



ATHLETICS
WEEKLY

MARATHON GUIDE 2018

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RACES TO RUN**

**MARATHON
CALENDAR**

**PRODUCT
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**EXPERT
ADVICE**

CHOOSE YOUR NEXT 26.2-MILE CHALLENGE

TAKE YOUR PICK

DECISIONS, decisions. When it comes to choice, marathon runners really have never had it so good.

Such has been the explosion in mass participation running that it can now feel at times like there is barely a corner of the planet which doesn't have its own 26.2-mile event.

Whether you are planning your first marathon or you're an experienced campaigner clocking up yet more miles, the choice of the race for which you are planning to part with your hard-earned entry fee can quite rightly take a lot of time and consideration.

Options abound and, as the winter begins to draw in and thoughts turn towards targets for 2018, we at *Athletics Weekly* have been busy putting together this 32-page marathon guide which is packed with running possibilities.

From sunny Cyprus to the heart of Scotland, there is information on a wide range of marathons for you to consider, whether they be taking place in spring, summer, autumn or indeed the depths of winter next year. We also have some expert advice to help you through the challenges presented by running a distance which continues to capture the imagination.

You may wish to stay local or you may instead be looking to travel considerably further afield so you can put a pin in a new part of your own personal running map. Whatever event you decide to do, enjoy the journey that only running a marathon can provide.

Euan Crumley,
Editorial Director



SHUTTERSTOCK

➤ **Cover image: runners take part in the London Marathon (Mark Shearman)**

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WHY RUN A MARATHON?

There's good reason as to why so many are so keen to test their limits

THE lure of the marathon, it would appear, has never been stronger. With each passing year, a steadily increasing number of people are willingly signing up to take on the task of running 26.2 miles.

Why someone might want to inflict that physical and mental pressure upon themselves is beyond the comprehension of even more of the population but there can be no denying there is something particularly special about being able to call yourself a marathon runner.

It's classic distance, it takes the human body beyond its limits and it's an event which can, frankly, get under your skin.

Perhaps Zola Pieterse, the former 5000m world record-holder turned marathon runner puts it best when she says: "It's not something you just go and do...it's something that happens to you."

Ryan Hall, the fastest American to ever run the marathon with a personal best of 2:04:58, offers an intriguing insight too into the agony and the ecstasy of covering 42km. It's a recipe

which is proving difficult for runners to resist.

"The whole experience of running a marathon is really amazing," he says. "I'd encourage everyone to experience that once.

"I loved the part of the race where I felt good but also I really love physical challenge so I loved when the marathon got really hard. I told myself when it gets harder I get stronger and I get better. When it got really tough would be when I was at my best.

"I loved being 23 miles into the race, hurting like a champ and just digging down deep, trying to put one foot in front of the other as fast as I could.

"Then, getting to the finish line of a marathon is amazing, too.

"It's pretty emotional and I've had some really incredible life-long memories, of running into the arms of my wife and just being so stoked that whatever happened had just happened.

"It wouldn't necessarily mean I'd won or anything but just the fact I'd finished a marathon, the feat of completing 42km, is amazing."



MARK SHEARMAN

WISE WORDS

Running 26.2 miles is a big undertaking, so we asked some experts to offer their advice about the marathon

THERE is a seemingly never-ending stream of advice out there for marathon runners these days. We are never short of an expert opinion or two at *Athletics Weekly* and have pulled together some things for you to think about as you begin to make your marathon preparations.

FIND YOUR FORM FIRST

The lead-up to beginning marathon training is the perfect time to address any weaknesses in your form, insists running technique specialist James Dunne of Kinetic Revolution.

“If there are any idiosyncrasies within your own personal running form, that can result in you getting tight in certain areas or weak in others,” says Dunne. “That, in turn, overloads other areas, then all of a sudden we get to the point where we really reinforce these imbalances and flaws.

“A nice way to mitigate that is to look at breaking up the movement patterns and start to think how to build your body into that of an all-round athlete.”

He adds: “Hips and ankles are really, really important. Think about hip stability, hip mobility and strength around that region and combine that with a certain amount of spring or stiffness around the ankles. Hip mobility is what I generally get runners to focus on first. Make sure you make time for regular mobility and stability work.”



