

2026 Backyard Ultra Runners Guide:

Race Location: Goodridge Lions Hall, Goodridge, MN

Date: Friday, July 24, 2026

Check-in time: 4:00 pm

Check-in for the Backyard Ultra will start at 4pm inside the Goodridge Lions Hall. This should give racers and crew enough time to set up a tent (optional) or supplies you need prior to the race start at 7pm. Please use the south entrance door of the hall.

Race overview:

The Freedom Run Backyard Ultra is a night and day race, starting at 7pm and on a very flat course. During the night hours, we are so secluded in this area, you will get to see the stars so clearly at night, as long as the clouds stay away, and enjoy the picturesque Minnesota sunset and sunrise! From a weather perspective, the average high is in the upper 70s and low 80s and the average low is in the mid to upper 50s. Most years we have seen the temperatures as warm and humid. And we have certainly experienced rain, thunder and lightning. Make sure to plan your gear accordingly.

As for the course, this is an official Backyard Ultra course, with a 4.167 mile or 6.706 kilometer loop around a very flat landscape of the northern Minnesota terrain in Pennington County. The course starts and finishes at the Goodridge Lions Hall, which will be open and staffed for the entirety of the race and will include the following list of amenities for all runners. Crew are allowed inside at any time and can use the amenities below but crew are asked to be considerate of the supplies available and ensuring runners are first priority.

Amenities:

- Fully functional bathrooms with toilets, wash sinks and mirrors including stalls if changing is needed
- Tables and chairs for resting and eating
- Local hotels are in Thief River Falls, MN, approximately 30 min drive from Goodridge. There are no hotels in Goodridge. It's an easy drive to Goodridge from Thief River Falls if you are commuting.

Food supplies provided by event staff:

- Coffee
- Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Dr Pepper
- Water
- Ice
- Pre-mixed Tailwind
- Bananas
- Watermelon
- Napkins
- Plates
- Cups
- Available while supplies last

Other information:

This race coincides with the Goodridge Veterans Park Freedom Festival. Festival activities begin on Saturday, July 25th at 1pm. You can expect to see all kinds of spectators cheering and watching you through the town. All festivities are held at the Veteran Park. Runners can expect to receive encouragement during day hours as they pass by the activities. More detailed information on the course is noted below but it should be noted that runners will have some running through town, but the town is very small, with a population of 101, and during the night there will be very little traffic.

Official Backyard Rules:

The objective of a Backyard is for the athlete to cover the maximum distance possible for their level of experience and ability. There is only one winner in a Backyard Ultra, the runner who covers the greatest distance. However there can be many successes, as the rational pacing and team atmosphere of a Backyard raises many runners to achievements they never thought possible. Every athlete in the race plays a part in the final outcome. The ultimate winner cannot reach the distance they achieve without the contributions of all the other participants.

Backyard Format:**1. Course:**

1. A single 4.167-mile loop (4 miles 880 feet in length) or 6.7056 kilometers, must be completed every hour, on the hour.
2. The terrain is very flat and runnable, possibly the least elevation gain for a backyard ultra course in the world. The course is so flat, you will notice the difference from running on gravel to grass.
3. Race briefing will be at 6:50pm.

2. Starting Corral:

1. Measured to fit the entire starting field.
2. Corral stays the same size throughout the event.
3. Participants must be inside the corral at the bell.
4. Runners have the remainder of each hour to rest, refuel, and prepare.
5. At all times runners must wear their bib with bib #.

3. Starts:

1. Each Yard starts precisely one hour after the last.
2. Warning will be given 3, 2, and 1 minute before the bell.
3. All competitors must start at the bell (No late starts).

4. Yards:

1. Except for restroom breaks a competitor cannot leave the course until the Yard is complete.
2. No non-competitors on the course (including eliminated runners).
3. No personal aid during a Yard.
4. Each Yard must be completed in less than an hour to be counted.
5. After each Yard, the runner must check into the corral to record their lap time and must be within the corral before the bell is rung to qualify for the next starting loop.

