



Harriers take Silver in Masters XC Championships



All-time Marathon rankings



Paul Simons, Phil Leybourne, James Jackson and Paul Birkett with their team silver medals.

Vets Take Home Silver

The British Masters Cross Country Championships took place at Berry Hill Park, Mansfield on Saturday 24th March. Whilst this may have been a relatively low key event, it is a national championship so it was good to see our vets have at least one team there after missing so many events last year. So first well done to Paul Simons for ensuring that we had a team, comprising of Phil Leybourne, James Jackson, Paul Simons, Tony Smith and myself taking part. We'd left warm sunshine behind in Manchester and arrived at a cold, overcast blustery Mansfield. We were greeted by, I thought, an overly optimistic Phil Leybourne who suggested that we might be in with a chance of a team medal in the M40-49 category. Despite not having anywhere near our strongest team Phil was proved right. The moral being I suppose 'you've got to be in it to win it'. Phil was first home for the team in 11th place with James Jackson not far behind in 18th. Paul Simons finished about 2 minutes further back with myself struggling home in 65th position. Tony Smith provided excellent team support being fifth team finisher. After a short wait for the results we were surprised to hear that we'd finished second with a cumulative time for the team of only 13 seconds less than the third team Redhill Road Runners but almost a full

5 minutes behind first team, Sunderland Harriers, which as a Middlesbrough fan was hard to take! So come on Salford Harriers veterans get your running shoes on, let's have more athletes taking part and lets do even better at the Road Relays in May! Special thanks to Alfie, Bev, John Dawson and Roy Proffitt for their much appreciated support on the day.

Paul Birkett

National XC Championships

Fiddle Diddle, here's a riddle! Which athletics club had only one in the top seventy of either mens or ladies race yet still carried home individual and team medals? Fast forward to the end of this article for the answer. On with the action. Kicking off with the mens race, our first counter on this occasion... enter Pumlani Bangani. After a cautious start, making his way up to 74th place, a well judged effort and passing about 30 runners over the second half of the race. What a trooper Phil Leybourne is, enduring searing pain due to a toe injury, he still battled round the 12000 metre course to a respectable 133rd. Seriously, this man has few equals in the bravery stakes. The triumvirate of Rob Hughes, Tarus Elly and Phil West engaged in a Battle Royale throughout the three laps. Rob, getting fitter by the race and hopefully on his way to repeating his excellent

form of a couple of months ago, finished strongly in 192nd. Fifteen places and twenty seconds behind came Tarus in only his second race over 'the country' this winter and obviously finding the relatively dry and firm conditions more to his liking. Not so Phil West in 223rd. Phil simply revels in tough, muddy and hilly courses whilst this was more a road runners paradise. (I can't help thinking Andi and Tomas, on a course more suited to the quicker road runners would both have challenged for honours at this one). Dave Shaw made up the scoring six in 603rd whilst Tony Smith made his customary appearance at yet another National.

It was interesting to see former Salford 'icons' John Downes and Neil Wilkinson coming in together in 146th and 147th, whilst evergreen Larry Matthews came in 326th for Thames Hare & Hounds. Another ex-junior red, Michael Claff ran well for 123rd in the colours of Kent A.C. and Andy Thake had a fine run in 32nd for Hallamshire.

Ladies Race

What a super run by Tess Walker. After making a positive start she held it together and never remotely looked like losing her form and was duly rewarded with an excellent 29th placing. Well done Tess, lets hope this result acts as a springboard for really good things to

follow. In 106th Trish Sloan enjoyed her run, hopefully a prelude to a return to her halcyon days of a couple of years earlier. After expressing a strong desire 'to die' prior to this race young Jane Bilton nonetheless did herself proud in 214th, pacing herself very well indeed. Once this girl starts to believe in herself more she will make quite a handy runner. And finally.....the glowingly radiant Julie Laverock as upbeat and composed as ever, completed the course in 271st, over 18 minutes adrift of impressive winner Liz Yelling. But so what! Julie continues to improve as an athlete and her very presence ensured Salford Ladies finished a respectable 18th team - and they beat the men! In my opinion we should all adopt the Julie factor, by that I mean lets all get off our butts, get out there and just do it! Instead of coming out with the same tired old excuses, and yes, I count myself as one of those worst examples. Having got that off my chest, in the final analysis, a total of eleven Salford runners attended this years National, the lowest for many a year. That's a pity because the absent missed an absolute treat. Cracking venue, great course, superb parking and access, brilliantly organised, and the results were out in record time. Fantastic all round and full marks to everyone concerned. Answer to riddle...Salford Harriers! We gave a lift back to Gareth Raven, double bronze medallist on the day.