Liz McColgan-Nuttall: experience

HEAD OFF-ROAD

“Cross country is the backbone of endurance running,” says Liz McColgan-Nuttall, former 10,000m world champion, winner of the New York, Tokyo and New York marathons and ambassador for the Stirling Scottish Marathon and Birmingham International Marathon.

“It gives you the strength in the legs, it gives you the drive that you need and it’s all very akin to the kind of running that you need to be a marathon runner.

“Most marathon runners will come from a good cross-country background. Very few distance runners I know that went on to be champions didn’t come from doing the mud running from a young age.

“It uses all the muscles in your feet and your legs – everything that you need to use, it strengthens.

You’ve got to be careful of the impact (marathon) training will have

on your legs and people forget that there are a loads of green areas all over Britain where you could really benefit from doing fartleks, hill running and barefoot running, which I did a lot.

“There are so many elements that you can do other than just getting on a road or getting on a treadmill and running for two hours. Because that’s not what marathon running is. When you do a marathon, you’re running anything from two-and-a-half hours to five hours and you’ve got to prepare your body for that.”

TAILOR YOUR TRAINING

“The marathon is an aerobic event and therefore you must tailor your training to make your body efficient at burning fat and running aerobically,” says Mara Yamauchi, the second-fastest British female marathon runner in history. “This will spare carbohydrate during a race and prevent you running out of fuel.

“Some runners misunderstand this and think they can handle a marathon just by adding a longer run to a training programme which consists mainly of fast, anaerobic work. For the marathon, training at speeds in between a jog and fast intervals is important.”

With specific regard to the traditional long run, she adds: “Lots of people run too slowly and get a limited adaptation.

“I ran well in my early career over 10km and half-marathon, but

MARK SHEARMAN



✦ Cross-country running provides the ideal blocks upon which to build endurance running

poorly over the full marathon. In the latter part of my career after I really worked on aerobic marathon-specific training. I didn't improve my 10km or half-marathon times, but my marathon did improve."

WRITE IT DOWN

"A training diary can really help to keep you motivated and I'd recommend everyone keep some sort of running log," says multiple Olympic and world champion over 5000m and 10,000m, Mo Farah, who will run his second London Marathon in 2018.

"Like everyone, I have moments of self-doubt and there's nothing better than flicking back to see how well you have been running.

"I write everything down in a diary, but it doesn't matter if it's online or on paper, it can be inspiring to look back at how far you have come. I do it all the time and it always has a positive effect."

SETTLE ON A STRATEGY

"One of the keys to running a marathon successfully, no matter what level of runner you are, is to focus on the task at hand and execute your race plan," says running writer Dr Jason Karp, who holds a PhD in exercise physiology.

"It's often easy to let other things or outside or self-imposed pressures become distractions or let your mind wander during a race.

"If you don't allow those things to become distractions and instead focus on your performance to the exclusion of everything else, you will perform at your highest level.

"Remaining positive when things don't go as planned before or during your race keeps you calm and helps you run well.

"At the starting line and when you're in the middle of the race, remove all the negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones."



Patience: Haile Gebrselassie

MINIMISE YOUR MISTAKES

"Physically the marathon is not like the track where you're kicking and you're looking to reach a certain point and then using another gear," says three-time Olympian and international marathon runner Dathan Ritzenhein.

"In the marathon there are no more gears and when you get to that point it's really just a metabolic race. Either you've got the fuel and the energy to keep moving or you don't.

"It's an event where you can take back a lot of time or you can lose a lot of time at the end.

"Whereas on the track if you



Jo Pavey: enjoy yourself

get dropped then you're done, in the marathon someone can come back a minute or two in the last few miles and then it's all about what happened earlier in the race, how the preparation was and it's amazing when that happens.

"A lot of it is about competing against yourself, really. It's about what you can handle and what you can do. Sometimes it's just about minimising mistakes in the training and in the race. There are so many variables."

BE PATIENT

"The marathon is the hardest thing there is," says Haile Gebrselassie, running great and former world marathon record-holder. "The whole 42,195 metres long you are fighting the distance. The only way to overcome the distance is to be disciplined and patient.

"Patience is very important. Only then can you give 110%. With only 100% you will not make it."

AND FINALLY

"Just make sure you enjoy it!" says former European 10,000m champion and two-time London Marathon competitor Jo Pavey. "Take in the amazing atmosphere and really enjoy the day.

