



David Fairlamb

THE FIT FACTOR

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THE North East's greatest sporting spectacle, the Great North Run, takes place two weeks from tomorrow.

After having to cancel last year's event due to the pandemic, the knock-on effect means there is a new route this year, including a staggered start.

For the first time the race will not be finishing in South Shields and will instead double back to cross the Tyne Bridge for a second time and finish on the Town Moor in Newcastle.

The organisers, as always, will have the day running like clockwork and after a two-year wait, I'm sure the tens of thousands will embrace the day and once again raise millions for their chosen charities.

Last year almost 17,000 people in 57 countries completed the 13.1m (21km) distance virtually via an app, which allowed them to raise money for charity.

The Great Run Company have made the changes to ensure all runners can socially distance both at the event and on the transport network before and after they take part.

GNR FACTS

Sir Brendan Foster, along with his team of original founders, staged the first ever Great North Run on a sunny day in June, 1981.

From day one the Great North Run was breaking records, with around 12,000 runners lining up on the central motorway it instantly became (and remains) the UK's biggest mass-participation running event.

Since 1981, there have been 1.2 million finishers

£25m is raised for charity annually

It contributes around £31m to regional economy annually

The start times for the race will also be staggered, with some runners not starting their race until after 12 noon. This is the first change to the course in 40 years.

For those taking part, if you have trained correctly and followed one

of the numerous half marathon plans available, your training should be pretty much done, including that long run where you are hitting the race distance.

Here are a few of my tips for the two weeks leading up to the run:

- Make sure you do a long run between now and Tuesday, near enough the 13 miles. Your body needs to know what it's like to hit the longer miles, training up to seven miles is not going to help you in the last three to four miles if your body has never been there before. This way you can go into race day with confidence and enjoy it.

- Post your long run, try to do a few shorter runs at a quicker pace than you will be attempting on the big day. Your body will then feel at a relaxed slower pace on race day.

- Try to run at your race day start time and keep your diet the same on the Great North Run morning. If all your training runs have been evening based, running at a different time of day can affect the way you feel, therefore it's important to simulate race conditions the best you can.



> Sir Mo Farah leads the way at the 2019 Great North Run

- If you have a diet that works for you and it's tried and tested throughout your training, avoid suddenly changing it. Our bodies like consistency and if it works don't change it.

- Make sure you have trained in the kit and trainers you are wearing on the day. The last thing you want

is new kit that rubs and trainers that give you blisters because you haven't worn them in.

- From the Wednesday leading up to race day on Sunday, I would just do one light jog and a couple of walks to keep your body moving, this way you will be fresh and ready to give it your all on the big day.