ORIONHARRIERS

RUNNING SINCE 1911



WELCOME PACK 2026/2027

Club History

The origins of the club date back to 1908 when certain members of the Orion Gymnastic Club (that's why the club vest is white) discovered that running, even around Hackney where the club was based, could be fun! On the 7th November 1908, and in Epping Forest, the first Orion run at Chingford was attended by 20 gym members.
In 1911, Orion Harriers was officially founded by Frankie Harriss and Joe Spicer. You can find out more about the club's history on our website www.orionharriers.com

Club HQ

The Club's HQ is a newly refurbished facility nestled in Epping Forest, it is approx 5 minute walk from Chingford Station. There is an excellent social area with a small kitchen and changing rooms with hot showers.
Please note there is no parking at the Club's HQ grounds. There is ample parking further down Bury Road (nearer Chingford station).

Being a Member

We are a friendly, inclusive club with opportunities for all ages and abilities all of whom enjoy running through the magnificent Epping Forest and beyond.
We know it can be a slightly daunting turning up at a training session or a race for the first time, but we are a friendly, encouraging bunch of runners who will fully appreciate your efforts.

Racing for Orion Harriers

You do not have to wait to be asked to run for the Club. Everyone is encouraged to race as often as they want, and we are full of encouragement for any runner in an Orion vest. Members of Orion will race in all different kinds of races including track, road and cross country. We participate in a number of winter and summer leagues, host a number of races around Epping Forest and turn out in local road races. Someone from the club is usually racing most weekends of the year. Check our Facebook page, fixture list, Whatsapp groups or ask around at the club about who is racing and you will probably have some company at a race you have entered.
If you are entering a race that is not part of our membership, you will be entitled to a discounted race fee for being an affiliated runner so, simply put "Orion Harriers" as your affiliated club/team along with your UKA number.

Spond

The majority of our training and racing opportunities are organised via the Spond app. The app is free and can be found here https://spond.com/client/
Here are the relevant invite codes to join your desired group:

Orion Harriers Training & Social Group https://group.spond.com/WGKNL
Orion Race Registration Group (Members Only) https://group.spond.com/FIKIN

Racing

As part of your welcome pack you should receive a fixtures card which sets out all of our races throughout the year. A copy of this can also found online via http:www.orionharriers.com/fixtures/

Orion Harriers participates in a series of inter-club leagues throughout the year, cross-country, road and track. Everyone is encouraged to turn out for the club whenever they can. You do not have to be one of our faster runners to participate. All races cater for runners of all standards and the scoring system is based on finishing places, so even if you aren't one of the first Orion Harriers to finish you may reduce other club's scores by finishing ahead of one of their scoring runners. They are great fun and usually involve some socialising or food afterwards. You can also satisfy your competitive streak by beating your own times and goals and you will usually find yourself racing alongside the same people each time and over time you will develop a bit of a rivalry.

If you would like to participate in any of our races, please arrive wearing your Orion colours (see kit information) and race (most of the races listed on our fixture list will include the race fee as part of your membership). However, we would suggest that you speak with one of our captains beforehand who will be able to give you additional information about the course/lift sharing/changing facilities etc.

Winter Cross Country Season (October to March)

The club's winter fixtures are focussed on cross country events.
There are 3 mob matches against our traditional rivals Blackheath, Ranelagh, and South London Harriers.
We also take part in two leagues, each with 5 or 6 races per season:

- Our priority league during the winter is the Essex League has races for all age groups, against clubs from all over the county
- Chingford League is a little less competitive and is against 10 local clubs.

The season starts with the Winter Handicap and finishes with The Orion 15 (see below). All of the races are explained in a little bit more detail below.

Winter Handicap

This cross country 5 mile race takes place in October through the forest. Everyone is set off according to times they have achieved from the previous season with the slowest starting first, followed at intervals by faster and fastest runners.
Scoring: The handicap times are subtracted from runners' race times. Faster runner = smaller handicap time subtracted. Our handicapper usually gets it right with lots of runners finishing very close together in a heap at the finish!

Chingford League

There are 6 races, usually held on Saturdays. The distance is approximately 5 miles and is a mixture of trial, mud and road. We host one of these races and the remaining 5 are held around north east London (usually, Victoria Park - Tower Hamlets, Dagenham, Trent Park - Cockfosters, Lee Valley Velopark, Redbridge Cycle Circuit etc.)
The team competitions then culminates in March with a 4x3000m cross country relay, after which all presentations are made. It is great fun and everyone is welcome to join in.

