THE WFRA SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR FELL RACES AND RULES FOR COMPETITION

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JANUARY 2015

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Introduction

A Welsh Fell Runners Association (WFRA) fell race is one insured by the WFRA.

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 in their race. However, competitors must accept that race monitoring (marshals, checkpoint recording, search and rescue etc.) is not infallible 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 and officials but must equip and conduct themselves as though they were unsupported for the duration of the race.

The WFRA's Safety Requirements for Fell Races comprise of:

- 10 safety rules
- A set of guidelines which help competitors understand and apply the WFRA's safety rules
- A set of guidelines which help RO's exercise their duty of care

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

RO's are required to organise their races in accordance with the WFRA's requirements. If requirements are not met, the WFRA may withdraw insurance cover for a particular race or impose other sanctions.

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WFRA SAFETY RULES FOR COMPETITORS

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 abandon the race.

3. obey all instructions from race officials.

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 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.

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 FELL 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 conducted under WFRA insurance, you must comply with the WFRA Safety 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 particular races may change from year to year.

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 RO. 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.

- **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 enter only 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 event 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 stop or slow, 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 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 standalone race in respect of WFRA Rules and the requirements set out in this document.

WFRA REQUIREMENTS FOR RACE ORGANISERS & RULE FOR COMPETITON

1. WFRA Race Requirements

The Race Organiser shall carry out the following actions, as a condition of insuring a race with the WFRA:-

1. Consider, and take appropriate steps to minimise, foreseeable risks where this is reasonably practicable and where the risks are not inherent in fell running.

2. Differentiate between Seniors and Juniors, and between all participating age groups of Juniors, in determining what steps should be taken to minimise such foreseeable risks.

3. Take reasonable steps to contact landowners/tenants on the race route prior to the event, and take their comments or requirements into account where reasonable to do so.

4. Limit the number of competitors to a level which is reasonably manageable and which is acceptable in terms of environmental impact.

5. Use the WFRA, or similar, entry form. The form must be completed by all competitors admitted into the race, or by an adult on behalf of juniors. Entrants must sign the form to agree to the stated conditions and rules.

6. Publicise beforehand, and display information about the race at the race HQ, essential information about the race including:-
   a. The nature of the race, the severity and type of terrain and the suitability or otherwise for novices. The nature of any Junior category races.
   b. The route, the kit/ equipment to be carried and a local weather forecast for the day.
   c. Specific Race Rules covering course requirements (such as 'out of bounds' areas or unusual obstacles), retirement procedures, closing times for checkpoints and for the finish.

7. Decide beforehand the criteria for abandonment of the race, or for the use of a pre-planned alternative 'bad weather route'.

8. Require competitors to carry kit and equipment commensurate with the length and severity of the race and likely weather conditions to be encountered.

9. Use an appropriate system for counting race starters and finishers.

10. Run the race in accordance with the WFRA's requirements and with any specific information or assurances given to the WFRA.

11. Put in place an appropriate team of helpers to meet these requirements. If your personal availability is not possible a Deputy must be appointed.

12. Report to the WFRA Secretary any incidents a) requiring WFRA action, b) which might result in an insurance claim, or c) involving an injury requiring hospital treatment. Good practice is also to report any learning from the race which might help other Race Organisers in similar circumstances. The WFRA Incident Report Form has more details.

WFRA Rules for Competition

Race Organisers should categorise their races in accordance with the following definitions.

Definitions
Fell Races shall be categorised according to severity and length as follows:-

Severity/climb categories

Category A	Category B	Category C
• 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	• Should average not less than 25 metres climb per kilometre. • Should not have more than 30% of the race distance on road.	• 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

Race Organisers must stipulate age limits for their events.

The following **maximum** distance limits for juniors must be observed.

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

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISERS OF FELL RACES

1. INTRODUCTION

If you organise a race under WFRA Insurance you are required to comply with the WFRA Safety Rules for Race Organisers (RO) using the guidance below to help you implement your detailed safety management arrangements.

2. RACE SAFETY INFORMATION

The RO should prepare a Race Information Sheet to inform competitors, (marshals and other helpers) of the main details of the race. It may be used by the RO in general race publicity. The race Information should contain the following:

- Race details. These should include the start time, distance, ascent and any category (if relevant) of the event. If there are multiple races and/or junior events each race should be specified and the age group applicable to each race.

- A route description, any checkpoints, and any alternative in the race of bad weather; recommended maps that would assist the competitors on race day, and in the planning and preparation leading up to the event; a description of the route indicating the type of terrain and severity of the route, highlighting any unusual characteristics of the race which may be important for the safety of competitors. Areas that are restricted except on race day should be described.

- The level of experience required and any qualifying conditions that the RO may set as entry criteria.

- First Aid cover and emergency response available at the event.

- A clear list of minimum personal safety kit / equipment to be carried by competitors.

- The level of navigational skills needed during the race and advice on the type and extent of any course markings that will be in place.

- Information for competitors concerning all race rules, retirement procedures, safety equipment to be carried and (where applicable) checkpoint number recording and checkpoint closing times.

