

NORTHUMBERLAND COAST MARATHON August 19th 9.30am

ROUTE DESCRIPTION: NB PLEASE CARRY YOUR COPY WITH YOU

Those of you who are familiar with the Alnwick Harriers Coastal Run please bear in mind, if I state the obvious, that these directions are primarily intended for runners who have not visited this area before. The main difference from the Harriers event is that there are NO road sections in either direction. Running on the road will lead to disqualification.

It is intended to be an OFF-ROAD/TRAIL Marathon. (Last year's event was Garmin measured at 26.3 miles) The whole idea of the Run is to use public footpaths, mainly the well-signposted Northumberland Coastal Path from Alnmouth to the Turn at Long Nanny Bridge, south of Beadnell Bay

Newcomers to the Northumberland Coast, all you need to do for most of the way is to follow the blue, or blue/white Coastal Path signs.

Keep the sea on your right going north and on your left on returning & you won't go far wrong!

Don't want to confuse people by giving too many directions but the following might help on the day.

1) The race's START and FINISH in Alnmouth is on the beach at the southern end of the children's play park next to the river Aln. It then continues along the beach to the concrete steps near Seaton Point. (2.2 miles) At different stages of the tide there are rocks on the beach near Foxtan – don't be put off by these, the route is always navigable here.

2) Ascend steps and turn immediate RIGHT at the top, past some old caravans, bear LEFT between the farm & the newer caravans on right & then continue straight ahead to Boulmer. (3.45 miles approx) The footpath merges with the road at the Lifeboat Access. Stay on path here, & continue past the Fishing Boat Inn on right, then along a gravel section to the DRINKS STATION here (on both the out & back legs.) Continue along gravel path to a footbridge across a stream. (4 miles approx) and follow path to a concrete footbridge at Howick (5.2 miles approx)

3) Cross concrete bridge & turn immediate RIGHT, do not go through gate onto farm track. Coastal Path sign has disappeared here! Go slightly uphill, past "wigwam" on left & continue on this path for approx the next 2.5 miles to Craster. The DRINKS STATION (out & back,) is next to the children's park before entering the village. (7.5miles approx) Your number will be recorded here.

4) Continue on coastal side of playground – not through housing estate, to pub garden and harbour heading towards Dunstanburgh Castle. After the last gate before the castle take the lower path on the BOTTOM LEFT of the castle to golf course. Run on the SEAWARD side of the golf course & descend on to the beach as soon past the rocks as possible. Run along Embleton Beach to its end at Newton by the Sea. (11.1 miles approx)

5) On leaving the beach, go uphill turning RIGHT through gate before lone bungalow & follow signpost directions diagonally uphill in NE direction. (Do not take lower path nearer sea on this occasion) The path will eventually bring you to a pay-machine car park next to a farm at Newton Links House. (12.2 miles approx) DRINKS STATION in car park both out & back.

6) Continue on the path, heading north for another mile to reach the Turn at Long Nanny Bridge where numbers and times will be recorded.

7) The route turns immediate right here, (EASTWARD to the beach!) Run south east along footpath to right of barbed wire fence to stile, over stile and on to Newton Links Beach. Run South on beach. Just before its southern end leave the beach by turning RIGHT, (Marshall here,) back to car park/DRINKS STATION. Now all you have to do is run back from here EXACTLY the way you came! Finish at far end of Alnmouth beach where you started.

REMEMBER: If you are unable to complete the course please make your way to the nearest Drinks Station & inform one of the marshals there. Do not simply walk off the course without informing us.

Jim Manford