Pete Budd

The Times They Are A Changing...

A study of the team results revealed much food for thought. Whats happened to some of the traditional 'big guns' of the sport. Tipton only 11th, Belgrave 17th, Birchfield no team? In the ladies section Bristol were only 10th and Birchfield 13th. And what happened to Sale, Liverpool, Charnwood and Tipton, all huge clubs but unable to muster just four runners for the biggest race on the winter calendar. Oh how the mighty fall! And what about the winners.....Winchester? Wasn't that the gun used by Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday to wipe out the Clanton Gang at the O.K. Corral?

Can of worms..

What is it about girls and tents? No

sooner had we landed at the venue, we all flexed our muscles ready to erect our pride and joy, but where were the ferns of the group? A quick look around revealed they were nowhere to be seen. Then, after our usual disciplined and flawless tent pitching master class, the girls duly arrived on the scene within seconds of the last peg being hammered into place! And of course at the end of the proceedings, with us guys again ready to do the biz, guess who were conspicuous by their absence!! When the deed was done, with impeccably perfect timing, grinning like Cheshire cats....Bingo! Here's the girls, just in the nick of time. Dear me. Anyway with the road relays coming up there's a quick chance for redemption for those with a conscience, but we're not holding our breaths. Watch this space! **Pete Budd**

All Time 12-Stage Team

After the last newsletter and with the National 12-Stage relays this Saturday, Sean McMyler wrote to me interested to know what people in the club think of who would make the Salford Harriers 'all time greats' National 12-Stage team. This was posted on the websites forum for debate... here is what some of you had to say...

Sean:

Imagine Steve Kenyon taking over from Billy Burns on leg two with a youthful Stan Curran warming up for leg 3, Tony Leonard, Larry Matthews, Mike Deegan, Kevin McClusky, John Downes, Eric Williams, Nick Jones, Andi, Tomas....that lot would frighten a few! I'm basically asking:

Over the history of the 12 stage who would make our 12 best runners?

Duncan Mason:

Long leg DEFINITES have to be: Steve Kenyon (24.48), Larry Matthews (25.27), Mark Peters (25.42), Kevin McCluskey (25.40), all whilst running in Salford teams. I would go for Deegan and Curran on other legs. Eric Crowther has the club record for the short leg, so he has to be in plus Neil Wilkinson has got to leg 12 for his heroic efforts in 97 (plus it was fast). Gary Crowther and Jimmy Newns probably worth a place too. I think John Brown and Andi Jones might be the only current team member to sneak in as short legs.

Aidan Walpole:

I am choked....despite my best efforts to fiddle the line up I dont make the team! But I have come up with a name nobody else has mentioned so far, mainly because although he was a member, he never ran for the team in a relay & only raced a handful of times whilst he was a club member. The mystery trump card has to be IAN ROBINSON. Joined from Preston in 1996 having run 28.40 track 10k, 48min ten miler & a low 63 for half marathon, all in the states. Never recovered from a serious calf injury sustained months after joining & retired.

My dream team would be, in no particular running order:

Long Legs - Steve Kenyon, Larry Matthews, Mark Peters, Tony Leonard, Stan Curran & Mike Deegan
Short Legs
Kevin McCluskey, Ian Robinson, John Downes, Jimmy Newnes, Gary Crowther and Martin Cox.

Can argue all day long over best of the rest....Neil Wilkinson, Eric Crowther, Andi Jones, Billy Burns, Duncan Mason & maybe even myself. I plump for Stan on long leg as Kevin has an awesome short leg pb but running for Copeland. Actually, I have changed my mind. Martin Cox loses his place to former European Junior 3000m champion Nick O'Brien. Added to the subs bench are John Brown who I forgot before (sorry John) and the most frightening runner I ever raced, Tony Barlow.

I'm sure Roy Profitt, who is somewhat of an authority on the 12 stage, can put this argument to bed, and so have asked him to put something together for the next issue.

Marathon Mania

SALFORD HARRIERS ALL-TIME MARATHON RANKINGS

Sticking with the theme of all time greats and with the London marathon less than 2 weeks away Roy Prffit has provided the following list, which makes very interesting reading...

1.	2:11:40	Steve Kenyon Gateshead, 1982.
2.	2:14:08	Stan Curran Rotterdam, 1981.
3.	2:15:12	Tomas Abyu Basel Switzerland, 2005.
4.	2:15:42	Billy Burns London, 2000.

