

25 years of the Sevenoaks 7



The 2018 Sevenoaks 7

This year's race will be held on Sunday July 15th starting at 10.30 am.

There will also be a junior race, starting at 10.35 am.

Lord Sackville will start the races.

The races will raise money for the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust to help disadvantaged youngsters get their lives back on track.

Origins

The Sevenoaks 7 was first held in 1993 as a replacement for the Sevenoaks Half Marathon.

This moved the race from the busy Sevenoaks roads to the tranquility of Knole Park and quickly established the Sevenoaks 7 as one of the Country's finest off-road races.

200 competitors entered the first race and over its 24- year history there have been nearly 8000 finishers – the race peaking in 2005 with 482 finishers.

Winners

Famous runners from all around the Southern Counties have run the Sevenoaks 7 including Bruce Tulloh (former European 5000m champion) in 1998.

No-one can remember who won the first race, but the fastest woman was Sue James who had recently moved from Blackpool.

In 1994 & 1995 Roy Smith from Blackheath Harriers triumphed, but was beaten into 2nd place by local athlete Darrell Smith in 1996 and again in 1997 and 1998.

Since then, Darrell, who once finished in the top 10 in the American Cross-Country Championships, has won the race a further 3 times.

More recently, local athlete James Mason has been the best of Sevenoaks AC's runners, winning in 2015 and finishing 3rd in 2016, and 2nd in 2017 behind newcomer Steve Hodges of Cambridge Harriers.

In the women's competition, Tina Oldershaw from Paddock Wood has had an impressive series of performances, being fastest woman in 2000 – fastest again in 2001, 2007 and 2010, second in 2008 and 3rd in 2011.

Maria Heslop of Paddock Wood was the winner in 2015 and again in 2016, but Tina Oldershaw was back to her winning ways in 2017.

In the 2017 junior race, Werner Krynauw was the fastest boy and Giselle Master the fastest girl.

2018

Once again, Darrell Smith will be the Race Director for the 2018 race.

Following discussions with the National trust, the race will move from its previous August date to Mid-July. This year's race will be on Sunday July 15th.

Route

The race takes runners through some of the most beautiful countryside in England. Knole Park is one of the Country's few remaining Tudor deer parks, similar to Richmond Park but quieter, where up to 400 fallow and sika deer roam the 1000 acres of grass and woodlands, including the largest oak tree in the UK.

The race starts down the valley behind the Rugby Club before a sharp right-hand turn and then a long steady climb up past Knole House, across the golf course and out to the lovely Chestnut Walk. This leads up to the highest point of the course near the top of River Hill. Lovely views from here – and refreshments.

From there competitors have a delightful canter down "The Gallops" to a turning point where they turn right and climb back up to Chestnut Walk. This time the incline doesn't feel so gentle, but they can storm down The Gallops once again, turn right and re-trace their route back to the finish in the valley behind the Rugby Club.

The route is clearly marked and there will be at least 12 marshals cheering the competitors on.

Runners World Survey

In the latest Runners World survey 99% of competitors said they would run it again.

They particularly liked the fantastic scenery, friendly efficient organisation and value for money, as these comments show: -

“Really enjoyed myself today. It is an excellent scenic run with very encouraging marshalls. A great way to spend a Sunday morning. Thank you”. Dr. Steve

“One of the best. Hard work but worth all the effort.” Racer Dan

“The first 3 miles seemed to go on forever and then the last 4 went by in a breeze. Well organised, friendly marshalls - I'll see you next year.” Chrisg9

“Really good, interesting, challenging, scenic welcoming run – recommended”. Tim Goswell

Runners from everywhere will be welcome to test their speed and strength on Knole Park's hills. All finishers will receive a special Sevenoaks 7 enameled medal.

Entry forms are available online at www.7oaks-ac.org.uk

You can also enter directly through RunBritain or Sports Systems.

Jim Knight

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