



Granite Peaks Races

Runners' Guide 2025



Granite Peaks Events Overview

There has never been events such as these in the Mourne Mountains (or Beanna Boirche, if you prefer). Never have their likes been seen. Described as "the first true Mourne Mountain Ultras.". And yes! "There may be others, but...". The first, the best, the most challenging and yet most rewarding and enjoyable races. I could go on (I'm biased, of course) but as their creator I hold these races dear to my heart, and I want you all to experience as much delight in competing as I experienced in creating.

So, without further ado I give you Granite Peaks Ultras 80k and 50k together with the Granite Peaks 25 events. These mountain running races organised under the Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association banner take place on 25th May 2025.

About NIMRA

Now, let me tell you a little about NIMRA before we get down to the details. NIMRA is a voluntary organisation that sets and manages the annual mountain racing calendar for Northern Ireland. In addition, NIMRA provides resources to Clubs organising races throughout the year, including among other items race safety pack, including radios, survival bags and first aid equipment. NIMRA organises and supports National and International Mountain Running Teams and supports the ongoing development of junior mountain running athletes.

NIMRA is affiliated to Athletics Northern Ireland and all NIMRA races are run under the rules of our association, available on the NIMRA website: <https://www.nimra.org.uk>.

Event Organiser Details

Name of Event:	Granite Peaks Races (80k, 50k, and 25k) – 25 th May 2025
Location of Event:	Mourne Mountains (see maps below)
Event Date:	25 th May 2025
Organisation:	Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association (NIMRA)
Events Director:	Ciarán McAleenan
Contact No.	07522113090
Email Address:	ciaran@uphillcoach.com
Marshals' Coordinators:	Debbie Mingout & Kathleen Monteverde
Event Tracking:	Primal Tracking
First aid:	R.E.C. First Aid Trainers NI
Catering:	Last Lap Cafe

Start Timings

Granite Peaks Races:	06:00 AM (80k race)
	09:00 AM (50k race)
	11:00 AM (25k race)



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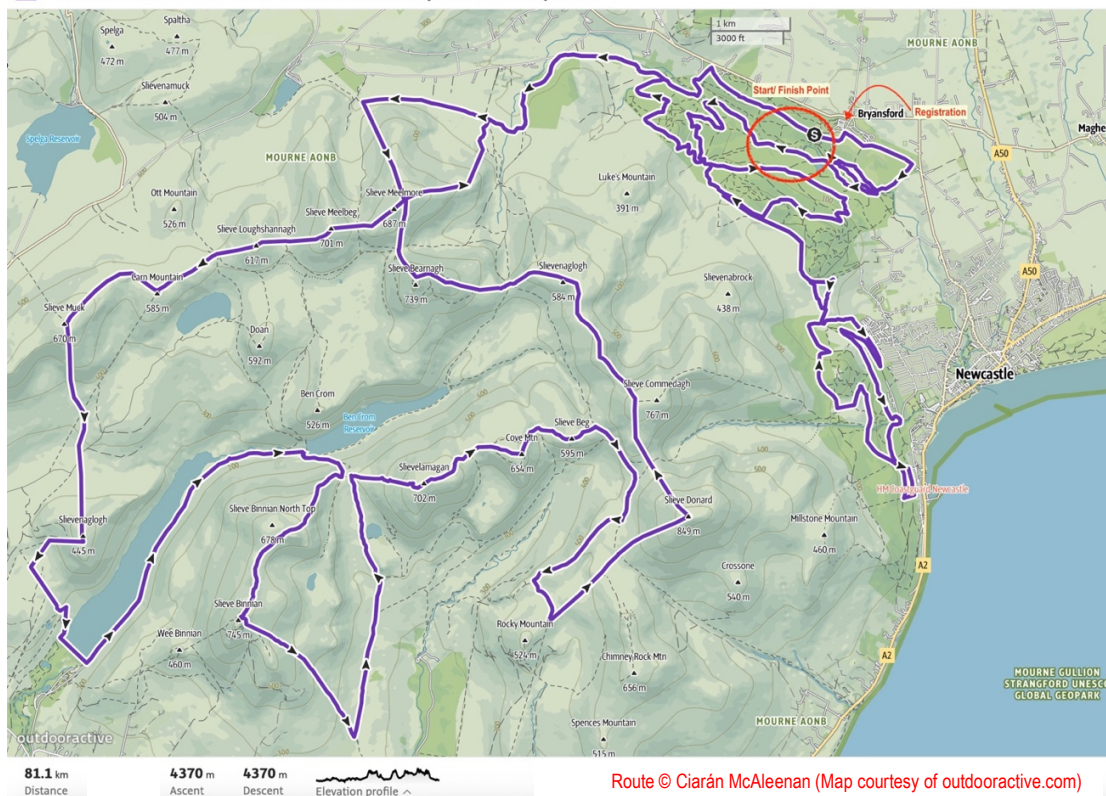
Granite Peaks Races: Ultra 80k

The Granite Peaks Ultra (80km) event starts at 6:00am on Sunday 25th May 2025 at Tollymore Forest Park, Bryansford. After registration in the Forest's upper main carpark the race starts and finishes on the trail just below lower main car park (See map).