"Go for it and good luck! It will be an amazing experience and something you'll remember forever."



Mo Farah: likes to keep a note of all of his training

MARK SHEARMAN



SOAK CYPRUS IN

THE OPAP Limassol Marathon GSO is an international marathon like no other and one which should be on the bucket list of every runner wanting to achieve their goals in an unforgettable location.

Taking place on Sunday March 18, 2018, the AIMS-accredited OPAP Limassol Marathon GSO ticks all the boxes for international visitors looking for a complete race experience combined with a superb weekend away.

It's almost too good to be true: a start line on the palm-fringed seafront; a flat, fast and straight course stretching 21km along the Mediterranean coastline and offering real PB potential;

magnificent views of sparkling seas and ancient ruins; professional organisation and fantastic spectator support.

For those of us emerging from a British winter, this is the perfect spring marathon and an incredible event to kick-start the season.

All this is just for starters, as once you've crossed the finish line there are endless options for post-race relaxation. Will you chill out by your hotel pool, swim in the ocean, book a massage, indulge in delicious local food or join the fabulous after-party in the Old Port?

Whether you want to soothe aching muscles or join in the celebrations, Limassol is hard to beat for its hospitality and sheer friendliness.

The best way to soak this all up is through the excellent race packages that OPAP Limassol Marathon GSO has put in place. These bespoke packages are ideal for club runners, friends, individuals and families.

The #RunLimassolPlus package includes:

- The best 3, 4 or 5-star accommodation rates
- 50% discount on race entry
- Technical t-shirt
- Pasta party pass
- Finisher's photo
- Race pack delivery to hotel
- Transportation to the start line

With package prices from €114 for two nights' B&B, plus cheap winter flights from UK airports, now's the time to sign up to #RunLimassol!



OPAP LIMASSOL MARATHON GSO

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FAST AND FRIENDLY

WITH the shorter days and cold weather setting in, now is the time to finalise your springtime running plans.

If those plans include taking on a marathon then the ASICS Greater Manchester Marathon on Sunday, April 8, 2018 could be the perfect spring race for you.

With 95% of runners promising to be back, places are being snapped up quickly for the UK's flattest, fastest and friendliest marathon. So don't delay and make sure you secure your spot.

Should you decide to take part,

you will be signing up for a race which features:

- A super-fast course with only 54m elevation gain
- A substantial British and Irish-only prize fund
- A glorious 8m wide finish outside Emirates Old Trafford, home of Lancashire County Cricket Club
- Excellent organisation
- Superb crowd support and first class entertainment
- A route measured to international IAAF standards

To give you an idea of how fast this course is, at this year's event back in April, 86% of the

top 50 recorded a personal best or season's best and 50% of the top 250 clocked a PB. This race is YOUR best chance to secure a marathon PB.

The race is also a great platform for charity fundraising and supports a number of well-loved charities including Alzheimer's Society, Cancer Research UK, the Christie charity and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Charity.

Make the ASICS Greater Manchester Marathon your goal for your winter running and make those miles over the festive period count!

asics / GREATER MANCHESTER MARATHON

SUNDAY 8 APRIL 2018

FEEL THE AMAZING SUPPORT ON THIS FAST & FLAT COURSE
THIS IS YOUR MARATHON!

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BRIGHTON ROCKS



THE Brighton Marathon Weekend is an exciting three-day running event in one of Britain's most cosmopolitan cities, comprising the BM10k and the Brighton Marathon on the Sunday, The Cancer Research UK Kids & Teens Mini Mile Races on the Saturday and the Event Village, which hosted 150,000 people in 2017 on Brighton beach.

Each year the Brighton Marathon has attracted top-class distance runners to the event.

2017 was the first year where British-only athletes were invited to compete, and this will be

repeated for the 2018 event on Sunday, April 15.

The first-place winner in the 2018 Brighton Marathon will win £2000, with prizes also allocated for the first eight men and women.

Time bonuses are on offer, starting at £250 for performances under 2:20 for men and 2:40 for women.

Another event to have become hugely popular is the BM10k. Taking place right before the marathon, the BM10k offers a very fast, flat route and all the atmosphere and course highlights of the marathon.

First place in the BM10k, for

both men's and women's races, will win a prize of £1000 while breaking 28:45 (men's) or 32:00 (women's) will receive a time bonus of £1000.