- Any other safety information that may be useful to competitors on race day that may be particular to the event, e.g. appropriate duty of care arrangements or local weather forecast.

- The race information should be sufficient to allow competitors to establish their competence to safely complete the race by carrying out a reconnaissance of the route.

3. RACE SAFETY PLAN

RO's should put together a Race Safety Plan to cover all safety related aspects of the race. An example is shown as an appendix to this document. The plan will prove a valuable tool in helping the RO take all reasonable measures to provide a safe and well organised race and contribute to compliance with RO generic safety rules. That plan should deal with:

3.1 Size of Field
Give consideration to:
- The maximum number of competitors that the race organisation can monitor and control.
- local facilities to safely handle the anticipated number of visitors
- environmental aspects

3.2 Course Design

Race information should accurately reflect the nature of the course. Ensure any exceptional hazards which can be identified in advance are accurately described. It is to the RO's benefit to highlight the risks and obstacles that competitors might not anticipate from normal experience. Details of the type and extent of any course markings should be included in the race information.

3.3 Adverse Weather Conditions

Should weather conditions be so severe that the monitoring of the race could be extremely difficult or impossible, the RO should consider using an alternative bad weather low level route, or in extreme conditions, cancelling the event. This should be the RO's decision and should be taken as early as possible on race day. If a safer bad weather alternative can be pre-planned then it would be helpful to identify it in advance.

3.4 Qualifying Criteria

If asking for any qualifying criteria or experience, please ensure that this is outlined in the race information, and also that there is a way of gathering the relevant information through the entry procedure. The responsibility is on the competitor to declare their information accurately. No-one has the absolute right to enter an WFRA insured race and the RO should refuse entry on any grounds including doubting that a competitor can safely complete the event and in a reasonable time.

3.5 Runner Identification

It is the RO's responsibility to have an accurate record of the number of competitors starting the race and the number finishing. A simple "head count" at the finish against the number of starters is not an adequately secure system alone. The race finish team should have a reference list of all competitor names with their numbers to allow rapid identification of unaccounted runners at the end of the race. Race numbers are a popular and convenient way of fulfilling the RO's obligation to identify competitors. If using numbers RO must provide instructions on how to make them visible

during the race and how they should be communicated to marshals (if applicable). Other systems for monitoring runners such as clip cards, wrist bands and dibbers may also be considered.

3.6 Race Monitoring

It is important that the RO:
- can accurately identify the competitors on the start line and those who complete the race.
- can accurately account for those that abandon the race or did not start after collecting their race identification.
- has a plan for the timescale and method of trying to account for missing persons efficiently and a rapid response procedure for initiating search and rescue.
- considers, where practicable, the use of radio, telephone or other wireless methods of communication.
- monitors the safe return of competitors from an uphill-only or downhill-only race.

3.7 First Aid

There should be some first aid provision available at the race start/finish point, at the very least a basic first aid kit. Competitors should be advised of their personal safety obligations and their self-evacuation obligations.

3.8 Marshals

It is important that when an RO places marshals in position to fulfil a particular role that they have the appropriate fitness, skills, experience, equipment and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of their role. In some limited circumstances the demands are unlikely to be met by a single person. ROs should consider whether to place multiple marshals at certain marshal points.

3.9 Retirement Procedures

These should be set out in the race information circulated to competitors before and on the day of the race. Each race will have its specific characteristics and ROs should advise competitors as to what is expected of them for reporting their retirement, whilst also accepting that the marshals, first aid and emergency services also have a role to play in such reporting especially when a competitor needs assistance.

3.10 Personal Safety Equipment

The RO should specify minimum safety kit requirements for their race based on their experience and conditions on the day. But it is the responsibility of the competitor to wear/ carry such additional kit as is essential for their welfare.

The RO should carry out full or random kit checks to ensure that whatever requirements they specify on the day are met. The RO should disqualify any competitor judged to be in breach of the race safety rules and report the infringement to WFRA where appropriate.

The RO should note that the WFRA emphasises that it is for the competitor to abide by all race rules. Should they fail to do so, the responsibility for that lies with the competitor. It is the RO's responsibility to comply with the WFRA Requirements for Race Organisers. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The Yomp Mountain Challenge

General Safety Plan and Risk Assessment Summary

This document draws from the detailed risk assessments (available in narrative form revised in 2013 and in numeric scoring form done in 2008) and should be used in conjunction with them and with the detailed organisational, control and checkpoint procedures available on separate sheets.

It can be seen from these assessments there are a number of readily identifiable generic risks recognised as being common to many locations on the course.

The purpose of this general safety plan and risk assessment summary is to simplify the presentation of those assessments for general use, making them easier to comprehend.

These risks and their control measures are summarised below.

Where risks specific to any given location are identified these and their appropriate control measures are listed in the detailed risk assessments.

Using the control measures stated it is intended to reduce all risks to low.

If it is found that any control measure is not adequate that finding will be noted and appropriate action taken.

The assessments and documentation should be reviewed annually.

