

## HHH VR Series – Black Cap Handicap VR250

Race window start times 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> July. Weekdays 0630 to 2030, weekend 0630 to 0900 / 1700 to 2030

This is a team and individual handicap race on an out and back course along the Downs from Ditchling Beacon to the Black Cap trig point and return. To enter this virtual race, please contact either of the team named below, so that you can be assigned a target time and team. It is open to members of Harriers only, ages 16 and over. Parents or guardians of 16 and 17 year olds should contact one of the race organisers to go through the safety points which we will request you to follow.



**The route** begins near the gate on the eastern side of the road opposite the Beacon car park, (this is the view you'll get with the gate behind you) and follows the South Downs Way until the farm gate by the fields at Black Cap at 3.7k from the start. At this point, runners leave the SDW and enter the field taking the track up the hill on the left following a line of trees until reaching the trig point (half way) at 4.1k. Runners must run clockwise round the trig point before returning to the start. Total route distance is just over 8k and your race organisers describe it as "undulating". If you are not familiar with the route we suggest you run it with another of your experienced colleagues (no more than 5).

**Timing.** This is the Strava link. <https://www.strava.com/segments/20405068>. No apologies for another club registering this segment before us! Instructions as before for previous VR include: turn off auto pause on your watch; start / stop your watch and your run at the gate (where the above photo is taken) which will make sure you capture the segment, don't try to second guess it even if you've run this route before. And follow the route description below.

**Race window.** We are aiming to get 50 Harriers for this event so we've extended the race window to give you enough time to choose when to run and it's not crowded. You will be able to run any time during the Thursday and Friday starting between 0630 and 2030. At the weekends, Ditchling Common Car Park and the Downs in particular on this section are extremely busy with cyclists, walkers and runners, so the race window on Saturday and Sunday is start times 0630 to 0900 and 1700 to 2030. You can run in groups of 6 or less provided you maintain a 2m social distance. If there are more runners setting off at the same time, you just need to allow a sensible gap.

**Car parking.** Pay and display at Ditchling Beacon. The location reference is 803351 on paybyphone.co.uk

**Safety.** Your own health and safety and that of others is your number one priority, we don't want anything to go wrong and neither do you, so here's a reminder:

- The paths are hard with loose stones which are slippery especially downhill – watch your footfalls, wear the right shoes, properly laced
- It can be very hot, UV levels are high – wear a hat, sunscreen, take water with you or have it at the car park with your treat food for afterwards
- Tell your close family members when and where you're going (!) and your team captain. Carry a mobile phone and have your name and address written on a slip of paper in your pocket
- The SDW is a bridleway so you'll meet horses, mountain bike riders and sometimes animals. Be aware of them, give them plenty of space, listen out. **If you wear headphones you'll be disqualified.**
- **Covid-19.** Social distancing of 2m still applies, and no groups more than 6. There are 3 gates to open on the route, wear gloves and use sanitiser when you get back to your car if you need to

For 16 and 17 year olds, we ask that parents or guardians speak to us first to make sure they are competent to run this distance. We'd also like you to run with them. We understand that this may not be possible (!) so we will organise a race window to accommodate your son or daughter in a small group, please contact one of the race organisers.

**Live leaderboard.** For those of you on Strava premium, you'll probably get a good view by filtering on "this month". For an even better view and for those of you who are not on the Strava premium service, your team captains will provide a link so that you can see a Harriers only live leaderboard which will update when you upload your runs on Strava. Watch out for "El Presidente sports reporting" which may again be in operation.

**The course in more detail – distances from start in km, in brackets for the return route**

Follow the well worn path which curves round first to the right and then left along the line of fence posts. As you come over the brow of the first hill just before you hit 1k, the path then moves away from the line of fence posts up over the next hill and then down to a gate at 1.9k (6.4k). Slow down here!



After the gate, cross the road watching out for anything coming from the left or the right and follow the stoney path up the hill. The SDW is quite narrow here, watch out for cyclists coming up the hill behind you or hurtling down towards you. At the top of the hill at 2.3k (6.0k), follow the SDW slightly to the right and don't be tempted by the prospect of a downhill on the left. This will take you to Plumpton College, and whilst this is lovely, for the purpose of this race it would be better signposted "This way ends in Ignominy". Pictured here.

Staying on the SDW, you're now on a faster stretch and the path is wider, with no fence on your right so there's nothing in the way of the crops and stunning views across to Seaford Head. Watch where you put your feet, the stones are sharp... you may see some cows on your right just before the brow of the hill at 3.4k (4.9k).



The fence is on both sides now and if you feel like you're picking up speed, and you probably are as it's downhill to the gate at 3.7k (4.6k).

The SDW goes to the right here but you go through the gate and take the path up the hill.

It's ok if someone happens to open a gate for you, but not ok if they pace you on an MTB – organisers and fellow Beetroots won't be happy. A navigation error here could be costly so practice this!

Follow the path up the hill, along the line of trees on the left here in this photo. There's a more grassy path which heads lower down towards Lewes and you don't want this one.

As the path levels out and becomes a bit more stoney, keep following the line of trees as they turn more to the left and you'll find something remarkable. It's your specially constructed turning point at 4.1k.

Run clockwise around the trig point – this is important to record against the Strava segment.

This is my finish point... it remains for me to say to you "run back to where you started from". Run as far as the gate in the field where you began – and stop your watch.

Have fun and stay on your feet.