5.	2:17:01	Scott Winton London, 2005.
6.	2:17:52	Andi Jones Kosice, Slovakia, 2005.
7.	2:18:08	Cyril Leigh Manchester, 1972.
8.	2:19:10	Larry Mathews Sacramento, USA, 1993.
9.	2:19:22	Mike Neary Bolton, 1986.
10.	2:19:52	Malcolm MacBride Glasgow, 1983.
11.	2:20:52	Paul Blakeney Milton Keynes, 1979.
12.	2:21:10	Duncan Mason London, 2000.
13.	2:21:38	Arthur Walsham Manchester, 1971.
14.	2:22:06	Tony Byrne Windsor, 1976.
15.	2:22:20	Mike Deegan London, 1981.
16.	2:22:27	Pumlani Bangani London, 2006.
17.	2:22:31	Ricky Gwilt Manchester, 1982.
18.	2:22:35	John Tarrant Liverpool, 1960.
19.	2:23:09	Mike Wakefield Manchester, 1981.
20.	2:23:42	Roy Profitt Manchester, 1971.
21.	2:23:51	Gerry O'Neill Dublin, 2005.
22.	2:24:10	Alan Sladen Bolton, 1981.
23.	2:24:32	Mike Murphy Galway, IRE, 1975.
24.	2:24:37	Barry Aspden Manchester, 1982.
25.	2:24:55	Peter Adams London, 1983.
26.	2:25:31	Malcolm Fowler Florence, Italy, 1994.
27.	2:25:35	Godfrey Claff Manchester, 1982.
28.	2:26:05	Patrick Milroy Queensferry to Prestatyn, 1981.

MEMBERS WHOSE BEST TIMES WERE ACHIEVED BEFORE OR AFTER BELONGING TO THE CLUB:

2:11:04	Dave Edge (Canada) Boston, USA, 1983.
2:14:04	Kevin McCluskey (Copeland) Berlin, 1992.
2:16:56	Eric Williams (Sale H) Manchester, 1984.
2:17:43	Malcolm Price (Sunderland) London, 1998.
2:19:34	Peter Morris (Wigan) London, 1983.
2:19:35	Tony Byrne (Bolton) Harlow, 1975.

2:20:22	Nick Jones (Tipton H) London, 1998.
2:20:57	Clive Bucknall (Stretford AC) London, 1986.
2:22:09	Darren Hale (Sheffield) Manchester, 1997.
2:22:12	Neil Wilkinson (Morpeh H) London, 2005.
2:23:18	James Jackson (Aldershot) London, 1997.
2:25:12	Matt Shaw (Tipton H) London, 2005.

Please advise Roy Profitt of any corrections or additions to these lists. He hopes to produce deeper lists in the future.

Two Steps Forward, Three to The Side, Oh He's Down Again

This next article was taken from The Observer magazine in January. Quite simply, it illustrates the enormity of a marathon and should give us all food for thought as we consider the task faced by our own members on Saturday week. This is the full article by the Observer Journalist Frank Keating:

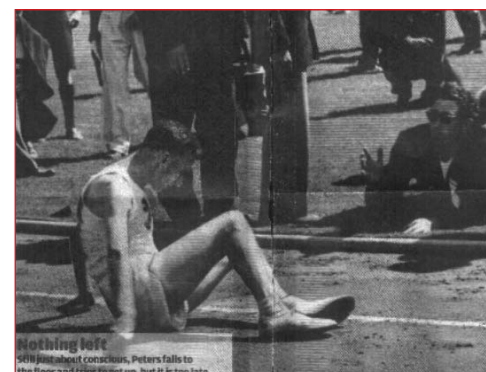
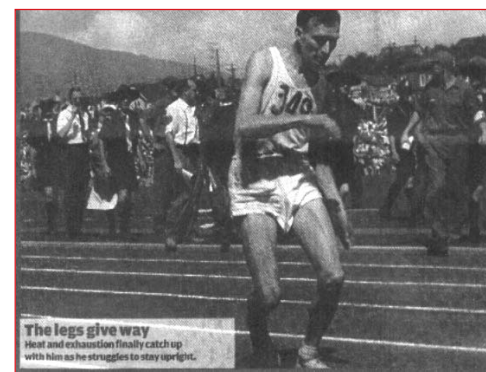
After running 26 miles, Jim Peters was 17 minutes ahead of his nearest rival and certain of gold. But after he collapsed, only yards from victory and with the pallor of death on his lips, he never ran again, as Frank Keating recalls...

Jim Peters could only presume the torment of his marathon collapse at the 1954 Empire Games (what are now the Commonwealth Games) was an excruciating heartbreak, both for history and for all who witnessed it. 'But I wouldn't actually know myself,' Peters told me, 40 years after that day and five before his death in 1999, at the age of 80. 'Because, to be honest, I have never been able to recall a single thing about it.'