6. No artificial aids (including trekking poles).
7. Slower runners must yield/allow passes.
5. **Winner/Results:**
 1. The winner is the last person to complete a Yard and receives a unique prize!
 2. All others are technically DNF but runners completing 12 and 24 hours earn a DNF award.
 3. Results of each participant in terms of Yards completed are to be given.
 4. If no participant can complete one more yard than anyone else there is no winner.

Required gear and/or supplies:

- At night time runners will be required to wear blinkers and reflective gear on their back, and headlamp on the front.
- Runners must supply their own first aid kit or any other race gear related supplies. We will try to help with whatever we can, but can't guarantee aid and supplies. We will have a first aid kit, just make sure if you bring supplies too.
- We highly recommend you wear sunscreen during the day and bring bug spray with deet as we do have mosquitoes and wood ticks.
- For any real medical emergencies, the local Fire and Rescue team can be called.

Course description:

The course starts and finishes at the Goodridge Lions Hall. You will be alternating the direction of the loop each hour, from north to south. The first lap will head north out of town, and second you will head south, and so on and so forth.

- Hour 1 at 1900 hour - Odd hour = North Loop
- Hour 2 at 2000 hour - Even hour = South Loop
- Hour 3 at 2100 hour - Odd hour = North Loop
- Hour 4 at 2200 hour - Even hour = South Loop
- Hour 5 at 2300 hour - Odd hour = North Loop
- Hour 6 at 0000 hour - Even hour = South Loop
- Hour 7 at 0100 hour - Odd hour = North Loop
- Hour 9 at 0200 hour - Even hour = South Loop
- So on and so forth....

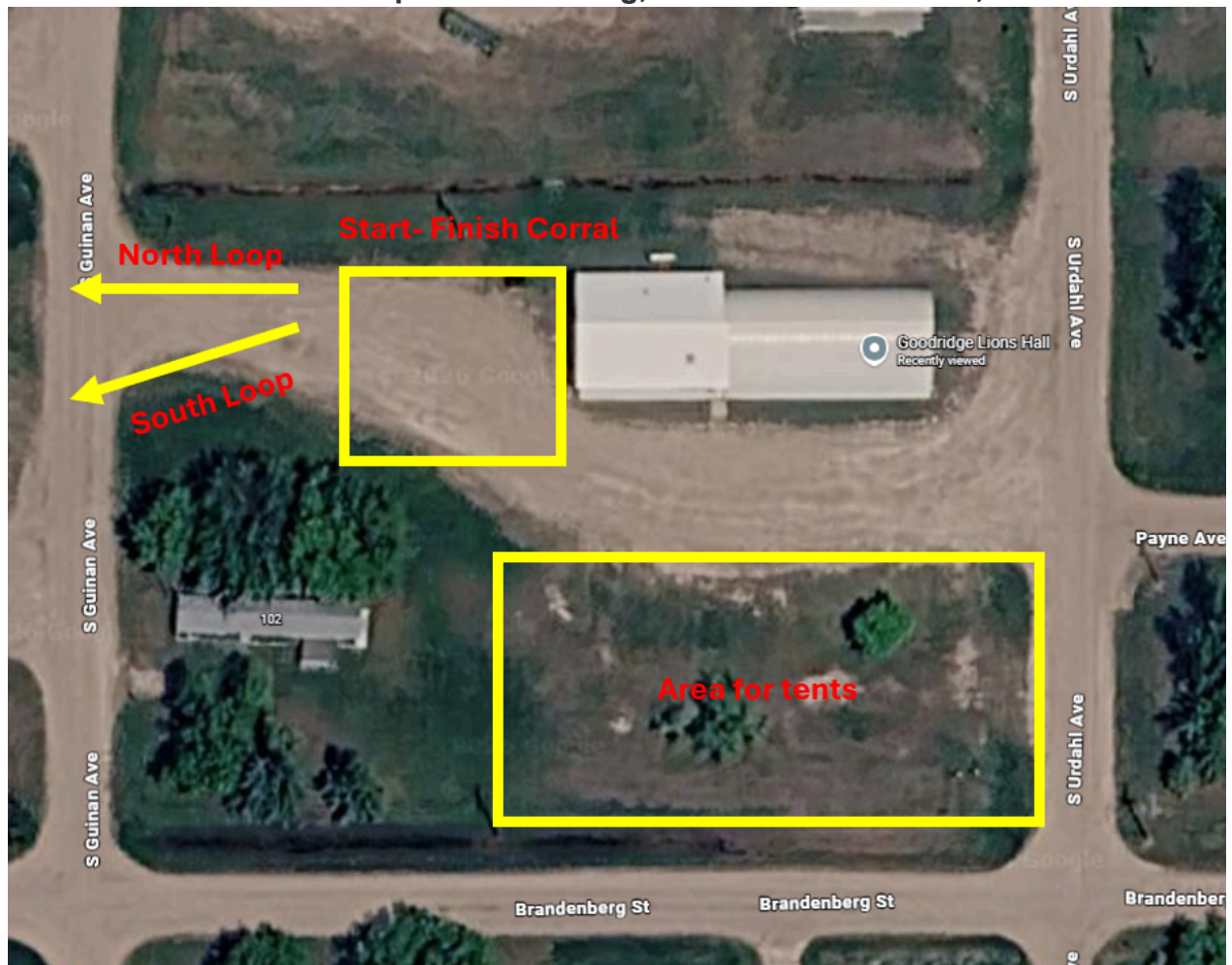
Additional course information:

Pictures below show you the course terrain which is mainly rural gravel roads with approximately one mile of grassy trail and three miles of gravel / shoulder road. Traffic will not be blocked for this race but the Pennington County Sheriff's Office along with the Goodridge Area Fire and Rescue are aware and can be available for any necessary needs. The course does not require you to cross any main highway and is very safe. We will have course markings with north and south loop signage with even/odd indicators and at night, flashers on course for greater visibility.

Aerial view of course map:



Aerial view of race headquarters building, start and finish corral, and tent area:



Note: The area for tents is reserved for backyard runners and crew only. But keep in mind, we will have a large space inside that holds approximately 100 people with tables and chairs.

**Race headquarters entrance
Please use door facing south:**



Ground view of start and finish corral:



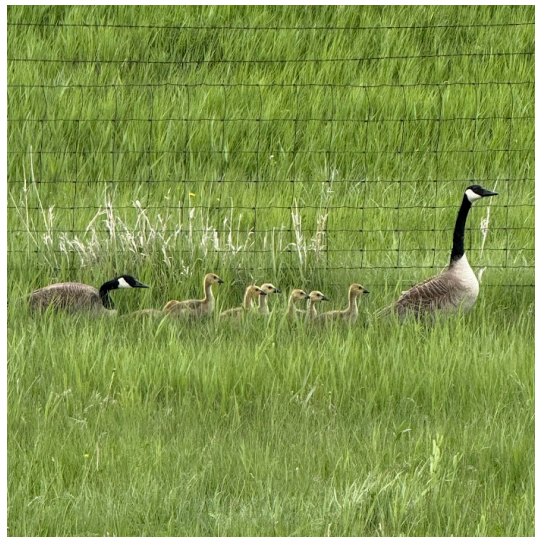
Additional course photos:

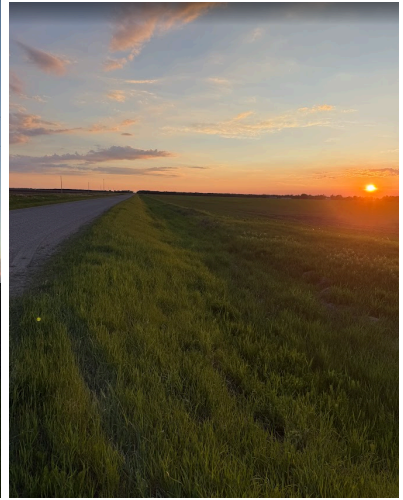
In town course photos: mostly mowed grass and some side gravel roads and small ditches. You will be running by the Veterans Memorial Park!





Outside of town course: basically, some pavement, shoulder, gravel and grassy minimum maintenance roads.





For additional questions, feel free to contact Cliff or Jena Johnsrud

Jena Johnsrud

 (218) 689-6895

 jenajohnsrud@gmail.com

Clifton Johnsrud

 (218) 689-5737

 clifton4592@gmail.com

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