After a tour of both Tollymore and Donard Forests (approximately 30km) the race makes its way towards the Kings Grave (Tollymore Forest), and beyond to Trassey Track. The route continues up Trassey Track turns right once through the upper stile and heads for Happy Valley where it follows the track up to the tower on Meelmore, crossing the stile to the interior of the Mourne Wall the race proceeds in an anticlockwise direction, over Meelbeg, Loughshannagh, Carn, Slievelamaghan towards Slievenaglogh and down to the dam at Silent Valley.

The race will continue up the access road alongside the Silent Valley and Ben Crom Reservoirs climbing the steps and making its way to the Slieve Binnian summit, via the Slievelamaghan/ Binnian col where it will follow the Mourne Wall down to the track at the edge of Annalong Wood. From there it will go up the track past the Blue Lough to Slievelamaghan and make its way to The Brandy Pad, via Cove Mountain and Slieve Beg. It continues in an easterly direction to reach the Mourne Wall at the foot of Rocky where it again will turn left towards the Bog of Donard before ascending Slieve Donard, Commedagh, Slieve Corragh and Slievenaglogh. At which point it descends to Hares Gap before climbing up and over Slieve Bearnagh, climbing Meelmore (for the second time) before descending towards the sheep pen at the top of the Trassey Track. From there the route follows Trassey Track and back into Tollymore Forest, past Kings Grave again and on to the finish line beside the wooden hut on the trail just below Forest's lower main car park.

Granite Peaks Ultra 80k - New start & finish point (25th May 2025)





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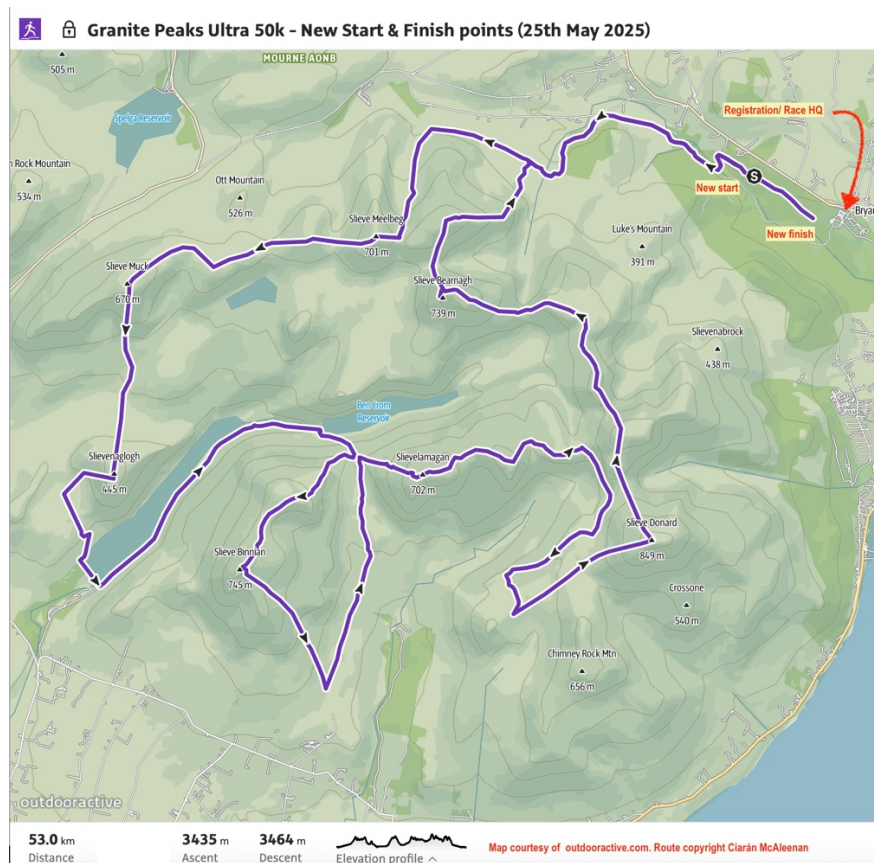


Granite Peaks Races: Ultra 50k

The Granite Peaks Ultra (50k) event starts at 9:00am on Sunday 25th May 2025 at Tollymore Forest Park, Bryansford. After registration in the Forest's upper main carpark the race starts and finishes on the Tollymore Forest trails (See map).