General entries for the Brighton Marathon are now closed to the public but club runners are still able to secure a guaranteed entry into the Brighton Marathon.

BM10k entries are still on sale via the website.

More information about prize funds and how to enter both events as club and elite athletes, is available at: brightonmarathonweekend.co.uk/club-elite-athletes

OPPORTUNITIES AT BRIGHTON MARATHON WEEKEND 13-15 APRIL 2018



Photo: Mark Shearman

**CLUB RUNNERS CAN NOW
APPLY FOR A GUARANTEED ENTRY**

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www.brightonmarathonweekend.co.uk

WHICH ONE WILL YOU RUN?

JANUARY 21
Standard Chartered
Hong Kong Marathon
hkmarathon.com
Gloucester Marathon
beyondthelimitations.org.uk

JANUARY 26
Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon
dubaimarathon.org

MARCH 11
Barcelona Marathon
zurichmaratobarcelona.es

MARCH 18
OPAP Limassol Marathon GSO
limassolmarathon.com

APRIL 8
NN Rotterdam Marathon
nnmarathonrotterdam.org
Asics Greater
Manchester Marathon
greatermanchestermarathon.com
Milan Marathon
milanmarathon.it

Schneider Electric Paris Marathon
schneiderelectricparismarathon.com
Rome Marathon
maratonadiroma.it

APRIL 15
Brighton Marathon
brightonmarathonweekend.co.uk

APRIL 22
Antwerp Marathon
antwerpmarathon.be

Blackpool Marathon
fyldecoastrunners.com/blackpool-marathon.html

APRIL 29
Stirling Scottish Marathon
greatrun.org/stirling
Metro Group Dusseldorf Marathon
metro-marathon.de/en

MAY 7
Deep River Rock Belfast City Marathon
belfastcitymarathon.com
Milton Keynes Marathon
mkmarathon.com

MAY 13
Stratford Rotary
Shakespeare Marathon
shakespearemarathon.org.uk

MAY 20
Rock n' Roll Liverpool Marathon
runrocknroll.com/liverpool
Asics Windermere Marathon
brathaychallenges.com

MAY 27
Edinburgh Marathon Festival
edinburghmarathon.com
Sierra Leone Marathon
sierraleonemarathon.com
Boddington Marathon
beyondthelimitations.org.uk

JUNE 10
Strathearn Marathon
strathearnharriers.org.uk/racing/club-races/strathearn-marathon



FEBRUARY 25
Tokyo Marathon
marathon.tokyo/en

APRIL 16
Boston Marathon
baa.org

APRIL 22
Virgin Money London Marathon
virginmoneylondonmarathon.com

SEPTEMBER 16
BMW Berlin Marathon
bmw-berlin-marathon.com

OCTOBER 7
Bank of America Chicago
Marathon
chicagomarathon.com

NOVEMBER 4
TCS New York City Marathon
tcsnycmarathon.org

JUNE 16
Midnight Sun Marathon
(Tromsø, Norway)
msm.no

JULY 29
Fort William Marathon
fortwilliammarathon.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 16
Richmond Runfest Marathon
richmondrunningfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 23
Baxters Loch Ness Marathon
lochnessmarathon.com
Hull Marathon
thehullmarathon.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 30
Ikano Bank Robin Hood Marathon
robinhoodhalfmarathon.co.uk

OCTOBER
Birmingham International Marathon
Date TBC *greatrun.org/great-birmingham-international-marathon*

OCTOBER 7
Bournemouth Marathon
bournemouthmarathon.com
MBNA Chester Marathon
activeleisureevents.co.uk/marathon
Standard Chartered Jersey Marathon
jersey-marathon.com
Belfius Brussels Marathon
sport.be/brusselsmarathon

OCTOBER 14
Asda Foundation Yorkshire Marathon
theyorkshiremarathon.com

OCTOBER 21
TCS Amsterdam Marathon
tcsamsterdammarathon.nl/en

OCTOBER 28
SSE Airtricity Dublin Marathon
sseairtricitydublinmarathon.ie
Mainova Frankfurt Marathon
frankfurt-marathon.com

DECEMBER 2
Reggae Marathon (Negril, Jamaica)
reggaemarathon.com

MARK SHEARMAN

STIRLING IS BACK



THE Stirling Scottish Marathon will return in 2018 with a brand new course and a new date.

