

So, You Want to Put On a ROAD RACE?

Some Helpful Hints from the Peninsula Track Club of Virginia

PENINSULA TRACK CLUB HISTORY: The Peninsula Track Club celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2015. Its role has grown over the years to more than 500 members of all ages, from all walks of life, of various running ability, and in different stages of their running careers. But all come together in a spirit of camaraderie to support over 35 races annually. While these races are the primary source of treasury funds for the club, PTC members are generous in their support of the community at large with its quarterly Adopt-A-Highway road cleaning, holiday Adopt-A-Family, and annual scholarship awards. This document was developed by the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Track Club as a public service to the running and jogging community in southeast Virginia.

THE BEGINNING

Planning, managing and executing a successful road race is a very complex undertaking. It involves considerable planning, coordination, communication, and a team of very responsible people. This guide outlines some helpful hints for race directors, race coordinators, volunteers, and runners.

- Allow for **one full year** of preparation.
- Seek advice from experienced people.
- Obtain expert help by working through a local running club; ask for a representative from one of the local clubs to be the race coordinator:
 - Peninsula Track Club
 - Colonial Road Runners
 - Tidewater Striders
- Carefully review annual running schedules and calendars. Be careful not to conflict with well-established races or events, e.g., parades or festivals.
- Be familiar with the area's weather history and norms.
- Consult with local government (including the Virginia Department of Transportation), or military bases for formal permission, permit issuance, medical support, and police coordination for traffic management.
- Consider a one-mile fun run for children or an unscored family event such as a 5K walk.
- Choose a date (with at least two alternates, if possible) and confirm the date with local jurisdictional authority (city, county, military base) in writing.
- Hope for good weather, but be prepared to conduct a race in less than perfect weather.

TIP: Contact your local running club to volunteer for a few races so you can experience the full range and scope of activities, tasks and roles involved in a race, including timing and producing race results. Learn how to measure and/or certify course distances.

THE RACE DIRECTOR

This person is ultimately responsible for everything. The race director knows what to do and how to do it. He/she also knows that there are no excuses, no rationalizations, and no good reasons why everything is not done right and well.

Some of the key race director duties are:

- Select a competent and experienced group to manage the race and produce accurate race results.
- Understand and incorporate sound safety precautions.
- Secure sponsorships (cash donations, door prizes, awards). Lack of sponsors reduces financial profits for your club, charity, etc.
- Ensure race is announced in road running schedules, club newsletters, athletic stores, and local newspapers about six months to one year ahead of time.
- Recommend the course and work with the running club to measure the course (and certify, if desired). Ensures that mile markers and directional signs are accurate and clearly visible on race day.
- Arrange for media coverage for race.
- Secure medical assistance to be on standby during the race.
- Ensure timers, course marshals, traffic control, and water stations are on the course.
- Secure adequate number of volunteers for registration, course management, and other race-day events.
- Arrange for refreshments: juice, water, soft drinks, sports drink, fruit, bagels, yogurt, etc., for all runners and volunteers.
- Approve design and fabric of race shirt (name and year of race clearly marked, major sponsors highlighted, running club acknowledged, colors, etc.)
- Work with T-shirt designer and screen printer for quantity and sizes. Prepare the flyers and announcements, which should be issued at least three months before the race date. (Sample flyer/announcement on next page.) Seek advice from a good running club before printing.

THE RACE COORDINATOR

The race coordinator is the representative of the running club who will *assist* you with planning and conducting your event. This person will become your “helper” before, during, and after the race. The start/finish line and timely and accurate race results are of primary concern for the race coordinator.

Some of responsibilities of the race coordinator include:

- Assist in developing a schedule for your race.
- Provide some general financial planning.
- Review and measure the course.
- Provide additional safety advice for you to consider.
- Make recommendations for race flyers, T-shirts, children’s fun run, awards, refreshments, etc.