The starting point of the race is at the base of the hill behind the Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (approximately 1.5km up the trail from the Forest's lower main car park). From there it makes its way down the hill, turning right at the bottom and heading over Parnell's Bridge towards the Kings Grave, and beyond to Trassey Track. The route continues up Trassey Track turns right once through the upper stile and heads for Happy Valley where it follows the track up to cross the Mourne Wall at the col between Meelmore and Meelbeg, proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction over Meelbeg, Loughshannagh, Carn, Slievemuck towards Slievenagloagh and down to the dam at Silent Valley.

The race will continue up the access road alongside the Silent Valley and Ben Crom Reservoirs climbing the steps and making its way to the Slieve Binnian summit, via the Slivelamaghan/ Binnian col where it will follow the Mourne Wall down to the track at the edge of Annalong Wood. From there it will go up the track past the Blue Lough to Slivelamaghan and make its way to The Brandy Pad, via Cove Mountain and Slieve Beg. It continues in an easterly direction to reach the Mourne Wall at the foot of Rocky where it again will turn left towards the Bog of Donard before ascending Slieve Donard, Commedagh, Slieve Corragh and Slievenagloagh. At which point it descends to Hares Gap before climbing up and over Slieve Bearnagh, climbing Meelmore before descending towards the sheep pen at the top of the Trassey Track. From there the route follows Trassey Track and back into Tollymore Forest, past Kings Grave again and on to the finish line beside the wooden hut on the trail just below Forest's lower main car park.





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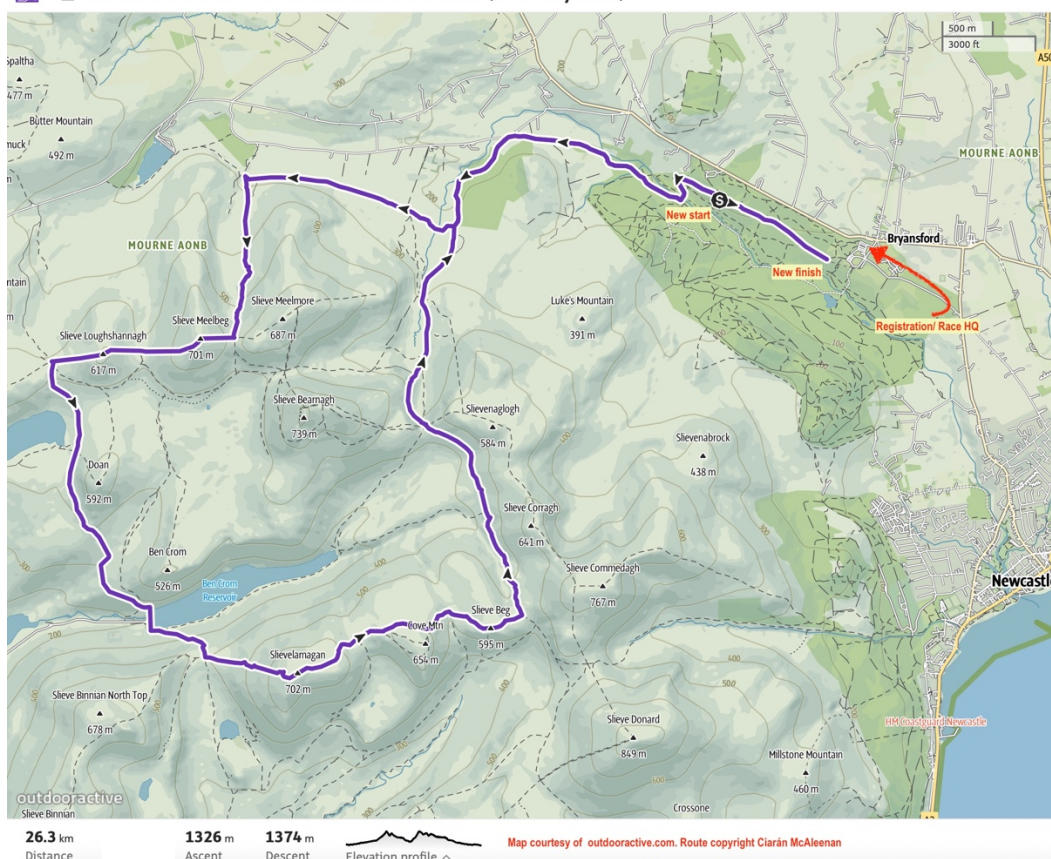
Granite Peaks Races: 25k

The Granite Peaks 25k event starts at 11:00am on Sunday 25th May 2025 at Tollymore Forest Park, Bryansford. After registration in the Forest's upper main carpark the race starts and finishes on the Tollymore Forest trails (See map).