Stirling's inaugural marathon reached capacity months before the event, with 6,500 people signing up for the run through the heart of Scotland in May this year, and organisers at The Great Run Company have unveiled the new route for the marathon, which takes place on Sunday, April 29, 2018.

Starting and finishing in the centre of Stirling, the Gateway to the Highlands, runners will make their way into the Stirlingshire

countryside, past the Blair Drummond Safari Park, through Doune, Dunblane and Bridge of Allan, before completing a circuit of the University of Stirling's campus in the shadow of the historic Wallace Monument.

Another new section of the course will feature the stunning scenery of Clackmannanshire as you enter Blairlogie, beneath the imposing cliffs of Dumyat, then back towards Stirling itself, passing through the city centre where thousands of spectators came to cheer on the runners, before finishing in King's Park, in full view of the magnificent Stirling Castle.

The Stirling Scottish Marathon became one of the UK's biggest marathons in its first year and the ambition is to make the event Scotland's biggest 26.2-mile running event.

Stirling is within easy access to the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen and is less than an hour away from the stunning Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, making it a perfect place to spend a weekend next spring.

Come and experience the fantastic support at Scotland's newest marathon event.

Register now at:
greatrun.org/stirling



ALSO COMING IN OCTOBER 2018:
THE BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL MARATHON
FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT: GREATRUN.ORG



RUN THROUGH THE HEART OF SCOTLAND

SUNDAY 29 APRIL 2018

REGISTER NOW AT
GREATRUN.ORG/STIRLING

DUBLIN DELIGHT



On Sunday, October 28, 2018, Dublin will once again play host to one of the great European city marathons.

This will be the 38th year of this superb event which is run through the capital's historic Georgian streets and its magnificent Phoenix Park.

Thousands of boisterous spectators will line the route and such is the buzz from the crowd that overseas participants in the SSE Airtricity Dublin Marathon have dubbed it the 'friendly marathon'.

The course is largely flat, a single lap and starts and finishes in the city centre.

Conditions for marathon running are ideal, too, as the average temperatures for the city in October are around 12°-14° C (53°-57° F).

Dublin is only an hour by air from most UK and European cities and

TOURS AND ACCOMMODATION

Sports Travel International
PO Box 9543, Dublin 6
Tel: +353 1 498 2656
Fax: +353 1 498 3043
e-mail: info@sportstravelinternational.com
web: sportstravelinternational.com

a large number of the expected entry of 20,000 will be made up of overseas runners, many of whom will be returning to sample Irish hospitality once more.

So why not go and experience the occasion for yourself? A warm and friendly welcome is guaranteed.

However, be warned, once you have tried it, you'll want to go back again!

Enter online at:
sseairtricitydublinmarathon.ie
Tel: +353 1 626 3746
email: office@sseairtricitydublinmarathon.ie

All finishers receive a technical long sleeve t-shirt and medal.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

Incorporating the Athletics Ireland National Marathon

REGISTER EARLY & SECURE YOUR PLACE

www.sseairtricitydublinmarathon.ie



THE HIGH ROAD



THE Baxters Loch Ness Marathon, which takes place on September 23, 2018, is one of the most stunning marathons in the world. With spectacular scenery, fantastic atmosphere and a truly memorable experience – it's no wonder runners travel from around the globe to take part.

"Breathtakingly beautiful", "friendly atmosphere", "flawless organisation", "felt like a festival not just a race" are just some of the comments from the 8000 runners who took part in 2017 so why not sign up and experience it for yourself?

The Loch Ness Marathon follows a spectacular point-to-point route alongside world-famous Loch Ness, starting in an atmospheric moorland setting, and continues through stunning Highland scenery, taking you along the shores of Loch Ness, across the River Ness, to finish in Inverness, capital city of the Highlands.

If a full marathon isn't for you, why not enter the Baxters River Ness 10K or 5K? Following a flat, scenic, point-to-point course through the historic Highland capital of Inverness, both races offer excellent PB potential.

Make a Highland weekend of it and visit with family or friends;

there's plenty to entertain runners and spectators over the race weekend with a Sports Expo, Baxters Food & Drink Fayre, live music and kids' activities throughout the weekend.

There are many marathons that promise spectacular scenery, fantastic atmosphere and a truly memorable experience – but few deliver it quite like the Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running. Guaranteed marathon places and early bird entries are available NOW.