In the 26-miler on that humid and sweltering Canadian afternoon, Peters, Britain's most consummate male marathon runner, had so dominated the rest of the field that he had entered the stadium a remarkable 17 minutes ahead of the next man. But at once the acclaim that greeted him froze to a horrified silence as the traditional 'victory parade' of a single 400-metre circuit of the track turned into a grotesquely hideous ballet when the spindly and exhausted Essex optician

(who had three times in the previous 22 months lowered the world's best-ever time for the distance) embarked on what amounted to a pitifully tottering dance of death.

Instinct and a misbegotten willpower under the merciless sun had Peters keeling over onto the cinder track again and again like a drunken vaudeville tumbler; each time he hauled himself up once more to stagger on in a groggy, futile nobility. When some from the grandstands, unable to bear it, began to shout for a stop, the stadium announcer crassly called for order and 'a respect for sportsmanship'.



High in the pressbox, Peter Wilson of the Daily Mirror fed another sheet into his typewriter: 'Two steps forward,

three to the side. So help me, he is running backwards now ... oh, he's down again ..

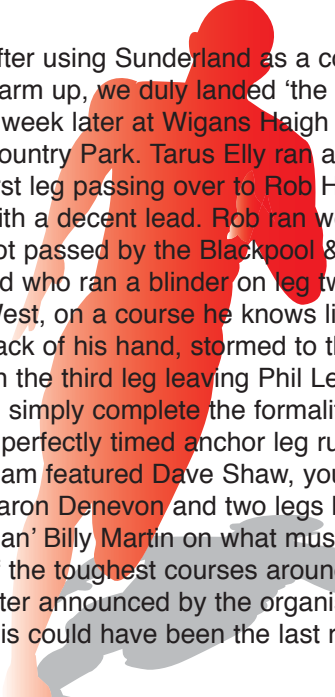
The nauseous spectacle of a semi-conscious man being allowed to destroy himself while no one had the power or gumption to intervene.'

The ghastly, ghastly mime lasted all of 11 minutes and 200 metres, when a boxer's sprawl of surrender at the halfway mark had the England team's masseur Mick Mayes stepping in to call for stretcher-bearers. Peters, skin a deathly mottled grey and a collar of foam streaming from his mouth, was borne away on a stretcher. He never ran again.

Forty years on, in 1994, the spruce, white-haired 75-year-old conceded: 'I was lucky not to have died that day.' He said that he had often suffered since from giddiness and what he called 'my Vancouver headache'; and he cheerfully admitted regrets: 'I set off too fast in the heat, but that was always my way: to destroy the field ... If someone had told me I was so far ahead, I dare say I'd have eased off a bit ... When I woke up in hospital I thought I'd won. When I asked a nurse, she'd said, "You did great, Jim, just great", so at least I went back to sleep a winner, didn't I?

'My lasting grief is that all the headlines for my idiocy denied just deserts for the actual gold medal winner [Jim McGhee of Scotland] - but at least I'd beaten Jim to the stadium entrance by a whole 17 minutes, so the Duke of Edinburgh struck me a special medal, inscribed "J Peters, a most gallant marathon runner". It's the most treasured of all my trophies.'

Haigh Hall relays



After using Sunderland as a convenient warm up, we duly landed 'the big one' a week later at Wigans Haigh Hall Country Park. Tarus Elly ran a strong first leg passing over to Rob Hughes with a decent lead. Rob ran well but got passed by the Blackpool & Fylde lad who ran a blinder on leg two. Phil West, on a course he knows like the back of his hand, stormed to the front on the third leg leaving Phil Leybourne to simply complete the formalities with a perfectly timed anchor leg run. The B team featured Dave Shaw, young Aaron Denevon and two legs by 'iron man' Billy Martin on what must be one of the toughest courses around. It was later announced by the organisers that this could have been the last running of

this particular race, but due to a very good turn out on the day they've decided to continue with the event next year, which is great cos the lads won 4 bottles of Stella each! Cheers!

Pete Budd

Northern 12 Stage

In what were blustry conditions at times, Salford Harriers headed to the North East for all the fun of the twelve stage relays. With four long and eight short legs to be tackled there was plenty to be getting excited about.