The race coordinator can be your key advisor and contact with the running club—use this person wisely, listen carefully, and keep in constant contact. The success of your hard work depends on a close relationship with the race coordinator and the running club.

TIP: When choosing race shirts, consider selecting tank tops or short-sleeve tees for summer/spring races and long-sleeve tees for fall/winter races. Also, consider women’s style shirts and youth sizes.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers form the backbone of any race event. They will:

- Staff the registration table to:
 - Greet runners and distribute preregistration race packages,
 - Accept race day registration forms and funds,
 - Ensure name, age group, and gender are ready for input into computer,
 - Give runners an initial favorable impression of the event.
- Direct the runners on the course where changes of direction occur and provide traffic control.
- Call out the time at each mile marker.
- Hand out water or sports drink to runners at predetermined intervals (every 1.5 to 2 miles) during the race.
- Manage the finish line to provide accurate times, assist finishers, and produce accurate race results for announcement at the awards ceremony.

TIP: It’s worth paying a running club for assistance in planning and coordinating the event, managing the finish chute, and tabulating the results. Cost for this service is generally \$1.00 to \$2.00 per runner.

RUNNERS

Runners are the customers! The better they are treated, the more of them you’ll see on race day, the more successful your event will be, the more likely they will return each year, and the more they will share their good experience with others.

- Courteously request each runner to sign the liability waiver on the race flyer/application.
- On race day or at the packet pickup, ensure that friendly, helpful volunteers greet each entrant with the smile and a wish for a “Good Run.”
- Clean restrooms or portable toilets should be available near the registration and start/finish areas for runners.
- Runners need plenty of fluids before, during, and after a race. Ensure that water or sports drinks are available at the registration or packet pickup areas, on the course (in prefilled cups), and at the finish area.
- Provide enough refreshments for double the number of runners that you expect. Runners are hungry people!
- Runners enjoy and remember well-organized and managed events, a good course, and a fun social after the race. They will be back in future years and probably bring a few friends.

TIP: The safety of each runner and volunteer is a top priority.

AWARDS and DOOR PRIZES

Types

Choose among:

Trophies
Medals
Plaques
Unique bowls, wood carvings or art sculptures
Ribbons
Certificates

Awards should include:

Race identification on awards
Name and date on the race
Distance
Age Group
Gender

Door Prizes

Gift certificates
Sports paraphernalia
Passes to local parks/events

TIP: A cash donation of \$250 per sponsor is the norm. Solicit businesses for door prizes as sponsorship. Be sure to obtain each sponsor’s logo for the race announcement and T-shirt. Their donation should be acknowledged at the race and on racing T-shirt. The more sponsors you have, the more your cause will benefit.

SAMPLE ENTRY FORM

Day, Date and Location of Race

Name and Distance of Race

Award categories: Overall places (male and female); age groups (male and female)

Start Time



PTC Women's 5K Challenge & PTC Men's Mile

Saturday, July 12, 2015 ■ Hampton, Virginia

Starting Time and Place
 8:00 a.m. / Men's Mile Sentara Hampton Health & Fitness Center
 8:30 a.m. / Women's 5K

Race Day Registration: 6:45-7:45 a.m. / Men's Mile
 6:45-8:15 a.m. / Women's 5K

Course
 Women's race takes place on the adjacent Matteson Trail. Men's race takes place on Butler Farm Road. Both courses are asphalt paved. Water and split times will be provided.

Entry
 \$13 for either event, postmarked by July 5th, 2003
 \$16 for either event, thereafter and race day
Make checks payable to: Mail entry and payment to:
 Peninsula Track Club Race Director
 123 Main Street
 Anytown, VA 23693

No PTC race passes accepted at this event. No refunds, exchanges or transfers. Race held rain or shine.

The first 100 registrants for the combined events will receive a colored tank top.

