

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Thank you for your team's registration for the 13th running of the Blue Ridge Relay. If you've run before, then you've heard me say that as your race director and fellow runner, my desire in organizing this event is to share the mountains of North Carolina and Virginia, through a perspective that very few experience.

We are thrilled to be hosting a capacity, 200-team field once again. BRR has grown considerably since the Relay began in 2005 with 10 teams. It is an honor and a huge compliment that teams return year after year. Our growth over the last decade is largely attributed to runners spreading the word. Thank you for running with us.

For those who are new this year, we know that runners thrive on stats...our starting line at Grayson Highlands State Park has an elevation of 4919' and the finish in Downtown Asheville, 2195'. In total, the course has an approximate loss of 19,100' versus a gain of 16,400'. Even though the elevation will change, sometimes quickly, remember to enjoy the mountain countryside, the creeks, the mountain hollows and the big views.

Our excitement for the Relay is surpassed by concern for everyone's safety. The following pages highlight some information that is posted on the website and some that is new. Please be diligent to review information on the website, emphasizing Rules and Regulations, Driver's Info and the Captain's Corner. If you have not run an event like this, be prepared, because you will be challenged. During the relay, we will post course updates such as weather alerts, emergency notes, course updates, etc... on the Blue Ridge Relay Facebook page. However, the Relay Officials at the exchange zones will remain the primary contact for emergency and non-emergency items.

The Blue Ridge Relay has the most participants of any athletic event that occurs in the North Carolina and Virginia High Country, with the exception of the last 1-2 miles as we enter Asheville. Even though we'll have 200 runners on the roads at any given time, the distance, the time spread, the time of day, the vans, etc... make the Blue Ridge Relay very visible to and impact many residents. Please remember that the Blue Ridge Relay wouldn't exist without the support of our local mountain communities, the people and authorities. Please respect, at all times, their mountain home.

Once again, WELCOME! to the Blue Ridge Relay. If we could assist in any way, please contact us (336-877-8888 or info@blueridgerelay.com.)

Kind regards,

Ken Sevensky
Director, Blue Ridge Relay

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Table of Contents

Page 1	Welcome Letter
Page 2	Table of Contents
Page 3	Additional References Grayson Highlands State Park Blue Ridge Parkway Counties and Municipalities Road Conditions
Page 4	Course Markings Safety Concerns Rules and Penalties Team Sign-In Pre-race Pasta Dinner Start Line
Page 5	Best Decorated Van Competition Restrooms on Course On Course Food and Beverage Exchange Zones and Restaurants Weather First Aid Communication – Team Showers Finish Line
Page 6	Awards Ceremony Course Records Sponsors
Page 7	Charitable Partners Emergency and Medical Care Contacts 911 for all emergencies Blue Ridge Relay Facebook Page Gas and Grocery Options Garbage Disposal

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

The notes of this Handbook apply to all competitors, team support staff, spectators, and event staff and volunteers. This was designed to make your experience safe, smooth, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Additional References

Runners, drivers, support staff, etc... need to reference the following documents, in addition to this Handbook:

1. Rules and Penalties (found under Team Information on the website)
2. 2017 Driver Info (found under Team Information on the website)
3. Leg Maps and Leg Map Links (found under Team Information on the website)
4. Pre-Race Dinner (found under Team Information on the website)

Grayson Highlands State Park

The Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Grayson Highlands State Park have issued a Special Use Permit to the Blue Ridge Relay. Please refer to the Rules and Penalties on the website for a full list of Park rules.

1. Grayson Highlands State Park is 30-45:00 from Jefferson/West Jefferson, 1:15-1:30 from Boone. Please allow extra time for the drive. The roads, which access the Park, are winding, narrow and secondary.
2. Upon entering Grayson Highlands, a parking fee for all vehicles will apply. The fee is \$12 for 15 passenger vans and \$7 for other vehicles, payable at the gate.
3. All Park rules apply.
4. Team Packet Pick-up, if not done Thursday at the pre-race dinner, must be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the start of your team's wave. Sign-in at the starting line will take place 15 minutes prior to the start of your team's wave. The Start is at the Visitor's Center, located 4 miles after passing through the Park entrance gate. Upon entering the park, do not stop at the Ranger's Station, which is located just inside the gate. The Ranger's station is EZ 1 and parking space is not adequate for additional vehicles.

