

Parramatta Park Runners and Walkers

Handicap Competitions 2023

Rules of the 5 Kilometre Handicap Competition

From 2023 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 ten months, beginning in February and finishing in November each year. It was also agreed that the 5 km Handicap Race will be conducted on the LAST Friday of the months, February to November, inclusive,

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.

The Course

From January 2022, 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. One lap is 3.14 Kilometres. Runners must then continue along Railway Parade for another, 1.86km, 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. Previously Handicap Day has been the fourth Friday of the month. From February 2023 onwards Handicap Day will be the LAST Friday of the Months, February to and including November.

How Winners and Placegetters are Calculated

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.

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 Wombat is the slowest competitor in the race with the handicap time of 40.00 minutes. Emu is the fastest with a handicap time of 20.00 minutes For Wombat 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 Emu is the fastest competitor, he or she must start at 12:40pm (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 because 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 1:20pm. The time-keepers and recorder would need to be there from about 12:10 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 and must return before 1:30pm. The officials would still need to be there from before the first starter at say, 12:00pm, then stay until the last competitor finishes and times recorded, say until about 1:30 pm.

An additional volunteer is required to call out starting times, in order, and, usher runners or walkers to the startline by their their official starting time.

We would also need a volunteer, for both the 5km Run and 3.14 km Walk, just past the finish line to identify the order in which they finished, perhaps handing them finishing place cards. Alternatively, or additionally, smart phones on tripods or similar could be utilised to video the finish of the race, and, thus enable places to be determined, on replay.

Bunch Start

On Handicap Day (**now the last Friday of each month from February to November, inclusive**), all runners start together at 12:30pm, subject to State Government directions. As each runner crosses the finish line the Timekeeper 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). Make sure your run or walk time and distance are 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 we utilised with the Handicap Competition at times when NSW Government restricts gatherings, is to allow each competitor to run the 5 Handicap course on Friday, **solo**. 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, (more precisely "self-timed runs") 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. The Walkers 3.14 kilometre Walk Handicap was conducted in the same manner. Self-timed or virtual runs (or Walks) , are still permitted ,but, will not be awarded points on Handicap Day.

Points Awarded on Handicap Day

1st place 20 points, 2nd Place 16 points, 3rd place 12 points, 4th place 9 points, 5th place 8 points, 6th place 7 points, 7th place 6 points, 8th place 5 points, 9th place 4 points, 10th 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 February 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 Run Handicap Competition or the 3.14 km Walk Handicap Competition for that year.

Competition Winner's Handicap

To give the rest of the competitors a greater chance, The Handicapper imposes a Winner's Handicap on last year's Handicap Competition Winners, i.e., the 5K & 8K Run Comps and the 3.14K Walk Comp.

Rules of the 8 Kilometre Handicap Competition

From 2023 it has been decided, by the majority of members, that the 8 Kilometre Handicap Competition should continue, and that the duration of the competition will be ten months, beginning in February and finishing in November each year. However, for 2023 only the 8km Competition will commence in March.

It was also agreed that the 8 km Handicap Race will be conducted on the SECOND Friday of the months, February (March 2023) to November, inclusive.

A runner cannot compete in the 8 Kilometre Handicap Competition unless they financial; that is, have paid their Annual Subscription; and, have **three (3) recorded times** for completing the **relevant 8 kilometre course** while making a reasonable effort.

The 8 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 two (2) complete, 3.14 Km, laps 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. At this point Runners have covered 6.28 Km. You then continue along Railway Parade for another, 1.72km, half circuit, turning left into Long Avenue at the **First** left turn. 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. As for all Handicap Competitions, to compete in the Handicap Competition, all competitors must be fully financial on Handicap Day. Previously Handicap Day has been the fourth Friday of the month. From February 2023 onwards Handicap Day will be the LAST Friday of the Months, February to and including November.

On the **1 January each year** all the recorded times over the 8 Kilometre course, from and including 1st 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 8 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.

How Winners and Placegetters are Calculated

Please refer to the three paragraphs above under "**How Winners and Placegetters are Calculated**"

The 3.14 Kilometre Walkers Handicap Competition

The Rules for the 3.14 Kilometre Walkers Handicap Competition will be **the same** as that for the **5 Kilometre and 8 Kilometre Handicap Competitions**, 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.**

Walk Handicap Course. Starting at the same location as the 5km and 8 km Run Handicaps, competing Walkers must walk one complete lap as described above for the first 3.14km of the 5km Run Handicap Course. The Finishing line for the 3.14km Walk Handicap will be the same as the Starting Line.

The 3.14 Km Walk Course

The 3.14 km course starts in the pedestrian lane of Railway Parade at the junction of Railway Parade and the very Northern end of Long Avenue; about 100m West of the Bandstand. Competitors must **walk** 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.

Handicap Time Reset

On the **1 January each year** all the recorded Walk times over the 3.14 Kilometre Walk Course, and all recorded runs over the 5 Kilometre and 8 Kilometre courses; from and including 1st 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, for the **current year**.

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.

Additional Rules

Timing Devices can be carried in Handicap Races:

Honest Effort: Runners in the 5Km and 8km Handicap Competitions 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. The same applies to the Walkers competing in the 3.14 km Walk Handicap.

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 and Walkers must keep on the footpath or within the pedestrian lane on the bitumen where possible.

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

Take Care & Run within Your Capabilities. Runners and Walkers must take care at all times, particularly when crossing vehicular lanes at intersections. Runners and Walkers 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 running at Parramatta Park.

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

The **GT Handicap**, a Staggered Start, 5 Kilometer Run and 3.14 Kilometre Walk, Handicap, has been a popular event held in May for the past two years.

The two criteria to be eligible for the above events are, that you are financial for the year and have completed three (3) timed runs on the 8km course or the 5km course or (3) timed walks on the 3.14 km course since 1st January in the previous year,

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

Dennis Williams, PPR&W Handicapper, (0425 243 974)

22 March, 2023