



COMPETITORS' HANDBOOK
including Rules for Competition

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JANUARY 2019

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SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPETITORS

Introduction

A Welsh Fell Runners Association (WFRA) fell race is one registered by the WFRA. The WFRA registers races only when it is satisfied that the Race Organiser (RO) has met all relevant criteria.

Factors including weather and terrain mean that fell racing takes place in a hazardous environment. Competitors must have appropriate experience in the conditions that may be encountered so that they can manage their own safety.

The Race Organiser (RO) has a duty of care to competitors but competitors must accept that race monitoring arrangements, e.g. marshals and checkpoint recording are primarily designed to ensure 'fair competition' and **must not** be considered a 'safety net'.

A competitor enters a race on the understanding that they are responsible for their own safety. The competitor must obey all instructions from the RO, officials and marshals and must equip and conduct themselves accordingly.

The WFRA's Safety Requirements for Fell Races comprises 10 'common sense' rules and a set of guidelines which help competitors understand and apply the WFRA's safety rules

Breach of a rule by a competitor may result in disqualification from future WFRA races for a period determined by the WFRA Committee.

As a condition for entering any WFRA race, the **competitor shall:**

1. comply with these safety rules and any additional race specific safety rules imposed by the Race Organiser (RO).
2. follow the procedures described by the RO if they fail to start or if they abandon the race.
3. obey all instructions from race officials and marshals.
4. be aware of the serious disabling consequences of hypothermia, dehydration and heat exhaustion and act appropriately during the race.
5. carry sufficient kit, e.g. body and leg cover which gives protection from the effects of wind chill and safety equipment (including food and drink) throughout the race to be able to navigate and provide protection from hypothermia, or dehydration and heat in the worst foreseeable weather conditions during the race, noting that rescue could take a long time.
6. take note of the length and severity of the race and local weather forecast for the day and judge their capabilities accordingly.
7. consider how any health impairments may jeopardise their safety or of others and act accordingly.
8. take specific note of RO's information on the nature of the terrain on the race route, checkpoints to be visited or course to be followed and any restrictions to route choice.
9. have the skills, experience and equipment required to comply with the RO's navigation and safety requirements, having assessed conditions on the day noting that the use of GPS devices for navigational purposes is not allowed, (except in an emergency).
10. take reasonable care not to create hazards that may cause harm to other people and support anyone in need of assistance, even if it means abandoning their race.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COMPETITORS IN WFRA RACES

PREAMBLE

The words, 'you' and 'your' refer to any prospective/actual competitor in a WFRA fell race.

1. INTRODUCTION

If you intend to compete in a race registered by the WFRA, you must comply with the WFRA Rules for Competitors and any additional rules imposed by the Race Organiser (RO). In addition, you must familiarise yourself with the safety guidelines set out in this document.

You enter the race understanding that you are responsible for your own safety. The philosophy of fell running is that for senior competitors you, the runner, are primarily responsible for your own safety whilst competing. It is essential that as a competitor you understand the RO's rules regarding:

- Minimum kit requirements
- Retirement procedures
- Race instructions that may be issued prior to, or on race day.

The nature of the race and the RO's requirements will be set out in the WFRA calendar and/or website and other documents prior to the race and updated as necessary on the day of the race.

Each race is unique and will therefore have rules and requirement tailored specifically to that race.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have read the race information before considering whether to enter. You should not assume that the requirements placed on a specific race are the same as another race and be aware that requirements for individual races may change from year to year.

Within the annual calendar WFRA categorises races in terms of their technical difficulty, with category 'A' being the most challenging. Competitors must pay careful attention to how a race is categorised. The WFRA also uses abbreviations (codes) to summarise specific characteristics of the race. These codes are set out below:

- **Experience Required, 'ER'** - denotes that specific, additional experience as a fell runner, (over and above that required for any WFRA race) is required as a condition of entry.
- **Navigational Skills, NS'** - denotes that navigational skills have been specifically highlighted as being essential as competitors must find their own way round the course. 'Following the runner in front', or use of GPS devices are not substitutes for traditional navigational skills, noting that the use of GPS devices for navigational purposes is not allowed.
- **Local Knowledge. 'LK'** - signifies that the race involves a degree of route choice and competitors would benefit from having a good understanding of the route options.
- **Partially Marked, 'PM'**- signifies that a small, usually very limited, part of the course may be marked to avoid any unusual hazards, to promote fair competition and/or to prevent environmental damage.