Blue Ridge Parkway

The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and Blue Ridge Parkway have issued a Special Use Permit to the Blue Ridge Relay to access the Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition to the established rules and regulations of these organizations, the following will apply to the Blue Ridge Relay:

1. "All runners must wear reflective vests at all times while on the Blue Ridge Parkway." To meet this requirement, the Blue Ridge Relay will require runners, who are running legs 12, 13 and 35 to wear reflective vests for their entire leg, regardless of time-of-day.
2. "Support vehicles are not permitted on the Blue Ridge Parkway with the exception: support vehicles can travel between milepost 373 and milepost 375, but cannot stop on the Parkway." Therefore, support vehicles will follow a route alternate to the course for legs 12 and 13. Support vehicles may use the Parkway for leg 35. Alternate vehicle routes are noted in the Driver's Handbook.

Counties and Municipalities

The Blue Ridge Relay has received permission from the following counties: Grayson, Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, Yancey, and Buncombe. Permission has also been received from the towns of Jefferson, West Jefferson, Blowing Rock, Newland, Spruce Pine, Burnsville, and Asheville. Please respect these communities, which graciously are allowing our event access to their roadways.

Road Conditions

The roads used for the Blue Ridge Relay in the North Carolina and Virginia mountains are mostly rural, narrow and have little or no paved shoulder. Two Cautions:

First Caution to runners: when traffic is approaching, be very careful when stepping onto the gravel/grass shoulder. Look before you step and step onto the shoulder earlier than normal to ensure good footing.

Second Caution to drivers: We need to drive with caution, awareness and on many roads below the speed limit regardless of shoulder conditions. In many places, if your tires leave the road you risk damage to your vehicle, getting stuck and even sliding into a creek.

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Course Markings

The course will be marked with one yellow directional sign (18" x 24") before each turn and one yellow confirmation sign with black arrow after each turn. Signs during the night legs will be highlighted with a blue blinking light. However, as noted in the Rules, it is the responsibility of the runner to navigate the course. In addition, approximately ¼ mile before an exchange zone, an "EXCHANGE ZONE" sign will be posted. This is not the beginning of the exchange zone, but an alert sign for runners and drivers that the exchange zone is approaching. Please note that signs may read "BRR" or "Relay". Signs will be posted on the Left side of the road. However, signs will be posted on the Right when the leg notes/description instructs runners to run on the right. Occasionally signs do disappear. So memorizing or carrying your cue sheet is highly advised.

Safety Concerns

We believe runners should always run defensively. Please be advised that you will be running on a course that is open to normal traffic. Roads will be posted with caution signs to approaching traffic. All runners should be alert to traffic, blind turns and road conditions.

Every year we receive questions about safety, especially at night. If you are concerned about safety:

1. County Sheriff Departments and Local Law Enforcement are informed of the Relay's presence, of the roads we're using and the respective time of day. They are seen patrolling the course.
2. Companion runners are permissible at night. Please refer to the rules for complete details.
3. Team vehicles are NOT permitted to "shadow" their runners and team vehicles are NOT permitted to "leap-frog" their runners (please see rule II-11, 60-minute penalties). Vans must drive directly to the next EZ.
4. You can carry a small canister of pepper spray.
5. Carrying your cell phone may or may not offer comfort. Sections of course do not have cell service.

Rules and Penalties:

Please refer to the website for a complete listing. Every runner and driver **MUST** comply with the rules.