Be part of it and sign up today at: lochnessmarathon.com

Follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram #runlochness



If you're going to put yourself through hell, you might as well do it in heaven.

Baxters
LOCH NESS
MARATHON
and Festival of Running

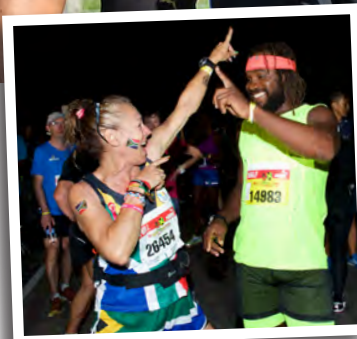
23.09.18

Marathon | 10K | 5K | Wee Nessie
lochnessmarathon.com

GUARANTEED MARATHON ENTRY AVAILABLE NOW



RUN AND RELAX



In the midst of a British winter, there can be few scenarios more enticing than running in the sunshine against the backdrop of stunning Jamaican beaches.

The Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10k offers runners the chance to do just that every December.

The events take place on a fast, flat course (looped for the marathon) which travels parallel to Negril's famous seven-mile stretch of white sand beaches.

Internationally certified, the event attracts runners from all over the world.

Organised by the Jamdammers Running Club of Kingston, keen to

promote a healthy lifestyle through running and long distance running in Jamaica, the Reggae Marathon has become known for providing the ideal 'runcation'.

The Reggae Marathon has been included multiple times among the world's 10 best marathon events while the 2016 half-marathon was rated among the best half-marathons of that year

as published by the 100 Half Marathons Club of the USA.

The event features reggae music along the course, while the "World's Best Pasta Party" held the night before the race remains a key attraction.

Many runners and walkers come for the run and stay for the fun as post-race offerings include a dip in the sea, which is a short distance from the finish line, and live entertainment.

This is a unique Jamaican event: a fusion of fun, food, sport and music! The event celebrates its 18th staging on December 2, 2018, so why not sign up to join in the party?

Visit reggaemarathon.com for further details.



REGISTER NOW! DECEMBER 2, 2018

WWW.REGGAEMARATHON.COM
E:RACEDIRECTOR@REGGAEMARATHON.COM
T:876 967 4903

Could you be in with a chance of being crowned champion over the Chester route come October?

AFTER a hugely successful day of racing at this year's event, the British Masters Athletic Federation's Marathon Championships will once again be contested at the MBNA Chester Marathon in 2018.

As well as competing in the championships, which are contested every autumn in order to give participants optimum recovery time from spring races, BMAF members had an opportunity in 2017 to join a new initiative launched by England Athletics which brought some the chance to compete for their country after a qualification process.



MARATHON MASTERS

The England Age Group Representative Team competition, designed to recognise and reward the commitment of competitive age group club runners, saw athletes from V35 upwards given the chance to earn an England age group vest, with the home line-up taking on a Celtic Nations team in Chester.

There was plenty of interest as to who would be crowned masters champion, of course, and Sarah Lowery had a day to remember, winning the women's open race and British Masters Championships by four minutes with her time of 2:44:27. Tipton's Stuart Hawkes won the men's championships in 2:28:11.

Who will be the next champions to be crowned on October 7, 2018, over the picturesque Chester route, which starts and finishes at Chester Racecourse?

● **For dates and information on all future BMAF Championships, plus details on how to enter, visit: bmaf.org.uk**

PACE YOURSELF



Pace Pockets are handy, fabric wristbands with a storage pocket for all your running essentials, such as keys, cards, cash or gels, printed with your choice of marathon or half-marathon splits. Price: £5

ORDER AT: PACEPOCKETS.RUN

Finding the right pace is key to a successful marathon and *PACE POCKETS* can help you achieve your goals

ONE of the most common and crucial mistakes marathon runners of all ages, abilities and experience levels make is to get their pacing wrong, writes *Dan Afshar of Xempo Race Pacing*.

Over 95% of runners in big marathons start too quickly and end up slowing down as the race develops. You can get away with it in a 5k but, in a marathon, the distance will always catch up with you.

We all know, of course, that we shouldn't do it, but in order to prevent it from happening, the following tips should help:

HAVE A PLAN (AND STICK TO IT)

Going into a race without a pre-determined target pace rarely results in the best possible performance.

