

# CASE STUDY: SPARTAN RACE AND THE ATHLINKS ACTIVE TIMING SYSTEM

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We jumped at the opportunity to be the first company that tried this new system, and we will continue to use Athlinks at every opportunity we can. It helps streamline all of the specific

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NICK HOWELL | NIKE

In advance of the public launch of the new Athlinks active tag timing system, we offered the team at Spartan Race Inc. the opportunity to test the new system at several Spartan races worldwide. Nick Howell, Spartan's Emperor & Technology Czar, was eager to sample the new-to-market technology.

“It sounded like a fantastic upgrade to enhance our athlete experience and to resolve the challenges posed by passive tags,” said Howell. “Plus, Kevin [Egan, Athlinks Sales Director] offered to cover drinks indefinitely.”

Following several event tests, we checked in with Howell to dig into the details of his experience with Athlinks' exciting new product offering.





## Q&A WITH

# SPARTAN RACE

### WHAT TYPE OF TIMING SYSTEM DID YOU USE PRIOR TO TESTING ATHLINKS' NEW ACTIVE TIMING SYSTEM?

Most recently we've been using J-Chip active tags, but we have tried nearly every timing solution available globally. For our stadium events, we've used Athlinks passive tags for the past two years.

### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES POSED BY YOUR PREVIOUS TIMING SYSTEM?

The cost and portability, as well as limited availability of rental systems in key global expansion markets, have posed significant challenges. Passive tags simply do not stand up to the unique demands of obstacle races.

### HOW MANY SPARTAN RACES HAVE NOW TESTED THE ATHLINKS ACTIVE TIMING SYSTEM?

So far we have adopted the system in the U.K. and tested it in the U.S. and Singapore.

### DID YOU OPT TO USE THE DISPOSABLE HOSPITAL STYLE BANDS OR THE REUSABLE NEOPRENE ANKLE STRAPS?

We went with the disposable bands. The hospital bands enable athletes to tuck the chips underneath their wristbands so that they do not interfere with the athletes' experience on the course. This is of paramount importance to us. Event timing technology needs to enhance the race experience, and we received overwhelming feedback from athletes that the wrist is the preferred location for timing chips. Also worth noting is the fact that chip retrieval at the finish is easier for race personnel when the chips are worn on the wrist, as they are less likely to be fully caked in mud (and less likely to be lost on course) than when worn on the ankle.

### HOW SUCCESSFUL WERE THE ACTIVE TAGS IN READING ATHLETES' SPLIT AND FINISH TIMES, AND HOW DOES THIS COMPARE TO PREVIOUS TIMING SYSTEMS YOU HAVE USED?

We are seeing near 100% capture rates throughout the course. J-Chip metrics are similarly successful, but with all other systems we have seen a 5%-15% loss across the course. Even a 1% loss is unacceptable to uphold our event standards.

### DID YOU RECEIVE ANY POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM ATHLETES REGARDING THE ATHLINKS ACTIVE TAGS?

In the U.K. we definitely stepped up the game. People stated they were amazed by the immediacy and accuracy of their results with the new system (Athlinks Live plus Athlinks active tags working in tandem).

### HOW WAS THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP THE ACTIVE EXTENSION, MINITRACK AND LOOP WIRE?

Not a problem at all. The mats were readily available on Amazon and at Home Depot and the set-up took mere minutes.

### SUMMARIZE YOUR OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE ATHLINKS ACTIVE TIMING SYSTEM, AND SHARE YOUR PLANS FOR USE GOING FORWARD.

The Athlinks active tag has met the performance accuracy of the J-Chip tag, plus it offers far greater system flexibility. Following on the results from our initial testing, we'll roll it out to replace J-Chip in additional markets including China, Singapore and Malaysia. We're looking to the Athlinks active tag system as our go-to international solution due to exceptional accuracy, ease of use and excellent availability. And of course, all those free drinks.

“ We are seeing near 100% capture rates throughout the course. Before Athlinks, there were so many mistakes made that the numbers were more of an estimate. Now, we are certain that our participants are seeing real time results with minimal error which is truly unbeatable to us! ”

NICK HOWELL | NIKE