Team Sign-in

Teams have two options for packet pick-up:

1. Thursday at Boondocks, West Jefferson, pre-race pasta dinner, reservations required. Packet pick-up 4:30pm – 8:00pm. Dinner 5:00pm – 8:00pm.
 2. Start Line, Friday morning, 30 minutes before your team's scheduled start time.
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1. Race bracelets will be distributed at packet pick-up, with the team's race numbers.
 2. Race bracelets will be retrieved at the finish.
 3. Not all team members are required to be at the start or packet pick-up.
 4. A waiver, signed by all team members, **must** be submitted at packet pick-up.
 5. Runner Order **must** be submitted at packet pick-up.

Prerace Pasta Dinner

Boondocks will be hosting the pre-race dinner 5:00pm – 8:00pm, Thursday, Sept. 7. Pasta (vegan option available), marinara, bread, salad, desert and soft-drinks. Cost is \$13. Registration and prepayment must be received by Tuesday, August 29. To make your reservations please reference Pre-Race Dinner under Team Information on the website.

Start Line

Teams should be at the Start Line 30 minutes prior to their start if they need to pickup their race packets. Teams, which have already picked up their race packets, are expected to sign-in/report at the Starter's Table at the Starting Line 15 minutes prior to the team's start time. The team's lead vehicle and lead runners only need to be at the Start (if two vehicles are used). Several items will be addressed at this time:

1. Team packet pick-up and race bracelet issue (if not completed on Thursday)
2. Team Sign-in (the captain is NOT required to be present).
3. Vehicle inspection (just if you think your vehicle size is going to be questioned)
4. Inspection of reflective vests, flashlights and blinking lights (if you have questions).
5. Inspection of van decorations. Please decorate your vans in good taste.

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Best Decorated Van Competition

The Best Decorated Van Competition will be judged at the Start Line by Blue Ridge Relay staff and volunteers. Winner will be announced at the Awards Ceremony.

Restroom Facilities

Restroom facilities and/or port-a-johns will be available at all Exchange Zones. Please use them.

Food and Beverages

Be prepared. The stores and gas stations in the rural towns of North Carolina's High Country may not be open around the clock. However, several community groups will have food and other services available for sale.

1. EZ 8: Riverside Restaurant is open and has a variety of food.
2. EZ 14: Grandfather Country Store will be open with a variety of food, including sandwiches and bagels.
3. EZ 21: Ingles Grocery Store has 24 hour gas (great prices) and the grocery store will be open extra hours for the Blue Ridge Relay. It's a convenient location for vans transitioning between EZ 18 and EZ 24.
4. EZ 24: Bakersville Volunteer Fire Department: This group of volunteer firefighters will host several exchange zones, including Transition Zone 24 at their fire department. They are offering a fresh dug/fresh baked potato bar, cases of water and bags of ice. Also hot showers (Bring your own towel).
5. EZ 30 Pensacola Community Group: Pancakes, coffee, orange juice, and fruit cocktail will be available at our last Transition Zone (EZ 30). What a great way to fuel-up before the last six legs, and for those runners who have completed their running duties. PLEASE NOTE: The classrooms only in the churches will be open for sleeping. The sanctuaries will not. Come prepared with tents if needed.
6. EZ 32 Barnardsville Elementary PTO: Expect some energy restoring goodies...breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Restaurants

- Mellow Mushroom in Asheville (50 Broadway St. 828-236-9800) has once again extended a 15% discount on food to runners (bring your bib...race bib that is). Just 3 blocks from the Finish.

Weather Conditions

Please be prepared for a variety of weather conditions. For every 1000' increase in elevation, expect the temperature to drop 2.2 – 5.3 degrees. The climate and weather is comparable to Canada! The average daily high temperature has a range of 50s-70s degrees and low temperature 30-59 degrees. Be prepared for rain, higher winds, and quickly changing weather at these higher elevations. To summarize, **be prepared for extremes**, as has been said, "If you don't like the weather, just wait 5 minutes."

First Aid

Each support vehicle should carry a well-stocked first aid kit and ice. Be prepared to know how to use it.

Communication

Teams are encouraged to have a means of communication between support vehicles and a means of communication to contact local authorities/emergency personnel. Dial 911 in the case of an emergency. Blue Ridge Relay officials at each exchange zone will have access to emergency contact information.

