

Running Class Frequently Asked Questions

Q - What level of fitness are the class members?

A – While the exact percentages vary a little with each class, it is usually about 70% Beginners (could not comfortably run a mile), 10% Intermediate (could run 1-2 miles comfortably), 10% Advanced (could run 2 or more miles comfortably), and 10% Speed group (have a good running base already and want to get faster by doing Interval Training (aka Speedwork)).

Q – Is the training competitive?

A – Definitely not. The training environment is supportive and we are out there to help each other, not finish faster than someone else in the class. On race day you can be as competitive as you like. Unless you are in the Speed group, you should be ENJOYING your training and even the Speed group should be on the bleeding edge of fun most of the time.

Q – Are there any age restrictions?

A – While the vast majority of our athletes are in the 20-50 range, the age of our athletes has varied from 8 to 70+. Children should only be there with their parent(s).

Q – Is a medical exam required to participate?

A – We will accept your signature on the entry form as confirmation that you are medically/physically okay to participate in a regular running program without putting your health at risk. If you have any doubt at all that you are medically fit to participate you should seek the advice of your doctor.

Q – What is the training program like?

A – All of the programs (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, & Speed) begin with a warm-up and end with a cool-down & stretching. The beginning program starts with 1 min of jogging followed by 1 min of walking, rinse & repeat for a total of 10 minutes, then begin the cool-down walk, then stretch. Each week the amount of jogging increase while the walking interval stays the same, and the total training time increases gradually (week 2 is 2 minutes of jogging with a 1 min walk, rinse & repeat for 12 mins, week 3 is 3 mins of jogging, a 1 min walk, rinse & repeat for 14 mins, etc.). By the 8th week you can probably run without the walk breaks, but it is okay to keep the walk breaks.

Q – How often does class meet?

A – We meet once a week on Weds, when we have a presenter, a full cadre of group leaders, and my bride, Vanessa (also a Physical Therapist) lead us in stretching. We encourage our athletes to get together for other runs during the week because most find it is more fun and easier to keep with your training with company. It is important that you commit to do your training at least 3 times a week, barring a medical problem, in order to be successful.

Q – How many times a week do I need to run?

A - While the right answer depends upon which training schedule you are on, you need to commit to doing your training at least 3 times per week. The training is actually enjoyable, gets easier, & is encouraging if you are regular with it. Train less than 3 times a week and the workouts will get harder and discouraging. Plan ahead to carve out your training time and you will find yourself, fitter, faster and enjoying yourself very quickly.

Q – What if I have to miss a class or classes?

A – Not a problem. I ask that you let me and your group leaders know if you will miss a class, but it will not keep you from successfully completing the class or the 5K. You will have the complete training program schedule and can do the training on your own, wherever you may be.

Q – What if it is raining or threatening to rain? Will we have class?

A - Rain will not ever cancel a class. If it is lightning or there is a visible funnel cloud we will cancel class. Sadly, the weather changes so quickly that it is almost impossible to tell 10 minutes before class what the weather will be like at class start time or at the St. Johns Country Day School track – so plan on coming.

Q – 150 people in the class sounds like a lot. What if I have questions?

A – The beginning level athletes will be split into groups of 10-12 athletes each. Each group will have 2 group leaders who will meet with you at the beginning of each class to see if you have any questions and to see how you are doing. They are great sources of information and are there expressly to help make sure you enjoy your training. If your group leader does not know the answer to a question, or any time you have a concern, you are encouraged to contact Bob Boyd at 904.272.1770, or BobBoydFL@gmail.com, right away. It is always better to ask than not.

Q – Where is the class held (where is St. Johns Country Day School)?

A – All of our classes are held at the St. Johns Country Day School (SJCDS) track. SJCDS is located at 3100 Doctors Lake Dr, Orange Park, FL 32073. The entrance to the campus is on Doctors Lake Drive about 2.5 miles from the Kingsley end of Doctors Lake Dr or 1.5-2 miles from the Peoria end of Doctors Lake Dr. Once you have turned into the campus entrance off of Coctors Lake Dr, proceed straight until you run out of paved road (about ¼ mile), over a few speed bumps, and park in the large dirt lot. Then walk up to the track, which is just past the baseball field and around to your right as you approach the dirt parking area. There is also some paved parking areas, though further from the track. Do allow yourself some additional time to find things, especially the 1st night of class. We start promptly at 6:30.

Q – What is the class party like?

A – The class party is held at noon, Saturday, May 29th, just before the Memorial Day 5K on 5/31. Everyone brings a dish to share (salads, appetizer, side dish, dessert) to share pot-luck style and Bob Boyd arranges for baby-back ribs, smoked turkey, pulled pork, cole slaw, and baked beans from Sonny's. Your class technical shirt, which will include your name and all of our class participants on it, will be given out at the class party. One really does not need to carbo-load before a 5K, but it sure is fun. Did I mention that peanut butter fudge brownies are an excellent dessert to bring? The party location will be announced.

Q – Will I be able to contact other class members about getting together for group runs?

A – A class roster, including contact information, will be shared with the class so that you can contact other athletes in our class to get together for your training runs outside of class. The use of the class roster for any other purpose (such as business “opportunities,” charitable funding requests, etc., is not allowed. Our class members have a very good recrd of honoring this restriction. Thank you for keeping that tradition going.

Q – What advantage is there to being a member of the Florida Striders?

A – Let me list some of them:

- 10% discount at 1st Place Sports
- \$2 discount for all Florida Strider races

- Monthly newsletter with good articles, information on races, socials, and other club activities.
- Built-in group support.
- Your club helps support over 30 area elementary school run/walk programs in our area - & growing.
- Access to the Weds night group runs at the St. Johns Country Day School Weds nights throughout the year.

Q – Can I use the St. Johns Country Day School Track for other training runs?

A – Unfortunately, no. St. Johns has been very gracious allowing us to use their track for our group workouts throughout the year, but only on Weds night. If you are on campus at other times, you may be asked to leave.

Q – Is running really suppose to be enjoyable?

A – You betcha! Your running should be in the comfort zone at least 90% of the time, meaning you could actually talk without gasping while you are running. If you cannot talk without gasping you are going too fast. Slow down. If you need to walk then walk. If you are in the Speed group and doing intervals you will not be able to talk comfortably and will be more on the “bleeding edge of fun.” Otherwise, your training time should have you working hard enough to generate a sweat, but not so hard that you are not enjoying the time.

Q – What is this runner’s high I’ve heard about?

A – While there are chemicals produced during running, called endorphins, which help elevate your mood and reduce the perception of pain, a “high” feeling such as a euphoric feeling associated with drugs, winning the lottery, or an abundance of chocolate is pretty rare. However, enjoying the company of others with a healthy habit, great conversation, or just enjoying your own company and feeling very positive about your increasing fitness and abilities is very common - & I hope you never take it for granted.

Please ask any other questions you may have to Bob Boyd at 904.272.1770 or BobBoydFL@gmail.com.