00%	1/20 = 5.00%
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>41:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	102.50%	1/40 = 2.50%
<b>7</b>	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>21:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	105.00%	5.00% <b>2nd</b>
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>40:59 m:s</b>	0:59 m:s	102.46%	2.46% <b>1st</b>
<b>8</b>	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>20:59 m:s</b>	0:59 m:s	104.92%	4.92% <b>2nd</b>
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>41:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	102.50%	2.50% <b>1st</b>
<b>9</b>	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>21:01 m:s</b>	1:01 m:s	105.08%	5.08% <b>2nd</b>
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>41:01 m:s</b>	1:01 m:s	102.54%	2.54% <b>1st</b>
<b>10</b>	Rocket	20:00 m:s	<b>21:00 m:s</b>	1:00 m:s	105.00%	5.00% <b>2nd</b>
	Dinky	40:00 m:s	<b>41:01 m:s</b>	1:01 m:s	102.54%	2.54% <b>1st</b>

### Staggered Start (Yachting Start)

If the Handicap Competition was conducted with a staggered start (also known as a Yachting Start) then the handicap time is designed to have every runner crossing the finish line together.

For example, let's assume we want to have most of the competitors finishing at around 1.00 pm on race day. Obviously, the slowest runner must start first. Using the examples above, let's assume Dinky is the slowest competitor in the race with the handicap time of 40.00 minutes. For Dinky to finish at 1.00 pm he would need to start his run at 12.20 pm (exactly 40.00 minutes before 1.00pm). Similarly, if Rocket is the fastest competitor, he or she must start at 1.40pm (exactly 20.00 minutes before 1.00pm.) The start times for all other competitors would be calculated in the same manner and would start at a time somewhere between 12.20 pm and 12.40 pm. In theory, everyone should cross the line together if everyone ran their handicap time in the event. In practice warmer or cooler conditions, levels of fitness, competitive instincts and determination plus other factors can all influence the outcome.

**In a staggered start the handicap places are determined by the order in which runners cross the line.**

The Yachting Start is very popular with the faster runners as it gives them someone to chase down for the entire run. Slower runners might take advantage of the head start and work hard to make it difficult for the scratch runner to catch them.

Some runners might have a bad day and run 10 or 15 minutes slower than their handicap time. That would mean they would not finish until 1:10pm or 1:15pm. The time-keepers and recorder would need to be there from about 12:00 pm or earlier to set up and remind runners of their start times.

Additionally there would be no gathering of all the runners before the start for milestones, warnings and announcements. The staggered start may not suit runners who come from work as they may have difficulty leaving work for an early lunch break. The officials would still need to be there from before the first starter at say, 12:00 pm, then stay until the last competitor finishes.

An additional volunteer is required to call out starting times, in order, and, usher runners to the startline by their their official starting time. We would also need a volunteer just past the finish line to identify the order in which they finished, perhaps handing them finishing place cards. Recorders of finishing places and finishing times would also be required. Alternatively, smart phones or cameras on tripods could be utilised to video the finish of the race, and, thus enable places and finishing times to be determined, on replay.

### **GT Memorial 5 Kilometre Run and 3.2 Kilometre Walk Handicap with a Yachting Start.**

The GT Memorial 5 Kilometre Run and 3.2 Kilometre Walk Handicap with a Yachting Start was held in May 2021 to commemorate our longest serving and greatly admired and appreciated member, Graham Taylor, who preferred to be called, simply, "GT". The event proved to be very successful and popular. Therefore, GT Memorial Run and Walk Races will be organised each year in May, in memory of GT. Only walkers who have recorded three (3), non-virtual timed walks over 3.2 km and runners who have recorded three (3), non-virtual timed runs over 5 km will be given a starting time for the two handicap races. Others may participate as guest runners or walkers in a group start, at 12:30 pm.

### **Bunch Start**

On Handicap Day (**usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month from January to November, inclusive**), all runners start together at 12:30pm, subject to State Government directions. As each runner crosses the finish line the Time Keeper calls out the runners time. It is the responsibility of each runner to listen for their time then immediately advise the Recording Officer (usually Garry Batcheldor or Ivan Williams). Make sure your time is recorded before you leave. Later, when all times have been data collected each runner's Handicap Time percentage is calculated and sorted in order of lowest percentage to highest. The runner with the **lowest percentage of their Handicap Time** will win the handicap competition that month and be awarded maximum points.