Tarus kicked off the day with a very strong leg to return the team in 9th place and to set the team up nicely for challenging for medals. Handing over to Carl, who has been suffering recently with illness but made the team stronger, went on to push the team up the pecking order and returned in 5th place. Paul, who has done a great job in selecting the team and finalising arrangements, ran a committed run and returned the team in 7th place. Taking over on the 4th and 2nd long leg, Andi Jones pulled back local north east athlete Martin Scaife, Morpeth and was hunting down an inform Matt Barnes, Alty AC. Jones returned in 4th place, and 4th fastest leg of the day, and handed over to Bangani who extended us up the running order with a great run to return in 3rd place. Approaching the half way stage in the race and the strong travelling support were thinking that maybe we were strong enough to medal even though we were missing a few runners who will hopefully be back in action for the National in two weeks. Kovacs held on to third place and handed over to the recent winner of the Wilmslow Half marathon, Tomas Abyu. Tomas not feeling 100% ran a solid run and moved the team up to 2nd place which was to be our highest placing of the day.

Billy Martin and Rob Hughes ran solid short stage legs ensuring the team stayed in contention in bronze medal position. Eddie Simpson headed out on the final long stage leg, but has missed many weeks with injury but still put in all his effort to retrun the team in 5th placing. The final two legs were ran by Phil West who maintained 5th place and Paul Simons, member of the winning vets team last weekend, bringing back the strong Salford Harriers A team in 5th place.

On the whole a very good turn out and run from all runners, and again fantastic travelling support. Well done to all and see you in Birmingham in two weeks. **Andi Jones**

Members News

R.I.P. PHIL BROWNLOW 1916-2007



The club were saddened to hear the news that Phil Brownlow has recently passed away. He and his brother Geoff were great supporters of Salford. Phil Brownlow was a war hero, winning the DFM (Distinguished Flying medal) for his actions with the RAF. His running was each side of the war and he was one of the many sportsmen whose careers were ruined by the Second World War. In 1936, he won the East Lancs Junior Cross Country Championship which was then a major event. Around this time he was training with Tom Evenson, 1932 Olympic steeplechase silver medallist, and really stretching him. It is clear that there were great expectations for his future prospects. He settled well into the senior ranks and finished 6th in the Northern in 1939. By the time the war finished, he had probably turned 30 and, although running for several years afterwards, he never fulfilled the potential he had shown in his younger days. The Club will miss him greatly.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS



At a recent committee meeting it was decided to do away with the age related formula which was a factor in the club championship over the past couple of years.

Ten local races have been selected for the championship, and from these a runners five best results will count. A points system will be used in that the first Salford runner will be awarded 10 points down to 1 point for the 10th and any subsequent Salford finishers.

Championship prizes will be awarded for the first 3 overall in both male and female categories. Championship races will be as follows:

1. Wed 28/03/07 Joan Rhodes Memorial 5k (Littleborough, Rochdale)
2. Sun 29/04/07 Radcliffe 10k
3. Tues 15/05/07 Geoff Doggett

Memorial 5k (Littleborough, Rochdale)

4. Sun 24/06/07 Horwich 5k races (these are separate races over same course around Horwich town centre - points awarded on a best time basis)
5. Tues 03/07/07 Rochdale 10k road race.
6. Wed 01/08/07 Saddleworth 6
7. Thurs 16/08/07 Radcliffe 5 Mile Trail Race (very easy trail running)
8. Sun 02/09/07 Andy O'Sullivan 25th Anniversary Race (5 MILES road from Falcon Inn)
9. Sun 23/09/07 Pendlebury half marathon
10. Thurs 27/09/07 Ron Hill Birthday 5k (Littleborough, Rochdale)

It would be great to see as many Salford runners out as possible in these local races. The championship has been scheduled to be completed earlier than last year to avoid any clash with the Cross Country season, which usually begins in October.

Good luck and good running in this years championship.

Mike Holmes, Road Race Secretary



Think last time I wrote I was still in Argentina, just climbing up to the Altiplano, I remember feeling pretty awful as I was trying to remember what my password was to get on the forum. I was probably around 3000m then. It was the start of 6 weeks where I don't think I dropped below 3500m. Riding the bike seemed a whole new experience. The slightest rise in the road would leave you panting like you'd ran a pb for 400m. Once I entered Bolivia the nature of the whole trip changed completely. I was use to drinking a nice coffee and crispy croissants for breakfast. I entered Bolivia in the morning, stamped in the country by a man in rags, and took breakfast sat on a stool in the street eating fried dough. Done by a fat woman in a bowler hat. The riding was then on pretty bad gravel roads. It was hot, but I could still get pop, sold from peasants in mud huts.