Scoring: There are 5 team categories: Men's A, B and Vet teams, Women's A and Vet teams. Teams of 6. Incomplete teams also included in the points, using the "ghost runner"score (total of runners plus one) to make up teams. The senior individual categories are as follows: U20 Women, Senior Women, Vet Women (40+), Supervet Women (50+), Ultravet Women (60+), U20 Men, Senior Men, Vet Men (40+), Supervet Men (50+), Ultravet Men (60+). For all age categories there is a perpetual trophy to be awarded to the winner for that year, plus medals for the 2nd and 3rd placed athletes. In all individual competitions the best 5 of 6 performances (not including the relays) are counted.

Essex League

There are 5 races. The standard is higher than the Chingford League but please don't let this put you off. The courses are great fun. You will be racing approximately 6k for Senior Women and 8k for Senior Men. The venues can vary from Colchester, Chelmsford, Southend.

Scoring: The numbers to score per team is four in each age group (including Vet Men) with the exception of Senior Men where six runners are to score and Veteran Women where three runners are to score. For a more indepth look at how the EL base their scoring system please go to https://www.orionharriers.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Essex-League-Constitution-and-Rules.pdf

The Mercury

Orion Harriers organises The Mercury each year which is also historically the club XC Championships.. It is a tough 10 mile cross country race that takes place in Epping Forest. The fee for this race is £5.00 for members. There is an award up for grabs if you are the first Orion woman and man to cross the finish line and everyone who takes part gets Winter Grand Prix points (see below). The Mercury also incorporates one of the club's handicap races.

Orion 15

We also host the infamous Orion 15 which has been voted in the top 50 by Runners World readers. It is our biggest event of the year where runners will enjoy 15 miles of old-school cross country racing through Epping Forest. If you are interested in this race – speak to some Orion members who will help you train for one of the toughest cross country races around London! This event is not part of your membership and therefore if you would like to sign up for this event we ask for a minimum donation of £15 and request that you supply a marshall.

Mob Match

Mob matches are a traditional series of annual races in which all runners count towards the final score. Statistically the more runners that turn out the better for the club and the more fun for everyone! The result is not normally known until the last few runners finish and regardless of your age or sex you can make a big difference just by running. Our main rivals are Blackheath, South London Harriers and Ranelagh Harriers.

Scoring: Scoring is based on 3 less than the smaller team's numbers. E.g. if we are at home and have 50 runners, Blackheath brings 46 runners, then it is the first 43 runners to score.

Points are awarded on position and added together. Lowest total wins. The format means that even the slowest runners may contribute to the club's score, each opponent overtaken means a 2 point gain – 1 less for us, 1 more for them.

Winter Grand Prix

If you decide to take part in the Winter cross country season you will automatically be placed into one of our club's divisions (if you have not ran for Orion before you will be automatically placed in the bottom division). Every race you complete on the fixtures card will score you points, during the season you will move up/down the leaderboard for that division. If you are one of the top women/men in the division you will be awarded medals/ prizes and moved up to the next division. It is designed to keep the season interesting and promote internal rivalry!

Summer Season (May to September)

The club takes part in a range of road and trail races in the summer months. We also compete in the Southern Athletics League (SAL) covering track and field events. Orion competes in the Midweek League and Elvis League and hosts a race in each of them. The club also organises a number of summer races in the forest which vary in distance and ability, these include the Summer Handicap, Fell Race, Mad Mile, 5k on the Rides and Forest Five.

Summer Handicap

The Summer League kicks off in May with our Summer Handicap. It takes the same format as the Winter Handicap (see above) where the slower runners are set off first with the faster chaps at the back of the field hunting everyone down! It is the same route as the Winter Handicap.

Midweek League (MWL)

The MWL is our Summer number one priority. This is a series of four races which takes place at 2 week intervals between May and July. They start at approx 7.45pm and will usually fall on a Wednesday/Thursday evening in May, June and July. The race distance is between 5 miles and 10k and also includes a mob match at the end. Each club in the MWL will host a race and therefore we will have a home race. There is always food and social opportunities after each race The races are held around North London and Hertfordshire. Historic places we have travelled to are: St Albans, Royston and Trent Park.