The Organisers

This event, organised by Upper Eden Rotary Club, draws assistance from its members, their families and volunteers from the community.

Some 60 or so people are involved in the two principal areas of activity being 'external course control' and 'internal checking, documentation and catering'.

Marshals at checkpoints, particularly those on the fell, are considered to be subject to the same hazards as participants.

Those in the control at school are considered to be within the scope of the school's safety guidelines.

The Participants

Up to 600 participants take part in this event.
Ages range from those of primary school age to those in their 80's.
Their experience ranges from novice to the highly experienced.
Their fitness ranges from that of the 'normal' person to the athletic.
For some the event is a race and for others a steady walk.

The Courses and Terrain

The event offers three courses being the Full Yomp (23 miles) the Half Yomp (11.5 miles) and the Short Course (6.5 miles)

All blend into the same route at the Tailbridge Hill checkpoint.
The Full and Half courses start and finish at Kirkby Stephen Grammar School.

The Short course starts at Tailbridge Hill checkpoint and finishes at Kirkby Stephen Grammar School.

All cross high open moorland and fell and contain an extensive mixture of terrain.

The course variously follows public highways and tracks and permissive paths over private land.

The route underfoot varies from metalled road surfaces, good farm tracks, good paths to fell tracks and paths that may be rough and rutted in places. Some have muddy sections or are boggy in places. In parts rocky outcrops or boulders have to be crossed. Much of the route is of rough, uneven grass.

Peat hags and steep slopes are encountered.
The route passes close to areas of shake holes, limestone outcrops, deep gills and steep rocky crags.

All of the above conditions and the hazards below are common and normal.
They are experienced by all hill walkers and runners.

The Hazards

The length of course, the nature of the terrain and it potentially being variously exposed to strong winds, driving rain and strong sunshine can lead to the possibility of exhaustion, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, strains and sprains brought on by over exertion.

Route finding may be difficult in poor visibility.

Traffic encountered at road crossings, where the course follows the public highway and at roadside checkpoints is a hazard as is farm machinery on private roads.

Because of the nature of much of the route underfoot the unwary have the potential to encounter slips, trips and falls.

Fell tracks may be deeply rutted in places and there may be loose stones and gravel.
Grassy slopes, peat hags, mud, rocky areas and beck crossings are uneven and can become slippery, especially when wet. Some areas are boggy.

The unwary have the potential to fall at rock crags, steep slopes, limestone outcrops, shake holes, open potholes in the vicinity of the route

Traffic at the busy A685 road crossing in Kirkby Stephen and in other streets presents a danger to the inattentive.

The manual handling of a wide and varied range of goods and materials in differing circumstances cannot reasonably be avoided. There is therefore risk of muscle strain through mishandling.

Quad-bikes and other ATV's used for the transport of materials may cause injury if misused.

The Control Measures

An external course co-ordinator and an internal control co-ordinator will be appointed. They will share ultimate responsibility for safety issues.

The course will be marshalled and the progress of participants monitored at checkpoints on route. Details of all participants and marshals will be recorded and they will be checked out and back. Marshals will be suitably fit and adequately briefed.

The courses will be marked with flags at regular intervals at appropriate distances to assist way-finding and to guide, where practical, participants away from rock crags, steep slopes, limestone outcrops, shake holes, open potholes in the vicinity of the route.

Normal individual common sense should enable participants and helpers to perceive, identify and overcome most obvious hazards particularly those relating to slips, trips and falls and to those relating to traffic.

Notices clearly visible at the start will draw their attention to hazards on route and the need to take care.

Warning signs will be placed appropriately at road crossings out of town to supplement the normal care needed by participants.

Appropriate protective clothing, equipment, food and drink should be carried

Checkpoints will be appropriately equipped. They will have water and shelter available

A communications network between control and checkpoints will be established for the duration of the event.

Participants should use normal town centre care at the A685 in Kirkby Stephen and elsewhere in town. If necessary they may cross via the "pelican crossing" by the Tourist Information Centre adjacent to the route.

Quad bikes will be used to facilitate transport of material to the checkpoints and to patrol the course. Drivers should be suitably experienced and exercise care.

Individual people have differing strengths and abilities to manually handle goods and materials. All stewards will be forbidden to lift carry or move any load so heavy as to be likely to cause injury. Stewards will be forbidden to persist in attempting to lift or move any load that causes a feeling of strain and should seek the assistance of a colleague. Awkward movements should be avoided if possible.

Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team will be requested to attend.
St Johns Ambulance or equivalent will be requested to attend.
Police will be notified.

Supporting documentation detailing operational guidelines will be produced… for which see list below.

Supporting documents

Risk Assessments in numeric format for all courses	Annual Organisational Programme
Risk assessments in narrative format for all courses	Organisational Structure Chart
Checkpoint list	Control at School Rota
Alternative Routes Details for Bad Weather	Checkpoint Rota
Checkpoint Procedures	Check-in Procedures
Radio Procedures	Check-out Procedures
Checkpoint Bag Contents List	Mobile Phone Contact List
Route Marking Flag Allocations List	Route maps