Showers

1. EZ 24: Bakersville Fire and Rescue will have 2 portable shower units (4-6 showers/unit, 1 unit male, 1 unit female) set up in their bays. Cost \$4. BYOT (Bring Your Own Towel, soap, etc...).
2. Finish Line: For those teams traveling home post-relay, YMCA Asheville (30 Woodfin St), about 100 meters from the finish, will be available to runners for \$5, towel included.

Finish Line

Downtown Asheville at One Oak Plaza, the corner of College and Oak Streets.

Teams may finish with their last runner. We will have a staging area for the team to gather as your last runner approaches. Please do not interfere with finishing runners from other teams. If your runner and another team's runner are finishing close, please allow the active runners to pass before entering the finish line shoot.

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Finish Line Awards Ceremony

Award ceremony & post-Relay drawing starts about 6:30pm. The following awards are planned, but may change.

1. First Place Overall. (Will not be awarded an additional team category award).
2. First Place in the team categories with 5+ teams: Open, Ultra, Mixed, Master and Women. (Mixed Master combined with Mixed. Ultra Master and Ultra Mixed combined with Ultra. Ultra Women and Women Master combined with Women).
3. Second Place in each team category with 10+ teams. Third place in team category with 25+ teams.
4. Best Decorated Van.
5. First team across the finish line (if different than the First Place Overall team).
6. Runners Raffle: open to all runners who deposit the tab of their bib number in the Raffle box at the Officials' Tent 6:00pm - start of the raffle. The runner must be present and must have his/her bib number to win.

Course Records

Category	Team Name	City, State	Year	Total Time	Pace/Mile
Course	Charlotte Running Club	Charlotte, NC	2016	19:48:47	5:46
Open	Charlotte Running Club	Charlotte, NC	2016	19:48:47	5:46
Ultra	KTC – Shaving Time	Knoxville, TN	2010	21:25:26	6:11
Women	CRC Ladies Fast & Pretty	Charlotte, NC	2012	25:53:42	7:24
Mixed	Charlotte Running Club	Charlotte, NC	2010	21:59:07	6:21
Master	Carolina Godiva Masters	Raleigh, NC	2011	21:58:33	6:20
Ultra Women	Ultra Chick Maggots	Asheville, NC	2013	27:53:06	8:03
Ultra Mixed	Sole Asylum	Asheville, NC	2016	24:58:15	7:16
Ultra Master	Flying Foxes Ultra Master	Charlotte, NC	2016	26:57:58	7:50
Women Master	Sisterhood of the Traveling Bracelet	Chapel Hill, NC	2013	29:05:31	8:24
Solo	Scot Hayward	Hudson, NC	2009	57:31:00	16:20
Mixed Master	TBD 2017				

Sponsors

Grayson Highlands State Park, VA: The spectacular setting of Grayson Highlands State Park and the very gracious staff of Park Rangers has served as host of the Blue Ridge Relay Start Line since 2005 (year 1). If this is your first or eleventh visit to the park, you are in for a treat. Mountain balds, cool temperatures, wild ponies, and big views are the norm. Previous sightings included buck in velvet, black bear cubs, and so much more.

Mellow Mushroom, Pizza Bakers, Asheville. Mellow Mushroom (Asheville) continues to remain as a tremendous sponsor of the Blue Ridge Relay. Mellow Mushroom will be offering gift certificates for some fantastic post-Relay dining at their Asheville location. In addition, all runners who present their bib numbers on Saturday, September 9, will receive a 15% discount on food while dining at Mellow Mushroom.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car: www.enterprise.com. Need a team vehicle? Enterprise is there with 15-passenger vans and a Relay discount. You can't beat the combination.