The race starts at the base of the hill behind the Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (approximately 1.5km up the trail from the Forest's lower main car park). From there it makes its way towards the Kings Grave, and beyond towards Trassey Track. The route continues up Trassey Track turns right once through the upper stile and heads for Happy Valley where it follows the track up to cross the Mourne Wall at the col between Meelmore and Meelbeg, proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction following the wall to the stile at the col between Slieve Loughshannagh and Carn Mountain.06

Then the race takes a left turn down the track between Loughshannagh and Doan all the way to the top of Ben Crom Dam. Crossing the dam the race continues leftwards and follows the track up and over Slievelamaghan, across Cove and Beg mountains and descending onto the Brandy Pad. At that point the races takes a left turn and follows the Brandy Pad to Hare's Gap crosses the stile and descends towards the sheep pen at the top of the Trassey Track. From there the route follows Trassey Track and back into Tollymore Forest, past Kings Grave again and on to the finish line beside the wooden hut on the trail just below Forest's lower main car park.

Granite Peaks 25k - New Start & Finish Points (25th May 2025)





Car Sharing/ Car Parking

In the interests of protecting our environment I would recommend that you car share, as much as possible. Car parking spaces are available inside the Tollymore Forest area and access will be open from 4:45AM on the morning of the race. There is a dedicated car parking area set aside for racers on the lefthand side inside the main entrance in advance of the car park pay station. (See map). Take the left turn and go down the hill, on past the scout hut. As you approach the car parking area you will see a derelict cottage to your right and the gate to the car park is just beyond that on your left.



Racers arriving in cars will get a token (indicating they are Granite Peaks competitor) to display on their dashboard while driving past the Pay Station, which you must do to exit. The Forest has a one-way system so on exit you go back up the road to the main entrance road, turn left drive towards and past the Pay Station and follow the exit signs which will take you out to the top end of the Bryansford village.

Of course you can make arrangements directly with [Tollymore Forest](#) to use their camper/ caravan facility for the weekend.

Registration

Registration for all 3 races is at the Tollymore Forest upper main carpark (GR 344 328 – see map). Registration will take place as follows:

Racers will present their kit at the 'kit check' desk. Once successfully noted as having all the mandatory kit (see below) racers will proceed to desk 2 where they will receive their race number. Following which Primal Tracking will fit the race tracker.



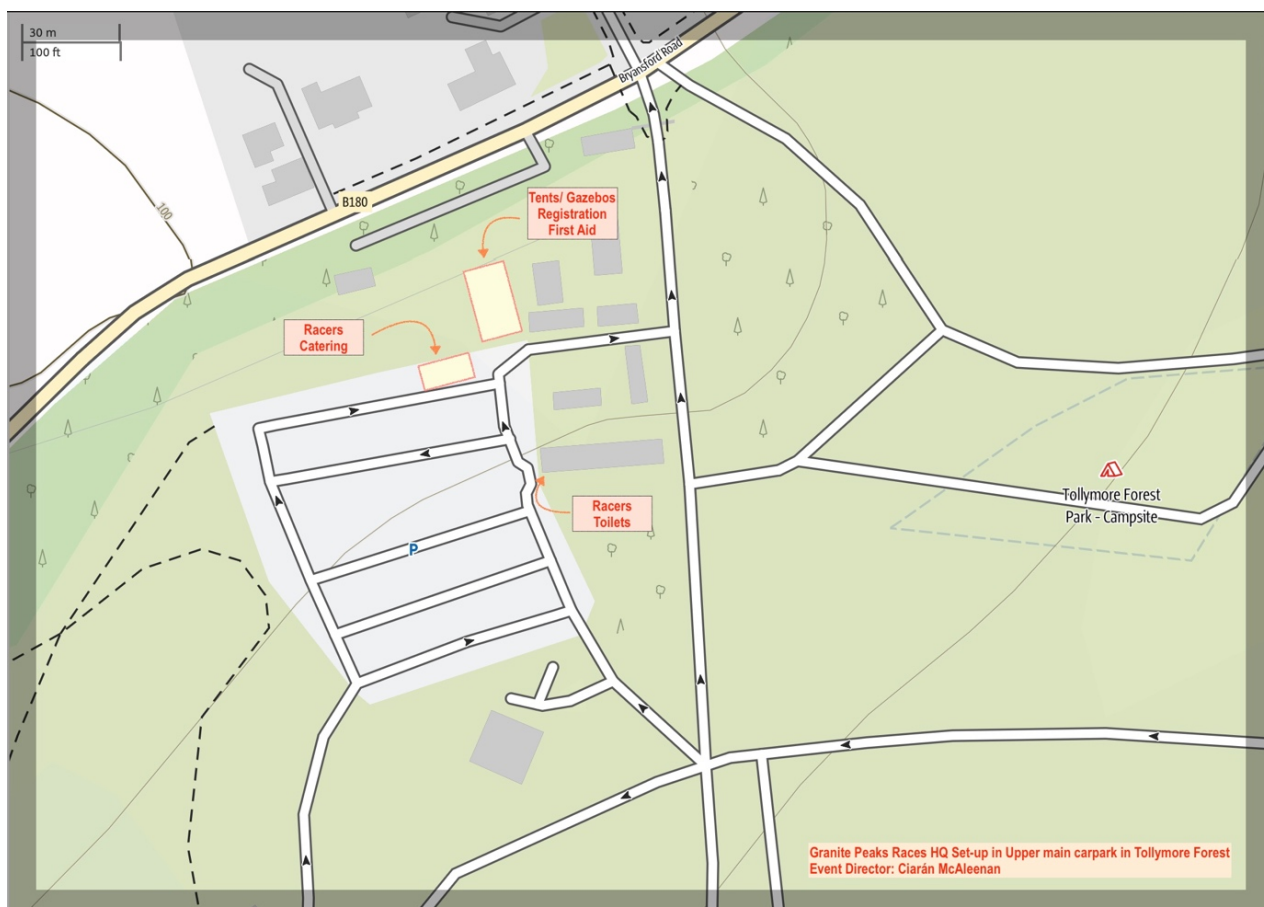
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The timings for registration to each race is...