Use an online pace calculator, with (ideally) a recent half-marathon or 10k time as a guide, to work out what pace you ought to be running from the start. Position yourself in the right start area, as it's easy to be swept along at the pace of runners around you. Don't worry

if the pace feels too easy at the start and don't be tempted to abandon your plan early on like so many do.

RUN YOUR OWN RACE

You've got no idea if the guy in the Spiderman suit is a top club runner, or the woman twice your age in front is a former Olympian. Quicker runners than you come in all shapes, sizes and ages.

Don't let your ego force you to try and outrun someone you think you should be beating. Concentrate on your race plan and let other people worry about theirs.

MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Keep a regular eye on your watch to ensure you are sticking to target pace. A *Pace Pocket* with your mileage splits is ideal to help you do this.

Your perfect marathon will probably see you running the first and last mile at the same speed. Even pacing means you will overtake thousands, which is great for your confidence and your finish time!

GET KITTED OUT

Marathon training, particularly through the winter, will require the right gear. PAUL FREARY picks some out

FOR THE WEEKS OF HIGH MILEAGE...

Brooks: Levitate – £140.00 (brooksrunning.com)

In the quest for shoes with highly responsive and 'spring-like' qualities to their midsoles, Brooks have joined the party with the Levitate. The shoe feels very 'springy' and offers a highly-cushioned, plush running experience. The midsole, 'DNA AMP' is very similar to that used in the adidas Boost and in fact is in the main manufactured by the same company, BASF. In the case of the Brooks shoe, the polyurethane cushioning has been encapsulated within a thermoplastic 'skin'; this essentially aims to contain the energy and spring the midsole back into shape, thus giving a responsive feel. Technicalities aside, the shoe feels great. Testers immediately enjoyed running in it and, whilst it's not particularly light, we think its shock absorbing qualities make up for a lack of weight savings.



New Balance: Fresh Foam Vongo V2 – £110.00 (newbalance.co.uk)

If you are looking for a training shoe capable of handling high winter mileage but which also offers a little support, the Vongo could be the perfect, lightweight solution for you.

It manages to provide a smooth and supportive ride thanks to a combination of an injection moulded process and unique geometrical design used in the midsole of the shoe.

Differences in the construction on the lateral and medial side of the shoe allow it to cushion on initial impact and provide support for over-pronators. A split in the outsole also compliments this design and helps guide the foot forward in a smooth and neutral manner. A knitted mesh upper provides a seamless fit and feels plush and comfortable.



361°: Meraki – £119.99 (361europe.com)

The latest shoe from 361° is a neutral trainer that offers the cushioning of a high mileage shoe with the responsive nature of a racer.

The cushioning comes from the brand's 'Qu!kfoam', a full-length layer of cushioning incorporated into the midsole that absorbs impact with great effect while offering a smooth ride.

An added feature is a carbon-fiber plate that runs through the midfoot and into the forefoot of the shoe. This has the dual effect of providing stability as well as a definite 'push-off'. Here the 'springy nature' of the shoe feels nicely balanced and makes it perfect for faster paced runs.



FOR THAT LONG OFF-ROAD RUN...

Mizuno – Wave Hayate 3 – £105.00 (mizuno.co.uk)

If you are training for a spring marathon, you'll undoubtedly find yourself heading off-road at some point this winter and in need of a trail shoe. In this model, you will soon feel able to push the pace on the trails. The multi-directional studs give good traction and forefoot flexibility is excellent, too, making this a great off-roader at any speed.



Altra: King MT – £130.00 (altrafootwear.co.uk)

This shoe features an aggressive Vibram outsole for excellent traction and full-length cushioning, incorporating a stone guard to provide a stable and protective footing wherever you venture. The upper uses durable materials and provides a supportive and protective fit, which is enhanced by a midfoot strap.



FOR RACE DAY...

Adidas: adios Boost – £119.99 (adidas.co.uk)

The adios remains the choice of some of the world's best marathoners and, after running in the shoes, you'll quickly see why. Using their Boost midsole cushioning in conjunction with a full length of CM-EVA, the brand have managed to combine the soft cushioning and energy return properties into a lightweight shoe that provides a responsive toe-off, perfect for racing.

The Torsion system in the midfoot of the shoe creates a little stability and the stretch-web outsole in the forefoot gives a toe-off that compliments the naturally 'springy' properties of the Boost material.

