# **Day Relay 101**

A day relay (as opposed to an overnight relay like Hood to Coast) has a distance that can be covered in a single day (i.e. sun-up to sundown). The distance can range from a marathon to 70 miles, divided into multiple legs, with teams of two to seven runners. The legs of the course can include trails, roads or a combination of both. Relays can be point-to point, out and back, or on a repeated loop. Some relays are running events only; others allow walking teams, who often cover a portion of the full running course.

# **Registration**

1. Some events use registration platforms that allow a team captain to register an entire team and fill in the spots with team mates as they are found. Some platforms have people register as individuals, they indicate which team they are joining. The team captain is responsible for managing the team—e.g. registering members, letting the race director know about changes, being the contact person for the team, finding a volunteer. Be sure to fully understand the registration process to avoid missing deadlines or paying extra fees.
2. Some relays are also open to solo runners, who provide their own support vehicle and crew.
3. There should be a system for teams to find an extra runner or for a runner to find a team. There may be a message board, or it may simply involve contacting the race director.
4. Each team member should be registered and sign a waiver (electronically). Relays may ask for individual 10K times or estimated paces. This information is needed when there are wave starts instead of a single start time. Typically, slower teams start earlier and faster teams start in later waves.
5. 10K Times: The 10K time shouldn’t be a PR time, but a realistic pace for the relay. Give accurate estimates (e.g. no sandbagging), as staffing the exchanges is based on accurate estimated finish times. If the teams are appropriately seeded, then the lines for the portapotties are shorter and all the exchanges are staffed.
6. Find out the refund policy. Life happens. Some events don’t allow refunds, but do allow transfers or selling the entry to a different team.
7. Relays will often have different divisions for awards, based on age, gender, etc.
8. Many relays give awards will to the fastest teams in different divisions. Often special awards go to Best Team Name, Best Decorated Vehicle, and Most Creative Costumes.

## **Pre-Race**

1. The team captain is responsible for making sure the team roster is complete, estimated times are submitted, a volunteer is recruited, waivers are signed, and fees are paid. Most communication between teams and relay officials goes through the captain.
2. Putting a team together: Running a relay is a lot of fun. Relays provide a wonderful bonding experience and unique camaraderie that isn't found in other events. You encourage each other and spend hours together in a van. You also have the chance to be silly by running in a costume or decorating your van. Then there is the finish, where it is a tradition for a team to cross the finish line together. But there are logistics to figure out; planning ahead will make it easier come race day.

**The first thing you need to do** is to put a team together. You can start by recruiting your running friends and family to join you. It will help to decide what kind of team you want. Some teams are competitive and seek the fastest runners. Some teams are not competitive, and seek runners who enjoy having fun. If you don't have enough friends to put together a team, make some new friends by contacting the event director about team/runner matching. Teams may be all men, all women, or mixed.

1. Depending on the size of your team, you’ll need a van or an SUV (for up to seven passengers). It may work better to drive two cars. Be sure to check the event’s policy on vehicles. Most prohibit RVs, as such large vehicles can clog narrow roads.
2. Consider making it a destination experience. Get to the start a day early or stay an extra day to see the sights and enjoy the local shopping or pubs.
3. Be creative with your team name. Be sassy, but keep it in good taste. Ask yourself if your grandmother would find the name fun or offensive.
4. Decorate your van, but vehicles shouldn’t have decorations that are suggestive, sexual or contain foul language. Create costumes to fit your team name, but keep them in good taste (and not too hot to wear while running).
5. Print and bring a copy of the course manual and leg maps. Preview the legs, where to get gas, etc.
6. Bring sufficient supplies for your team. Relay courses are often isolated, so don’t leave home without food, water, a first aid kit, toilet paper, tape, and a full tank of gas. Each team is responsible for supporting its own members, but race officials can help as needed in emergency situations.
7. Bring several changes of clothes for your legs and for the post-race celebration. Be ready for changes in weather throughout the day.

# If your team has an unusual name, take the time to buy/create costumes and buy/create decorations for your van.

# **Choosing Which Leg to Run**

1. Relays should provide maps and descriptions of each leg.They may be described as easy or hard, but these are subjective rankings. Flat legs are easier than hilly ones, shorter legs are easier than longer legs, and paved roads are easier than gravel roads, but ranking is hardly scientific. It’s best to print all the legs, look them over, and decide as a team who gets which legs.
2. Runner Line-up: Some relays require that teams maintain the order of runners throughout the event. For example, a relay might have six people doing twelve legs. Runners do Legs 1 through 6, then repeat Legs 7 through 12 in the same runner sequence. If a runner on a team is injured, the next runner in rotation must substitute and others move up.
3. For non-competitive relays a team may have their runners run/walk in any order. You are not required to run/walk the legs in a particular sequence, but all legs must be covered. Be sure to know the policy of the particular relay.