- Granite Peaks Ultra 80k registration starts at 5:00AM, ending at 5:45AM,
- Granite Peaks Ultra 50k registration starts at 7:30AM, ending at 8:45AM, and
- Granite Peaks 25k registration starts at 9:00AM, ending at 10:45AM.



Route Markings

There is limited route marking on these races (none on the 25k route), since the route map and the GPX files are your main and essential guide around your chosen course.

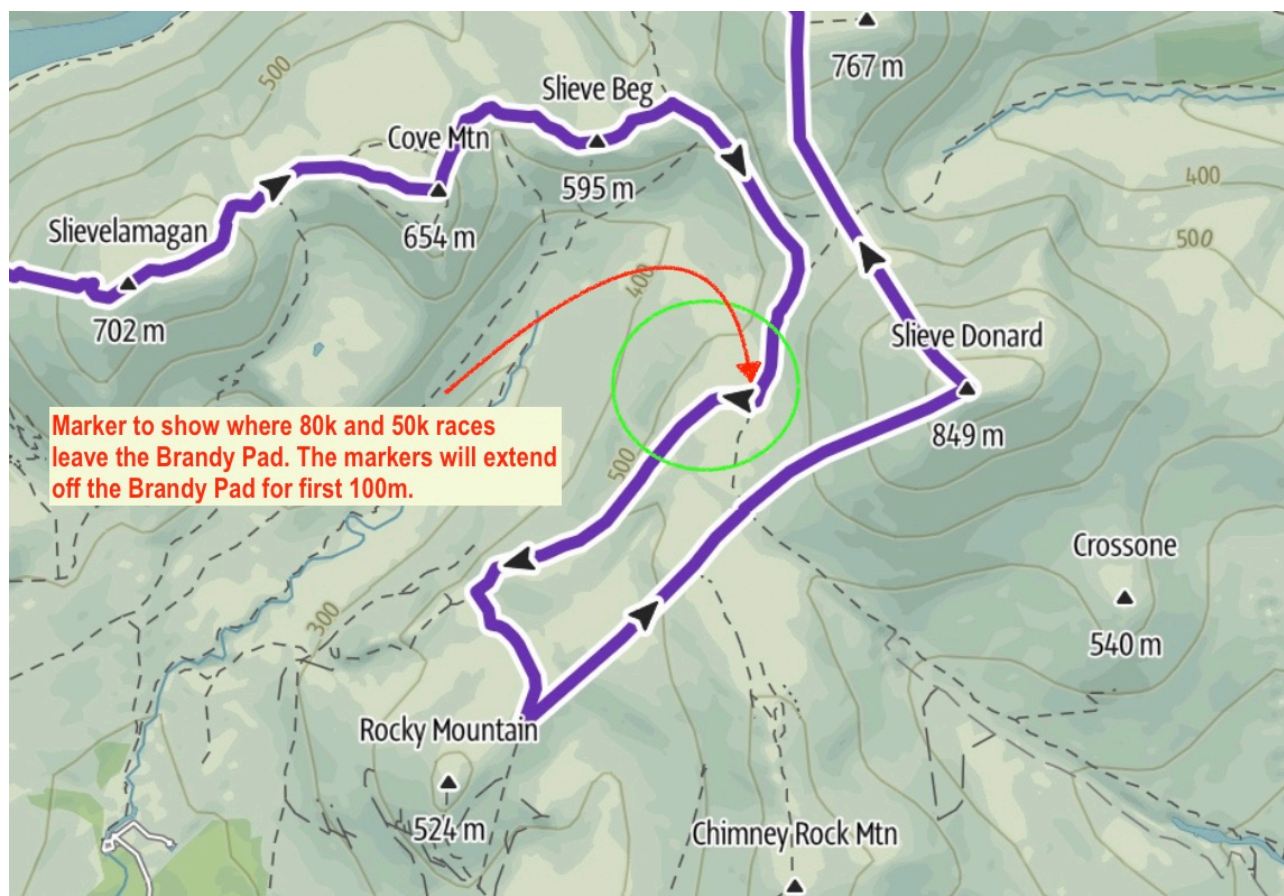
However, for the 80k ultra, which takes an initial 30k route through Tollymore and Donard forests critical junctions will be marked.