### **Self-timed Runs**

An honesty method could be utilised to allow distances and times to be recorded when NSW Government restricts gatherings. This method will allow each competitor to run the 5km course or walk the 3.2 km course, solo, at any time they choose on Friday. Each competitor would use their own timing device to record their elapsed time to complete the course. Then the details of the distance run and the elapsed time taken would be sent as a text message to the recorder. These, so called, virtual runs, (I prefer the term "self-timed runs" because on a cold, wet day, they seem very real) enabled Athletics NSW to continue with cross country and other events during the winter of 2020. Running alone is nowhere near as engaging and enjoyable as starting in a bunch and running with company, but, it has been proven to work.

### **Points Awarded on Handicap Day**

1<sup>st</sup> place 20 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place 16 points, 3<sup>rd</sup> place 12 points, 4<sup>th</sup> place 9 points, 5<sup>th</sup> place 8 points, 6<sup>th</sup> place 7 points, 7<sup>th</sup> place 6 points, 8<sup>th</sup> place 5 points, 9<sup>th</sup> place 4 points, 10<sup>th</sup> place 3 points. All other competitors who finish are awarded 2 points. This point allocation is designed to reward those finishing in the top three places but allocating at least 2 points to anyone for participating.

### **The Competition Winner**

During the period January to November after Handicap Day each month the points earned by each competitor are added to each competitor's tally of points for previous months. This gives a progressive score. The competitor with the highest progressive or aggregate score after the November Handicap Day is the winner of the 5 km Handicap Competition for that year and will be awarded the Vic Townsend Memorial Trophy. (Vic Townsend was a long term, highly respected, member of Parramatta Park Runners and Walkers and the most senior of all the members).

### **The 3.2 Kilometre Walkers Handicap Competition**

To allow walkers to record at least three qualifying 3.2 kilometre Walks for this new competition it has been decided to delay the commencement of the 3.2 Km Walk Handicap Competition until the fourth Friday in February 2021 i.e. 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2021. This will be the case for 2021 only. Commencing in 2022, the 3.2 Km Walk Handicap Competition will be conducted over eleven months, beginning in January and finishing in November each year. The Rules for the 3.2 Kilometre Walkers Handicap Competition **will otherwise be the same as that for the 5 Kilometre Run Handicap Competition** except that the **competitors are not permitted to run at any time during the event. This will not be a race walking event. Bent knees will be permitted but one foot must be in contact with the ground at all times while competing.**

### **Additional Rules**

#### **Timing Devices can be carried in Handicap Races:**

**Honest Effort:** Runners in the 5Km Handicap Competition must run the distance. Runners are expected to make an honest attempt to give their best effort. This is conducive to a fair competition for everyone. The Handicapper reserves the right to penalise competitors who appear to be stalling or holding back in an attempt to secure a more favourable handicap time for upcoming competitions. The competition is run on an honour system.

**No Short-cuts:** Competitors must complete the full distance. The Handicapper reserves the right to penalise or disqualify competitors who cut corners and/or run off the course. Runners must run on the footpath or within the pedestrian lane on the bitumen where possible.

**Obey Parramatta Park Trust Rules:** Runners must comply with all directions of officials within Parramatta Park. Runners must run on the footpath or within the pedestrian lane.

**Take Care, & Run or Walk within Your Capabilities.** Competitors must take care at all times, particularly when crossing vehicular lanes at intersections. Participants, on any Friday, are responsible for taking their own health and fitness plus the weather and hydration levels into account when considering the effort they can safely make when participating in any event at Parramatta Park with Parramatta Park Runners and Walkers.

**Novelty Events:** From time to time Novelty Events may be held on non-competition days.

“Guess Your Time” was a popular event last year. Another might be “Start when you like but the one who finishes the 5Km closest to 1:30:00 pm is the winner”.

*The only criterion to be eligible for the above events is that you are financial for the year and are prepared to run or walk in this event **without** a timing device..*

If you have any questions about the Handicap Competition or other issues at Parramatta Park Runners and Walkers, please ask.

**Dennis Williams**

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**20 June 2021**