Right now i'm still in Peru. I've dropped from the mountains down to the coast. It was 50 miles of continuous downhill. I started in a hailstorm, where the hail

stung my legs and finished in the driest desert you could imagine. So that's where I am, I've rode about 1600k up the coast. Including a 220k stint without a town or place to buy a drink. I was thinking of camping somewhere that day, but halfway through I met a tricycle motortaxi, the driver had ran out of petrol, so I gave him mine I use for the camping stove. That meant I was definitely not camping. The scenery rarely changed, sand dune after sand dune. But tomorrow I should reach the Ecuadorian border. From there i'll start the climb up into the mountains again.

I Know about what happend to Coxy, and it spooked me a bit. But to be honest i've been impressed by the warmness of the people. When I was on the altiplano going through villages of mud huts, my arm got knackered from all the waving at people who wanted to run alongside and say hello as I rode along. I did have one idiot though who wanted to rob me in Lima but I was too shrewd for him and I gave him the slip.

John Brown



CONGRATULATIONS to Andrew and Jenny Towell on the birth of their son Joseph Clarke 6lb10 oz.



I have just come across the web page of the Salford Harriers and in particular the newsletter and noticed an article on the history of the SH and wondered if the club might be interested in my father's experiences.

My father, Albert Wolstencroft (born 1901), was an active member of the Harriers from 1922 for about 10 years or so. He was a sprinter and was the Salford Harriers 100 yards champion in 1925 and 1928. Athletics seems to have been a very active sport in the 1920's and for example in 1924 he competed in around 20 meetings in the Lancashire and Cheshire area, winning medals and prizes in many. The local papers took quite an interest in those days and I have a picture and a cartoon from the Manchester Evening Chronicle, the latter showing the highlights of a 1925 Salford Harriers meeting at Belle Vue. I have programs from several of the athletics sports meetings he attended (including the program for the Salford Harriers meeting at the Manchester Athletic

Club Ground, Fallowfield, on 4th May 1929) and they make quite interesting reading from the list of prizes, the list of officials, the band program (in some cases) etc. The number of entries was often surprisingly large and eg at the 1929 Harriers meeting there were 16 heats (91 competitors for the 100 yards flat handicap)! My father died in 1940 but I still have his various medals including 4 from the Harriers, numerous prizes/trophies as well as his running jersey described in the program as turkey red.

Ray Wolstencroft



Alfie Simons in City Top... Good Lad!



Which one suits me best?



Please can people with access to a computer check out the following link:
www.justgiving.com/paulsimons

Feel free to sponsor me for the London Marathon if you should so wish. I am running for Bliss, which campaigns for improvements in neonatal care so that more babies survive and have the best quality of life.

Just an aside to that.....my longest run so far was 80 minutes for the Wilmslow 1/2, not exactly ideal preparation!! I think we should run a book on 'bet my time'.....50p a guess and winner will receive some running kit.**Paul Simons**

(May be a good idea to get something posted on the website forum for that Paul, ed)

Physio Room

With many runners churning out the miles in preparation for the London marathon, and many other runners with different yet equally specific training goals in mind, some of you are inevitably going to pick up injuries. This month we hear from physiotherapists Duncan Mason and James Williams on some common complaints and sensible management tips.

ACHILLES TENDON INJURIES

The Achilles tendon is the largest and strongest tendon in the body. It is quite a remarkable structure, being able to sustain loads of up to 17 times body weight, with only 13% the oxygen supply of muscle. Yet it is also the most frequently injured tendon and many runners will suffer from Achilles tendon problems during their running life. Achilles tendon injuries interrupt many training programmes and ruin many plans for PBs. They are also the most common injury in athletes over the age of 40 (so watch out old gits!) and are certainly an injury you want to try and avoid.

Why then, I hear you ask, is the Achilles tendon, the thickest and strongest tendon in the body, so frequently injured? Well now, tendons, like all musculoskeletal tissue, are exposed to multiple episodes of minor trauma during activity. However, they respond poorly to overuse due to a relatively poor blood supply, and healing is therefore notoriously slow. Over a period of time if a tendon's capacity for repair is continually exceeded by its trauma through activity, structural changes and degeneration can occur. This process leaves the tendon substantially defective, which decreases its strength and leaves it less able to tolerate load and thus, vulnerable to further injury.