Zap Fitness: Based in Blowing Rock, Zap Fitness is a non-profit training center for post-collegiate, Olympic hopeful distance runners. Zap Fitness also conducts adult running retreats that are ideal for runners of all ages and with any type of goal, be it performance or fitness. Looking to run your first 5k? ...Improve your marathon? Come to the mountains and achieve your goals! Zap Fitness is very community minded in their efforts to promote distance running. Their professional coaches are frequently found on the local track supervising workouts for the local community runners. www.zapfitness.com

Schuster Physical Therapy: Based in West Jefferson (near EZ6), Schuster Physical Therapy was voted BEST PHYSICAL THERAPIST in the 2016 BLUE RIDGE OUTDOORS MAGAZINE. Our good friends at Schuster PT are well connected to and have long been a part of the BRR family, frequently serving as one of your BRR Start line hosts, announcer and Relay starter...and as a current and past BRR runner. It is always a pleasure.

Blue Ridge Relay: 2017 Team Handbook

Charitable Partners

Our charitable partners are community organizations based along the Blue Ridge Relay route. Please see the website for a listing of community groups. Teams/runners are encouraged to raise funds to support these organizations, separate from the contributions made by the Blue Ridge Relay. The team that raises the most (\$3,000 minimum) will be awarded free entry into the 2017 Blue Ridge Relay. These donations do not go through Blue Ridge Relay hands. All donations will be made payable to the selected charity.

Emergency and Medical Care Contacts

Call **911** for all emergencies. Drivers and runners should know their location on the course at all times. Race Day course, weather, emergency, etc...updates will be posted on the **Blue Ridge Relay Facebook** page. Become a Friend to stay in-tune during the race. Race related questions must be directed to EZ Relay Officials.

Exchange	Local Hospital	Address	Town	Phone
1-8	Ashe Memorial Hospital	200 Hospital Ave.	Jefferson	336-846-7101
9-13	Watauga Medical Center	336 Deerfield Rd.	Boone	336-262-4100
14-19	Cannon Memorial Hospital	434 Hospital Dr.	Linville	828-737-7000
20-24	Blue Ridge Regional Hospital	125 Hospital Dr.	Spruce Pine	828-765-4201
23-24	Bakersville Fire and Rescue			
25-26	Bradshaw Fire and Rescue			
27	Clearmont Fire and Rescue			
25-30	Yancey Comm. Med. Center	320 Pensacola Rd.	Burnsville	828-682-6136
29-31	Pensacola Fire and Rescue			
31-36	Mission Hospital	509 Biltmore Ave.	Asheville	828-213-1111

Gas Stations and Grocery Stores

Legs	Store	Town	Address	
5	Walmart Gas & Grocery	West Jefferson	1149 Mount Jefferson Rd.	
5	Ingles Gas & Grocery	West Jefferson	60 Ashemont Dr.	
5	Other Gas and Grocery options in West Jefferson and Jefferson			
12	Food Lion Grocery	Boone	1864 Old Hwy 421 S	
12	Mobil Gas	Boone	Hwy 421 & Bamboo Rd.	
12-13	Walmart	Boone	200 Village Dr (off of Hwy 321)	
12-13	Other Gas and Grocery options in Boone on Hwys 321 and 105			
13	Food Lion Grocery	Blowing Rock	7533 Valley Rd.	
13	Tanger Outlet Gas	Blowing Rock	Hwy 321 & Tanger Outlets	
13-14	Other Gas and Grocery options in Blowing Rock			
16	Gas	Linville	After 1 st traffic light	
21	Gas – 24 Hour/Valero	Spruce Pine	6121 Hwy 19E, Middle of Leg 21	
21	Gas – 24 Hour/Ingles	Spruce Pine	EZ 21	
29	Gas and Grocery	Burnsville	Time of day dependent	

Garbage Disposal (DO NOT leave trash at other exchange zones)

Legs	Location	Other
Post 6	South on 221, just after the 194/221 intersection. Located on the Left side of 221.	Community garbage and recycling center.
Post 11	Immediately upon leaving EZ 10, turn Left on Old 421. Located on Left side in about ½ mile.	Community garbage and recycling center.
Pre/Post EZ 13	Between Boone and Blowing Rock on Hwy 321. On Left before entering Blowing Rock, on Right after leaving Blowing Rock.	Community garbage and recycling center.
EZ 24	Bakersville Fire and Rescue	
EZ 30	Pensacola	