But out on the open mountain using map & compass (and/ or the GPX file) the route is easily navigated. The one exception to this is where the 80k and the 50k route leaves the Brandy Pad (GR 352 271) to go to the base of Rocky before turning back towards the Slieve Donard ascent (see map below). The turn-off point is difficult to spot and the first 100m (approximately) is an unclear track. Consequently, I have opted to mark the turn off point on the Brandy Pad and the first 100m leading to the much clearer track. From that point it will be more obvious where you need to go.



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Please note though, that any markers in the forest will be there as guidance only. Mostly you should follow the route as indicated on the map and within the GPX file, but I understand that occasionally we all go slightly offline. At the Race HQ we monitor the trackers and can tell the difference between a short cut and a slight offline run. So don't worry. Make sure though that all aid stations/ checkpoints are hit and that you stick as closely as possible to the defined route (see the list of points in the 'Marshals' section below).

All the routes on the map and on the GPX files have been travelled many times in the build up to the Granite Peaks Races and all are runnable/ walkable. Some may be rough, as they are on less travelled track, but they all do exist. So, please take extra care when manoeuvring through the rough stuff.

GPX Files

GPX files for all 3 races routes are available on <https://granitepeaksultra.com/gpx-files>. Again, they are there as guidance, but it is expected that proficient mountain runners have navigational capabilities and are well able to traverse the race route, unaided if necessary. And while GPX files are extremely useful reliance on technology is not the wisest and having a map and compass, with your race route clearly marked, will give you all you need to complete your chosen race.

Cut-offs

Granite Peaks Ultra 80k:	Final cut off time of 08:30 PM – 14 ½ hours allowed
Granite Peaks Ultra 50k:	Final cut off time of 08:30 PM – 11 ½ hours allowed



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Granite Peaks 25k: Final cut off time of 05:00 PM – 6 hours allowed

The table below sets out the cut-off points and cut-off times for each of the 3 Granite Peaks races. Cut off times are exit times from the various aid stations.

Granite Peaks Races - Cut-off Times				
Start time		Granite Peaks Ultra (80k)	Granite Peaks Ultra (50k)	Granite Peaks 25k
		0km	0km	0km
		Start line Grid Reference: 342 324	Start line Grid Reference: 3320 3226	Start line Grid Reference: 3320 3226
		06:00AM start	09:00AM start	11:00AM start
Cut off 1	Location	Entry to Trassey Track	n/a	n/a
	Grid Reference	311 313		
	Approximate Distance	30km		
	Cut off from start	4:15hours		
	Time of day	10:15AM		
Cut off 2	Location	Ben Crom Dam (lower level)	Ben Crom Dam (lower level)	Ben Crom Dam (upper level)
	Grid Reference	315 255	315 255	3155 2550
	Approximate Distance	49km	21km	12.5km
	Cut off from start	8 hours	5 hours	3 hours
	Time of day	2:00PM	2:00PM	2:00PM
Cut off 3	Location	Brandy Pad (below Slieve Beg)	Brandy Pad (below Slieve Beg)	n/a
	Grid Reference	343 279	343 279	
	Approximate Distance	62km	33.5km	
	Cut off from start	11 hours	8 hours	
	Time of day	5:00 pm	5:00 pm	
Finish Cut off	Location	Finish Line (Tollymore)	Finish Line (Tollymore)	Finish Line (Tollymore)
	Grid Reference	342 324	342 324	342 324
	Approximate Distance	81 km	53km	26km
	Cut off from start	14.5 hours	11.5 hours	6 hours
	Time of day	8:30 pm	8:30 pm	5:00 pm

Notes:

1. Daylight hours on 25th May 2025: 05:00 AM to 09:40 PM (16 hours & 40 minutes)
2. Anyone anticipating being on the race route after 8:30PM must carry a head torch
3. Irish Team trials target times for 80km race = 9:30 hrs for men's race and 11 hrs for women's race.
4. Irish Team trials target times for 50km race = 6:25 hrs for men's race and 7:45 hrs for women's race.