The shoe's upper is a more traditional, 'classic racer' look and feel; lightweight breathable mesh with synthetic suede and the three stripes to give some support around the foot. It's a shoe made in the classic form of a road racer – light, fast and responsive.



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FOR PROTECTION FROM ANY WEATHER...

Gore Apparel: Rescue Running Gore-Tex Jacket – £219.99 (goreapparel.co.uk)

Offering the ultimate in protection from the elements, this jacket will help see you through the hard miles of training in any weather that's thrown at you.

The Gore-Tex membrane of the jacket is totally waterproof, wind-proof and breathable and don't be tempted to over dress with baselayers when running in this jacket; such is its ability to block the wind and rain you'll find a light baselayer or t-shirt will be sufficient to remain comfortable.

Reflective details and logos increase your visibility to other road users and the built-in hood proves useful, as does the chest pocket. It's built for pure performance and doesn't disappoint.



FOR HELP WITH TRAINING...

Garmin: Fenix 5 – from £499.99 (garmin.com)

The new Fenix model is packed with both hardware and software to analyse every part of your training.

After a week or so of wear the watch essentially 'learns' about you – your heart rate, your running speed and efficiency – and it's then that it begins to present you with an in-depth overview of your training.

Simple on-screen graphics give you feedback on the effectiveness of each session and your training load over the previous 10 days. If you are looking for the ultimate training companion, this could be it.



Hilly: Ultra Marathon Fresh – £13.00 (hillysocks.com)

These offer good cushioning and a Polygiene treatment that enhances odour control and freshness. This version has a little more padding around the ankles and a harder wearing, more abrasion resistant construction.



Petzl: ACTIK head torch – £40.00 (petzl.com)

This lightweight yet powerful head torch packs enough lighting power to help you negotiate unlit paths, as well as making you more visible to other road users. The comfortable headband holds the unit in place and three AAA batteries power the 300lumen beam.

Ronhill: Wind-Block 7" Short – £40.00 (ronhill.com)

A clever idea, these shorts use a fabric similar to that more often found in rain jackets to give them a wind-proof quality, as well as making them highly water resistant. The lightweight, single-layer shorts are a longer length and offer a good level of protection against the elements, making them great for those that prefer to run in shorts but still need the function and performance offered by something more substantial.

FOR WORKING ON POSTURE...

CEP: Wingtech Long-sleeved Shirt – £65.00 (cepsports.co.uk)

The unique posture-enhancing strips bonded to the shoulders and back of this shirt provide a compressive fit.

From the moment you pull the shirt on you are aware of the figure-hugging design and manner in which it focuses your attention on maintaining a correct posture.

On the trails this helps add to your balance and ability to tackle uneven terrain with a great sense of stability. The shirt itself uses a lightweight and breathable fabric with flat seams to give a comfortable fit over extended periods of activity.



FOR GOOD VALUE...

MoreMile: Train To Run T-shirt – £13.00 (moremile.co.uk)

These great value t-shirts use highly breathable and moisture wicking fabric, making them great for use as base layers in colder weather.

The raglan sleeve construction allows for a good range of arm movement and flat seams mean there's no chance of irritation. Long-sleeve versions are available at just £20 and there are men's and ladies styles in a wide range of colours.



FOR MAXIMUM COMFORT ON THE RUN...



Runderwear: performance underwear – from £16.00 (runderwear.co.uk)

Runderwear is an award-winning premium performance underwear brand from the UK that solely aims to keep runners chafe-free and comfortable mile after mile.

All of Runderwear's products – there are extensive ranges available for men and women – are made using 360 degree seamless technology which means no irritating seams digging in and causing rubbing and irritation on the skin.

The technical moisture-wicking fabric helps runners keep dry and comfortable by wicking moisture away from their skin. Furthermore, micro-perforations in the fabric help with breathability to prevent over-heating.



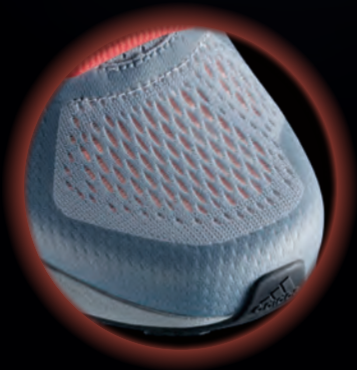
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