Race Organisers will refuse entry to those prospective competitors who, in their opinion, do not have the appropriate kit/equipment, experience or navigational skills required to complete the race safely and in a reasonable time

2. EXPERIENCE

You must make the judgement as to whether you are able and equipped to cope with the demands of the race.

You must ensure that you are fully aware of the race safety information provided by the RO, and only enter if you are confident that you have appropriate fitness and experience.

Certain races require previous fell race experience or general endurance running experience. If you have any doubt about your experience to compete in a specific race then you probably shouldn't take part.

Contact the RO to outline your fell running history and discuss with the RO whether the race is suitable for your level of experience. Be realistic and truthful about your current level of experience.

No-one has the absolute right to enter a WFRA race and the RO may refuse entry on any grounds including doubting that you can safely complete the course and in a reasonable time.

Anyone who competes in WFRA races must ensure that they have the necessary skills to cope with the navigational problems, terrain and weather which may occur.

In a number of WFRA races navigational skills with map and compass are essential. The acquisition of these navigation skills is your responsibility. You must be able find your own way around an unmarked route. Route marking will usually only exist as an absolute minimum, i.e. the overwhelming majority of the route is likely to be unmarked.

As well as navigating yourself around the route, an important factor to bear in mind is that if you are injured you may need to get yourself off the fell safely and quickly without the assistance of others, and so escape route planning may be important. If you see any other persons in need of assistance, you must help them, even if it means sacrificing your race. Lives may depend on this fundamental duty.

3. SURVIVAL AND EQUIPMENT

For Senior Events, you (including eligible juniors), should arrive at races prepared to wear/carry all of the following equipment:

- Adequate **whole body cover**, (e.g. windproof or waterproof top and legging to give protection against the effects of wind chill, hat and gloves), to protect you against hypothermia or heat exhaustion/dehydration in the severest conditions likely on the day. The RO will specify minimum clothing requirements for their event, but you are responsible for carrying much additional clothing as necessary for your own protection. You should always bring additional protective equipment to the race registration in order to be able to comply with more stringent requirements that may be demanded by the RO on the day due

to adverse conditions. The greatest need for clothing is not for running but when you are forced to slow or stop and wait what can be a very long time for rescue.

- Map of the race route and compass, both suitable for navigating the course.
- Whistle.
- Emergency food and/or fluids as needed for the conditions.
- Any additional items specific to your needs.

If you are found not following the RO's minimum kit requirements you will be disqualified and may be subject to further disciplinary procedures by WFRA. Complete or partial kit checks before and after the start of the race may be conducted and failure to comply with the rules may result in disciplinary action. Jettisoning of safety kit before the race finish will be treated very severely.

Hypothermia is dangerous. You should be aware that if circumstances cause a runner to stop or slow to a walking pace then body heat is lost quickly. In cold, wet or windy weather the onset of hypothermia can be very rapid unless sufficient warm clothing is worn. This fact will influence decisions on the equipment that an RO may require runners to carry in poor or unsettled weather conditions. The RO's rules are a minimum requirement. Ultimate responsibility for what equipment is carried lies with you, the competitor.

Heat exhaustion/dehydration is also dangerous and you should be aware of the risk and precautions you should take.

4. IDENTIFICATION

You must use competitor identification, such as race numbers, as instructed by the RO in the race information.

If numbers are recorded at manned checkpoints, it is your responsibility to identify yourself to a marshal at each and every checkpoint and NOT leave that checkpoint until the marshal has acknowledged that your number has been recorded.

The WFRA requires that competitors who fail to comply with this requirement be disqualified.

5. RETIREMENT PROCEDURES

If you decide to retire (including not starting after collecting race identification at registration) you must follow the procedures set out by the RO. This is likely to include advising appropriate officials of your retirement.