Awards
Women: Top 3 overall, top 3 masters (40 yrs. plus), and top 3 in age groups (9-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60 & over)
Teams: Mother/Daughter, top 3 overall; Sister/Sister, top 3 overall
Men: Top 10 overall, top five masters (40 yrs. plus)

Race Information
 Race Director
 (757) 000-0000
 www.peninsulatracclub.com

Directions
From the East: Take the Magruder Blvd. exit off I-64 (Exit 262B) and follow it to the corner of Butler Farm Road (3rd traffic light) and make a left.
From the West: Take I-64 East to Hampton Roads Center Parkway East (Exit 261B). Follow the exit to Magruder Blvd. North. Turn left on to Magruder Boulevard. Go one block and turn left at the stoplight.

Sponsors  

Clear directions to race (map desirable)

PLEASE CHECK ONE: **Women's 5k Challenge** **Men's Mile**
IF COMPETING AS WOMEN'S TEAM, CHECK ONE: **Mother/Daughter** **Sister/Sister**

TEAM ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER.

ENTRY FORM

First Name *(please print)* _____ MI _____ Last Name: _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ e-mail _____
 Age on Race Day _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____ Gender: M F PTC Member: Y N Tank Top: S M L XL

Runners Agreement Waiver, Release & Acknowledgment
 All runners are required to sign the waiver below. **Registrations that are not signed will not be processed.**
 I know that running a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter a run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risk associated with running this event, including, but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, including, high heat or humidity, traffic and the conditions of the road, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts, and in consideration of your accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release the City of Hampton, Peninsula Track Club, Sentara Hampton Health & Fitness Center, Road Runner Clubs of America, all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation in this event. I grant permission to all of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings, or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose. This is a road race conducted under the rules of RRCA and USATF; it is not intended for individuals with headphones, baby strollers, dogs on leashes, skateboards, skates or rollerblades.

Signature of Runner _____ Date _____
 Signature of parent/guardian if runner is under 18 _____ Date _____

Registration Information:

- Reduced fee for advance registration until cut-off date
- Race day fee
- Name of organization to make check payable to
- Where to mail registration

Request for runner information:
 Name, address, telephone,
 gender, age

+
 Liability waiver
 +
 Runner signature
 (parents or guardian signature
 if runner is under 18)

Name and logos of
 all sponsors (major
 sponsors may be
 highlighted)

Entry can also include:

Whether or not course is
 certified (map desirable)

Door prizes offered

RACE DAY CHECKLIST

- Tables for registration
- Tables for computer support; indoor facility for computer in event of inclement weather
- Finish chute (stands, flags)
- Time clock
- Tables for refreshments
- Table for awards
- Plenty of advance time for instructions to volunteers
- Conduct children's fun run 30 minutes prior to race start
- Public address system
- Starting gun/horn
- Instructions to runners
- A good bicyclist to lead runners along the course from start to finish. Please ensure that bicyclist knows the course well and stays well in front of the lead runner (but clearly in view).
- Marshals to control traffic
- Brightly colored cones or well-marked signs to mark race course
- Stop watches for timers at each mile markers
- Medical aid stations
- Volunteers to congratulate runners on their performance

TIP: Have volunteers "pre-fill" the cups at water stations before handing out to runners.

LOOSE ENDS

- Thank all volunteers—with a race shirt if appropriate.
- Thank all sponsors in writing.
- Thank local government or military base personnel in writing
- Fax/deliver results to local newspaper and thank press coverage in writing.
- Submit results to local running club newsletter.
- Document the entire process for the next year.

Kick back and relax—you've done an excellent job!



Managing a road race is a stressful, pressure-filled experience that will tax your patience, decision-making, and problem-solving capability. Planning for a small- or medium-sized (100 to 200 runners) successful race requires the same amount of effort as a large race. You will derive much satisfaction from dealing with a very complex, challenging, and demanding process that culminates in an event others will enjoy and remember for years to come. You will also reaffirm the joy of giving. And, you will be constantly be pursued by others to do it again, and again, and again.

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