Scoring: Team competitions are based on 12 to score for men and 6 to score for women, with separate trophies, as well as the overall trophy with men's and women's scores combined. There are also separate vets team competitions based on 6 men and 3 women. Individual awards are awarded in 5 men's age categories (Senior, M40, M50, M60 and M70) and 5 women's age categories (Senior, W35, W45, W55, W65)

Elvis League

The ELVIS League is a very local series of 5k and 5m races.
The last race is the Forest Five held in August. They are always fun, hilly, short, dry and entertaining. If you haven't raced before these are a great introduction to racing. Points for team and individual places are awarded for each race. Totals are calculated and trophies are awarded at the end of the series. These are not inter club races and therefore will not be covered by your membership fee.
Scoring: For more information on the rules and scoring please refer to the Elvis site https://elvisraces.club/elvis rules/

The Forest Five

The Forest Five was introduced by club president Bob Jousiffe during a lean spell for Orion and generated good revenue and acquired a cult following. It is now a firm fixture in Orion's diary every summer which takes place at 10am on a Saturday in June, July and August. It is a three fixture series also incorporating an ELVIS race.

Scoring: A reduced rate is offered for the 3 race series, with age category trophies for best aggregate time for the series. SW W40 W50 W60 SM M40 M50 M60. Note Women's age categories are now the same as men. The August race is also Orion's home fixture in the ELVIS competition. There are trophies for this race, as above, plus 2nd and 3rd SW and SM. Also 1st Women's and Men's Teams (4 to score). On the day entries £15 per race (or £20 for series) for both club and affiliated runners. To enter: go to https://www.EntryCentral.com/ and search for Orion

Athletics

We are also an athletics club and take part in the Southern Athletics League (SAL). There are 5 meetings throughout the summer and each event consists of an A Team and B Team which makes it an ideal opportunity for people to try out new field events or track races. In each race, every athlete will score points so you have nothing to lose! From 2023 we joined forces and provided a composite team with Loughton AC which was designed to boost numbers and ease the burden of supplying officials. So, if you have watched the athletics on TV and thought you fancied having a go at the long jump, steeple chase or running 5k on the track please speak with Shayne Bellas who

will give you all the information you need. We also have roles for those of you who would like to be an official, scorer or assist in organising the team. Historically, Orion has lost points for not having enough scorers/officials and therefore if this is something you are interested in, again, please contact Shayne Bellas.

5K on the Rides

Is a very low key series of 3 midweek 5k races that takes place on Wednesday evenings in August. The fee is £3.00 for each race and there are series prizes for ladies and men across various age categories. The race is also run by our juniors who are very much encouraged to race against the seniors.

John Clarke Memorial Fell Race

This is the only category A fell race inside the M25. It is a 3.5 mile race with lots of ups and downs, finishing on Pole Hill with great views over Lea Valley. It is a low key event and therefore if you have ever wondered what a fell race is like - this is your opportunity to try it out!
See here for more info: https://www.orionharriers.com/fixtures/fell-race/

Summer Grand Prix

Similarly, to the Winter Grand Prix, if you decide to take part in the Summer Season you will automatically be placed into one of our club's divisions. Every race on our fixtures card that you complete will score you points and you will move up/down the leaderboard for that division. If you are one of the top women/men in the division you will be awarded medals/prizes and move up to the next division. It is a bit of fun and promotes internal rivalry!
There are 20 summer races and all races count towards your total score. MWL scores double race points and there are additional points awarded for ELVIS races. Anyone who runs 4 or less races will be relegated.

Training

We have a number of sessions throughout the week which cater for all abilities.
We have track sessions, interval sessions, forest and road runs all of which vary in distance too. Details of these runs can be found on our fixture card and our website https://www.orionharriers.com/training/ One group we would like to draw your attention to is the Beginners/Jeffing.

Beginners / Jeffing

Throughout the year Orion Harriers offers several 10 week beginner courses. The aim is to get you from running 0 to 5k! We have had a lot of success with these. Our members have gone on to achieve various individual goals such as completing parkrun's and even marathons. The Beginners programme is run in parallel with our Jeffing group which allows runners to use intervals of running and walking to help beginners, and more experienced runners, reach their goals.