6. JUNIORS

Ultimate responsibility for a junior competitor and whether they have sufficient skills and experience to deal with the demands of the race is in the hands of the parent or guardian who is attending the race and who has approved the entry of the junior.

Junior races are restricted in terms of the distance they can cover and are generally set out with consideration for the relative inexperience of the competitors. However these events can still be very demanding and it is essential that the parent or guardian of the junior athlete considers the race and conditions on the day when making the decision whether or not the junior athlete should take part.

Equipment for Junior Races

All juniors must be accompanied to and from the race by a responsible adult who acts as their guardian and makes safety and equipment decisions on their behalf. For example, they may consider more than the minimum clothing requirements to be advisable.

7. RELAYS

Relay legs will be treated as if they were a stand-alone race in respect of WFRA Rules and the requirements set out in this document.

WFRA Rules for Competition

WFRA Races are categorised according to severity and length.

Severity is represented by the categories 'A', 'B' or 'C' with 'A' being the highest technical grade (at least 50m of climb per km) usually requiring significant levels of fell running experience and 'mountaincraft' as it will probably involve rough and remote mountain terrain.

Length is represented by the categories - S (short, <10km), M (medium, 10k-20km) and L (long, >20km).

Severity and length categories are combined to indicate the overall difficulty of the race, e.g. Pen Tir Drop is categorised as a 'BS', (moderate difficulty and short).

It is worth repeating that the philosophy of fell running is that you the competitor are responsible for your own safety, that you enter a race with this understanding and that you equip and conduct yourself accordingly.

It is therefore essential that you must have appropriate experience in the conditions that may be encountered so that you can manage your own safety noting that fell races are all categorised in terms of length and difficulty.

Fuller details on race categorisation is set out below.

Severity/climb categories

Category A	Category B	Category C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should average not less than 50 metres climb per kilometre Should not have more than 20% of the race distance on road. Should be at least 1.5 kilometres in length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should average not less than 25 metres climb per kilometre. Should not have more than 30% of the race distance on road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should average not less than 20 metres climb per kilometre. Should not have more than 40% of the race distance on road. Should contain some genuine fell terrain

Race Length Categories

Long (L)	Medium (M)	Short (S)
20 kilometres or over	Over 10 but under 20 kilometres	10 kilometres or less
12.4 miles or over	Over 6.2 but under 12.4 miles	6.2 miles or less

Race Descriptions

Within the annual calendar, WFRA uses abbreviations (codes) to summarise specific characteristics of the race over and above the route description and other information provided by the Race Organiser. These codes are set out below and Race Organisers are expected to ensure their races are categorised in accordance with these codes, as they provide prospective competitors with consistent information on the skills and experience required to compete safely in the race.

- **Experience Required, 'ER'** - denotes that specific, additional experience as a fell runner, (over and above that required for any WFRA race) is required as a condition of entry.
- **Navigational Skills, NS'** - denotes that navigational skills have been specifically highlighted as being essential as competitors must find their own way round the course. 'Following the runner in front', or use of GPS devices are not substitutes for traditional navigational skills.
- **Local Knowledge, 'LK'** - signifies that the race involves a degree of route choice and competitors would benefit from having a good understanding of the route options
- **Partially Marked, 'PM'** designation, signifies that a small, usually very limited, part of the course may be marked so as to avoid any unusual hazards, promote fair competition or to prevent environmental damage.

Age Categories

Ages as on the day of the race (not on 1st January). For WFRA Fell Races the minimum age for competition is six years.

Age	Under 8	Under 10	Under 12	Under 14	Under 16	Under 18
Kilometres	1	2	3	5	7	10
Miles	0.6	1.2	1.8	3.1	4.3	6.2

For paired Mountain Marathon style orienteering events, over one or two days, where one of the two runners is under 18, the other runner must be over 20 and must also be the parent or legal guardian of the junior runner. The minimum age for the junior runner is 14 and the following straight-line distance limits must apply for each day of the event.

Age	Under 16	Under 18
Kilometres	20	25
Miles	12.4	15.5