It's not just a case of overuse through increased mileage though. There is always a classic history of subtle training errors and these may overlap each other. Any number of events can lead to Achilles tendon injury, including:

- Rapidly increasing your running mileage, speed or gradient
- Adding excessive hill running to your training routine
- Starting up too quickly after a lay off
- Trauma caused by sudden and/ or

hard contraction of the calf muscles when putting out extra effort such as in a final sprint

- Insufficient recovery time between sessions
- Change in running surface or inadequate shock absorbency in footwear
- Overuse resulting from the natural lack of flexibility in the calf muscles

The most notable thing from the above list is that each factor is correctable and therefore reversible. Intrinsic factors out of a runner's control, which often need further examination, are biomechanics of the foot, and the relative range of motion in the foot and ankle joint. This is because the Achilles plays an important biomechanical function in the positioning of the foot as the leg moves forward when running.

Achilles tendon injury is one of the simpler clinical diagnoses to make. Originally the pain may not be disabling, but with continued activity it can begin to affect a runner's ability to train effectively. Rest will often relieve symptoms, but return to activity reactivates the pain, generally within a few training sessions. The Achilles tendon is the only major tendon that must tolerate almost full range of movement, including stretch, immediately on rising in the morning. Hence, morning pain is a hallmark of Achilles tendon injury. The degree and duration of the stiffness are considered good indicators of tendon health and potential for recovery. Rest from training can also decrease morning stiffness, but often it will return with an increase in activity. A brief outline of the common symptoms are described below:

- Mild pain after exercise or running that gradually worsens
- A noticeable sense of sluggishness in your leg
- Episodes of localised pain, sometimes severe, along the tendon during or after running
- Morning tenderness about an inch and a half above the point where the Achilles is attached to the heel bone
- Stiffness that generally diminishes as the tendon warms
- Some swelling (the tendon can often appear completely normal, but more often than not will have subtle changes in outline)

'I think that's me. What should I do?'

Firstly, don't panic.....it's not all doom and gloom! As stated above many factors that have predisposed to the problem in the first place can probably be corrected. However, several conditions such as a partial tendon tear and heel bursitis have similar symptoms so you should consult a physiotherapist for a proper diagnosis.

Many of you have probably heard the term Achilles tendonitis. However, the suffix '___itis' specifically refers to inflammation, yet many studies on symptomatic tendons have failed to highlight the presence of inflammatory cells. This may help to explain the limited short term pain-relief, and lack of effectiveness, of anti-inflammatory medications. Unfortunately this dogma is deeply entrenched and the majority of medical practitioners still specifically recommend non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs despite the lack of a biological rationale.

An exercise-based program is essential in tendon rehabilitation, appropriate and progressive exercises must be prescribed if rehabilitation is to succeed. Inadequate amounts of load, speed and endurance may result in incomplete rehabilitation and insufficient musculotendinous strength to return to running. Currently, an eccentric exercise regime remains the gold standard for Achilles tendon rehabilitation and appears effective in most athletes. This does not mean exercising with a chicken on your head, but refers to the type of muscular action that occurs during the lowering phase of an exercise.

In summary, I hope that this has been an informative article. There are many other things to say about Achilles tendon injuries, but I think I have covered the bread and butter stuff for now. An Achilles tendon problem can be a very frustrating injury to a runner, but sensible management and recent techniques of rehabilitation produce a very good outcome in the majority of cases. The take home message is this: by accepting the need to allow time for tendon recovery, runners can improve their management of this debilitating problem. These conditions often take months rather than weeks to resolve, but through sensible training modifications and manual treatments, a full and pain free recovery can usually be made. **James Williams**

INJURY PREVENTION FOR RUNNERS

As a Physiotherapist working with sports injuries there are two main types of injury I encounter. The first being sudden traumatic onset, this type of injury is common in contact sports, such as rugby or football, often due to a fall in a compromised position, such as Michael Owen's latest knee injury in the World Cup. Traumatic injuries may also result from explosive sporting activities, such as in track and field athletics, for example a hamstring injury or Achilles tendon rupture. The second type of problems we see are overuse injuries, these are more prevalent in endurance sports, where the demands of training and prolonged competition expose weaknesses in the biomechanics of the athletes musculoskeletal system, particularly when in a state of fatigue.

In distance running, whilst athletes will undoubtedly experience traumatic injuries, overuse injuries are more commonplace. Traumatic injuries could include a fall, may result in a soft tissue injury, such as a sprained ligament or torn muscle. These types of injury are not entirely preventable, their occurrence often lies in the lap of the gods, although taking such measures as warming up sufficiently, stretching, undertaking a conditioning exercise programme and being more attentive to avoid accidents can certainly help. It is for the overuse type of injury, in endurance sports, that preventative measures or 'prehabilitation' can be invaluable. Prehabilitation is a service offered by Sports Specialist Physiotherapists who apply manual therapy techniques such as massage and manipulation along with prescribing exercises to treat movement dysfunction in athletes, with the aim of avoiding injury and enhancing performance.