Volunteering

Throughout the year the club organises a host of races and events which always require considerable help and as such, all members are expected to marshal/volunteer at a minimum of one event per year. Roles include marshalling, catering, trail laying, race registration but anything you can do is most welcome. Volunteer credits also count towards the allocation of London Marathon places. Keep an eye out on Spond and Social Media for opportunities. Useful contacts for this are:
Marshaling - taylordong365@gmail.com
Catering - socialsecretary@orionharriers.com

London Marathon

The Club gets an allocation of places which goes to club members who volunteer and help the club to function. If you would like to apply for a marathon place please contact our Secretary who will set out the criteria for you. The amount of places is relevant to the number of England Athletics registered members we have
There are always a number of training groups for the marathon and we welcome people who want to join the club specifically for this purpose. As most running magazines advise, joining a running club is an easy way to improve your running and get you ready for 26.2 miles!

White Club Vests and Black Bottoms

The wearing of the white club vest and black bottoms is required for all the inter club races (MWL, Essex League, Chingford League, Elvis races, SAL, etc) and should be worn for all other races that members participate in.The popular red and black vests are to be worn at training only and are not for club races. Vests and all other kit are available for purchase from PB Team Wear.
The link is https://pbteamwear.co.uk/collections/orion-harriers

Knowledge Experience Exchange (KEE)

Occasionally Orion hosts KEE sessions. These are a series of sessions that allow our members to share their knowledge with one another and listen to keynote speakers via zoom. They are usually in the form of workshops (small interactive sessions) or talks. We have already had talks about nutrition, gadgets and keynote speakers such as Shane Benzie. They are really worth signing up to. For further information, please see www.orionharriers.com/kee-sessions

Market Place

We have our very own marketplace where you can purchase and sell any unwanted kit, usually at a very good discounted price. For the latest items on sale, please visit https://www.orionharriers.com/orion-market-place/

Injury and Illness

If you have a pre-existing medical condition or any concerns about your health, the club suggests that you consult your GP before taking up running. If you become ill, it is advisable to take a cautious approach to training and either refrain totally or reduce the intensity of your training depending on the severity of your illness. You should always ensure you have recovered from illness before returning to full training.

Defibrillator

The club owns a defibrillator which is suitable for adults and children. It is currently kept in the club house. If you would like to receive training on how it works please contact one of the committee members.

Committee

The committee is there to help the club to function. They meet bi-monthly. Club members are welcome to put forward their views on how they think that their club should be run. If you have any suggestions for improvement, please contact a member of the committee – a list of current committee members is available from the website. https://www.orionharriers.com/your-2025-committee/

Club AGM

Orion holds its AGM in October each year (after the Winter Handicap) and this is an opportunity for everyone to set the aims and objectives for the club in the coming year.

Insurance

As an affiliate member of UK Athletics, Orion Harriers is covered by Public Liability Insurance.

Running Advice

For further advice on running, please feel free to talk to club members who will be happy to share with you their race experiences, training, injury woes etc.

100 Club

This is Orion's own Lotto. Members can join at the beginning of the year. Each number costs £20 for the year and there are monthly draws in which you can win various amounts throughout the year. If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit www.orionharriers.com/100-club

Buddy Service

Orion is not just a running club, we are a community and we want to look after each other. We therefore offer a 'buddy service' and if you need any help, please contact info@orionharriers.com where we can put you in touch one of our 'buddies'.

Diversity Committee

Orion Harriers are committed to giving people from all backgrounds and abilities access to our club. In order to enhance our outreach to people from a diverse range of ethnicities, age, gender, ability etc, we have created a Diversity Committee who engage with the membership as well as organising outreach programmes within the local community. They also ensure alignment with the policies of England Athletics in relation to Diversity and Equality within our sport. The Equality and Diversity Officer also serves on the club's committee.

Website and Social Media

The Club's website can be found at www.orionharriers.com Here you will find more information about the Club and its activities. Additionally, lots of up-to-date information about races, training, social events, etc, can be found on the Club's FaceBook, Instagram and Twitter pages. Orion also maintains the below WhatsApp Groups, please contact the moderator if you wish to join.

Official WhatsApp Channels

ORION RACE INFO

To communicate information on Orion's race fixtures and important information to members
Contact: Bob Glasgow 07505561833

ORION WOMENS INFO

To communicate information about the club and races for our women
Contact: Nikkii Barnett 07989938242

ORION TUESDAY TRACK

To support the Tuesday evening track sessions
Contact: David Wilson 07971839313

ORION HILL REPS GROUP

To support the Thursday evening hill sessions
Contact: Dan Green 07941281218

If there is anything that isn't explained within this welcome pack please do contact either:

Men's Captain
Bob Glasgow, 07505561833, runforhire1974@gmail.com
Women's Captain
Nikkii Barnett, 07989938242, nikkiibarnett17@gmail.com