Aid Stations, Checkpoints and Drop Bags

For your safety and assistance marshals will be on the course at various locations. At these aid stations/ check points marshals will have some water. For your own safety you should start the race with at least 500ml (but preferably 1l) of water. There is a water tap available close to the registration point that you may use to fill your bottle/ soft flask.

There are some sources of water (springs) in the Mourne mountains, one just as you descend off Commedagh (80k and 50k route), known locally as "Paddy's Pipe". Also, on the 80k/ 50k route after having descended off Slieve Bearnagh as you are ascending Slieve Meelmore about halfway up the climb you will cross a stream. The source of this stream is a spring (not as easy to find as 'Paddy's Pipe'), but it is just a few metres up the stream. Although you may consider this is taking you off route a little and compromising your race time.

Please note that you must visit all checkpoints on your race route. Missing a checkpoint may incur a time penalty.



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Granite Peaks Ultra racers may leave a Drop Bag with the marshals at the Registration, which will be transported to the Aid Stations. Please keep drop bags small(ish) and while we will try to get them back to Race HQ afterwards that cannot be guaranteed.

Drop bag locations are as follows:

GPU 80k: (2 drop bags) one at Exit Tollymore/ Entry to Trassey Track and the other at Ben Crom Dam.

GPU 50k: (1 drop bag) at Ben Crom Dam.

Aid station/ checkpoint locations are detailed in the table below.

Granite Peaks Ultras 80k and 50k plus Granite Peaks 25 - Marshals			
Date: Sunday 25th May 2025 (Daylight hours 5:00AM to 09:40PM)			
	CHECK POINT	SERVICES	Race
1	Start/Finish Area	FIRST AID (ALL DAY), HOT FOOD AND DRINKS (AFTER RACE)	All races
2	Shepherd's Lodge (Donard Forest)	WATER, SNACKS, HOT DRINKS	GPU 80k
3	Exit Tollymore/ Enter Trassey Track	WATER, SNACKS (DROP BAG - 80K ONLY)	All races
4	Loughshannagh/ Carn Stile	WATER, SNACKS	All races
5	Ben Crom Dam	WATER, SNACKS, HOT DRINKS, FIRST AID, DROP BAGS (50K & 80K)	GPU 80k and 50k
6	Brandy Pad, below Slievebeg	WATER, SNACKS	All races
7	Hare's Gap	WATER, SNACKS	All races
8	Exit Trassey Track/ Enter Tollymore	WATER	All races

Mandatory minimum Race kit

Kit checks will take place at the start of the race and may also take place at random points on the course. Racers must subject themselves to any requested kit checks. Failure to submit to a kit check or any other infringement of safety, health or wellbeing rules could result in disqualification and a ban from participating in future NIMRA events.

Runners are to have the mandatory minimum race kit, which comprises:

- Footwear suitable for mountain race terrain,
- Waterproof whole-body cover (with taped seams (and integrated attached hood), hat, and gloves,
- Map of route, whistle, and compass,
- Bivouac (aka bivvy) bag,
- Emergency Foil Survival Blanket,
- Fully charged mobile phone with the Event Director's number (07522113090) stored.
(Note: mountain rescue call is 999 – Ask for 'Police' then 'Mountain Rescue')
- Tracking device (supplied by Primal Tracking at Registration),



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- h. Thermal layer, and
- i. Emergency food and drink (minimum 500 ml water bottle).

Advisory Race Kit

- It is advised that if you are anticipating that your race will exceed 10 hours (Granite peaks Ultra only) that you also bring a fully charged head torch and back up.
- Racers may consider bringing basic first aid supplies with them. Some supplies will be available with marshals for runners to avail of, should they need them. Please note marshals are not trained first aiders.
- Sunscreen (even with an overcast day the use of sunscreen is advised).

Use of Hiking/ Walking Poles

Poles are not normally permitted in accordance with NIMRA rules. As an exception the NIMRA committee discussed the use of poles on Granite Peaks Ultras. Their decision (without prejudice) was to allow the use of poles on the 80k and the 50k only.