Overuse injuries occur when repetitive stresses applied to a soft tissue during activity cannot be tolerated, this results in micro trauma. Micro trauma is microscopic damage or tears in a muscle, tendon or other soft tissue. As the micro trauma accumulates to a significant level, signs and symptoms such as pain and dysfunction (abnormal functioning) will start to affect performance. So the first preventative measure at the onset of the signs and symptoms of micro

trauma is to take a rest day and allow tissues to regenerate. A day off or concentrating on another discipline will often make a huge difference to recovery.

The amount of stress a tissue can withstand depends on loading and biomechanics. Loading refers to the training volume applied and if carefully controlled will not only gain the best physiological benefits, but also allows soft tissues to gradually adapt and strengthen. The message here therefore is to avoid any sudden hikes in volume or mileage, and when returning from a lay off build up gradually, your Physiotherapist will advise you on this. Biomechanics is the science of how the body moves and the forces that act upon it during activity. Abnormal biomechanics will directly affect the rate at which overuse injuries occur, as movement dysfunction will lead to increased stress on soft tissues and eventually increased injury rate.

Movement dysfunction is present in us all, contrary to some people's beliefs none of us are perfect! The factors influencing movement dysfunction can be structural or functional. Structural factors can be managed by application of orthotics, taping or surgery to correct the anatomical fault, for example over pronation of the foot or a leg length discrepancy can be managed with orthotics. Functional factors relate to the efficiency of the muscular control system and recent advances in Physiotherapy have given us insight into how we can treat and prevent injuries with exercise, for example core stability exercises in cases of low back pain.

All of the skeletal muscles of the body can be classified into two major groups- the stabilisers and the mobilisers. All muscles are adapted anatomically and physiologically to perform their roles. The stabiliser muscles have the role of maintaining the body in optimal alignment, they have a postural control function for example our glutei stabilise our hip and sacroiliac joints during weight bearing. The mobiliser muscles have the role of producing movement for example our hamstrings produce the main propulsive force behind hip extension during running. Both groups of muscles need to work together harmoniously to achieve optimal movement and performance.

Movement dysfunction occurs as a result of injury or from the movement habits and postures we adopt. Certain muscles (stabiliser muscles) become under active, of increased functional length and exert less influence on movement. It is said that these muscles become 'defacilitated'. We still need to maintain our stability by some means during movement, so certain other muscles (the mobilisers) become short, tight and overactive and have an increased influence on movement. As time progresses these changes in roles can eventually lead to micro trauma and therefore injuries.

So what can we as athletes do about this? Well firstly it isn't as bad a picture as I have painted so far, as although most of us are exhibiting movement dysfunction, we only do so to a low level, and it tends to only become a problem when we increase our training too quickly or hit high training volumes. What we need to incorporate into training programmes is dedicated time for intensively stretching tight muscles and tissues and more importantly include some specific stability work. Those structures to be particularly aware of for runners are hamstrings, rectus femoris (one of the quadriceps which acts as a hip flexor and knee extensor), gastrocnemius (calf plantar flexor), back extensors.

Introducing stability work out into your training regimen could reap rewards on two fronts by enhancing performance and reducing injuries and their disruption to training. The key areas to work on for runners are:

∑ Core, deep abdominals in particular
∑ Pelvic girdle, mainly your glutei

Exercises forms such as Pilates and Yoga will certainly help target these areas. The reason that these areas are so important is that if movement is poorly controlled at these more central points in the kinetic (movement) chain, there is always going to be a 'knock on' effect further down.

To summarise injuries can be prevented if we take a measured approach to training building up gradually and using rest for 24-48 hrs at the first signs of overuse injury and micro trauma. Incorporating strength and conditioning, stretching and stability exercises into our training will also build up efficiency and tensile

strength in muscles in particular to enhance performance and reduce injury risk. **Duncan Mason**

You can book a physio appointment with **Duncan** at Worsley Physiotherapy, Ackerley House, Forrester Street, Worsley (0161 702 9474) or with **James** at Bury Physio & Sports Injury Clinic, 15 Knowsley Street, Bury (0161 762 0814)

Huge discounts are afforded to Salford Harriers!!

Birthdays

Birthday wishes this month are extended to: Pete Budd (53), Gerry O'Neill (39), Julie Cook (39), Mike Deegan (51), Russ Derbyshire (52), Terry Dermody (60), Martin Gill (51), Dennis Holdem (63), Paul McNamara (42), Dave Shaw (42), Paul Simons (43), Tony Smith (43), Hilary Towell (63) Dave Williams (44).