But poles are not permitted to be used in the Granite Peaks 25k (since this is a NIMRA Championship race and the use of poles is not permitted in NIMRA Championship races). Please note that the use of poles on the Granite Peaks 25k race will result in disqualification.

The rules of use and carry of poles on the Granite Peaks Ultra 80k and 50k races will be same as UTMB, that is:

POLES: If you choose to take poles, they must be carried for the duration of the race. If you do decide to use poles, it is forbidden to start without poles and then receive them during the race. No poles are allowed to be stored in the drop bags. Poles must not be used going through or past aid stations/ checkpoints.

Safety, Health and Wellbeing

All runners will attend a pre-race brief on safety, health and wellbeing matters just prior to the races starting times. The full details of the safety, health and wellbeing assessment and the control measures are available at <https://granitepeaksultra.com/controls-sheets>. The assessment includes any necessary emergency response measures.

First aid stations are being set up at the Race HQ/ registration area and at Ben Crom Dam.

These races are semi-autonomous, which means that for the most part racers are to have all with them that they need fluids, nutrition, clothing etc. But there will be checkpoints where marshals (if able) will have a limited amount of water and some snacks but remember because some of the checkpoints are in remote areas of the mountain this will not always be possible.

A fully stocked aid station will be available at the bottom of Ben Crom Dam where you can get refreshments and replenish your water supply. As always please be mindful that many other runners will want to avail of these facilities too.

Extreme weather events can occur in the Mourne Mountains. The Event Director may opt to run a bad weather route, which will be relayed to race participants at the earliest opportunity. In the most extreme case, the event



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may have to be postponed. The Event Director will monitor weather conditions in the week leading up to the races and will make that decision close to the time of the event(s).

Environment

Racers must only cross boundaries at designated points, using stiles or known openings. Do not climb onto or over walls or fences. The route out onto the open mountain has several gates along the route. Each gate has a stile (mostly gate type stiles) to the side of it. Do not open any field gates as they are there to cordon livestock and or wildlife. Ensure the gate-type stiles are closed when you pass through. Be patient with other racers at these points.

All runners are to take adhere to our 'leave no trace' approach to mountain races. A breach of environmental controls, including crossing the Mourne Wall at any points other than at recognised crossing points could result in disqualification and a ban from participating in future NIMRA events.

Help us reduce waste. Please bring you own water bottles and fill them before hand or at the water tap, located close by Race HQ, before starting. Water will be available at the Shepherd's Lodge (80k race) and at Ben Crom Dam Aid stations with limited amounts available at other more remote marshal points along the route.

A Habitat Impact Assessment is available on <https://granitepeaksultra.com/controls-sheets>.

Prize Giving

Trophies will be awarded to the winner of each race, Granite Peaks 80k, 50k and 25k in both Male/ Open and Female categories. Token prizes are to be awarded to 2nd and 3rd place, both categories in each race. And finally, to mark category wins token prizes are to be awarded to Male/ Open and Female age categories; 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, and 70.

Prize giving times will be as soon possible after the expected winning times for each race.

Granite Peaks 25k prize giving is to be at approximately 3:00PM

Granite Peaks 80k and 50k is to be at approximately 5:00PM

(These times may vary slightly, so don't worry about it too much).

Irish Team Trials for World Championships

[IMRA](https://media.imra.ie/ad-hoc/2025_HP_Selection_Representative_Opportunities.pdf) is the governing body for mountain running in Ireland. IMRA is affiliated with Athletics Ireland and are responsible for the selection of Irish Teams for international representation in selected competitions. To be selected to represent Ireland in any of the international competitions, an athlete must compete in the chosen trial/ selection race. Full selection criteria and all relevant information can be found via the document linked here https://media.imra.ie/ad-hoc/2025_HP_Selection_Representative_Opportunities.pdf.

For 2025 the Granite Peaks Ultras have been chosen by IMRA as the Irish Team trials races for those athletes wishing to represent Ireland at the Canfranc World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Canfranc, Spain in September 2025.

Trial target times are as follows:



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Irish Team trials target times for 80km race = 9:30 hrs for men's race and 11 hrs for women's race.
Irish Team trials target times for 50km race = 6:25 hrs for men's race and 7:45 hrs for women's race.

Websites

<http://www.granitepeaksultra.com/>

<http://www.nimra.org.uk/>

And finally...

May I offer you my best wishes for your chosen race. May it go at least as well for you as you expect it to and better than that hopefully. See you on the starting line.

Ciarán McAleenan
Granite Peaks Event Director

Thank you to our sponsors for their support for these events: <https://granitepeaksultra.com/sponsors>

- Manor Healthcare Ltd
- Quinn Piling
- Uphill Coach