# **Packet Pick-up**

1. Events often have early packet pick-up. This allows you to deal with bibs, pins and shirts the day before the event instead of rushing the morning of the event.
2. Packets typically include: bib numbers, T-Shirts, van signs, meal and beer tickets, and assorted promotional items.

# **Day of Race**

1. Plan to arrive 30-60 minutes before your start time.
2. Park where directed by race officials.
3. Tape the “Caution: Runners on Road” signs on your vehicle.

# **On the Course**

1. Treat volunteers, team members, race officials, residents, and spectators with respect. Give the volunteers a “thank you” even if you’re tired and grumpy.
2. For road races, the course may not be closed to traffic. Runners run along shoulders of roads and both runners and their vans must follow traffic laws. There may be potential hazards including (but not limited to) traffic, road surface conditions, weather and wildlife. Park in designated areas and on the legal side of the fog line only. In general, runners should keep to the left side of the road, facing traffic, unless told otherwise by race officials. Always be mindful of traffic and take appropriate precautions to insure a safe and fun event for all participants, volunteers and the public
3. The use of personal music devices is discouraged. If you do use headphones, the volume shouldn’t be so loud as to prevent you from hearing traffic.
4. Do not defile public or private property. Use the portapotties and trash boxes provided. Follow “no parking” directions and keep off private property. Do not block any residential or commercial driveways. Pack it in; pack it out. You wouldn’t want people leaving trash or urinating on your property. Use common sense, and treat others as you’d like to be treated.
5. Keep your noise level under control. There may be backcountry roads and the residents and their animals aren’t used to so much traffic. Play music, but not too loud. Cowbells are great, but air horns can frighten horses and dogs. Fireworks are prohibited, as they are both disruptive and a fire danger. Again, treat others as you would expect.
6. Runners may walk if they wish, but walkers should not run, as the exchange zones and the finish are staffed based on estimated times. Walkers who decide to ”jog a little bit” will arrive at unattended exchanges (and will be cheating). Walkers take competition as seriously as runners do. For your safety and fairness, this is not permitted.
7. Teams are usually **self-supporting**. A typical 12-person team supplies two vehicles, an *Active Van* and a *Resting Van*. The *active van* is the vehicle that carries the runners who are currently running the course; the *resting van* carries the runners who are eating and/or resting before it is their turn. The *active van* positions itself at a predetermined point called an *Exchange* to drop off the next runner and pick up the current runner. A typical 6 person team may use two smaller vehicles for being active/resting, or just one vehicle for dropping off and picking up runners.
8. Teams need to stock their vans with water, food, sports drinks, and first aid kits. There may or may not be aid stations at the exchanges. Some teams will do their own driving; some teams will recruit a driver for their van(s). Teams typically start in waves every fifteen to thirty minutes with the slower teams starting in the first wave and faster teams starting in the last wave.
9. Be aware of course markings. Check the leg maps before you start each leg. Critical turns will be marked, but teams are responsible for keeping their runners on course. Runners may want to carry a map with them as they go.
10. Drive 25-30mph on dusty gravel roads; be considerate of runners and keep the dust clouds to a minimum. Some runners like to wear a damp hanky over their face to make it easier to breath on dusty roads.
11. Captains may calculate and anticipate the timing of handoffs by using pace estimates of runners. To allow for error, Resting Vans should arrive at Van Exchanges 30 minutes prior to the predicted hand-off. Cell phones and 2-way radios are useful for van communications. However, sometimes there are some sections of the relay route where there is no cell phone coverage.
12. LINK: [SAMPLE PREDICTION SHEET](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12Bk9TwvpNQIvVDFOhQxIjqnR9wYw924v4RtFXBdGCNU/edit?usp=sharing)
13. Drink water; stay hydrated, especially on warm days.
14. If you drop out, notify a race official before leaving the course.
15. If you encounter a dangerous situation (e.g. loose dog or angry resident) or have a medical emergency, your first priority is to keep yourself safe. Once in a safe situation, please report the incident to race officials ASAP. Give specific details and information so we can follow up with EMS and law enforcement as is appropriate.
16. Smoking is typically prohibited on the course. If it is fire season, be cautious and aware of any sparks/smoke/fire that you see. Report any fires to race officials immediately.
17. **Bibs MUST be worn on the front**, so race officials can record which teams have passed each exchange and which teams have finished.
18. Handoffs should occur inside the designated exchange zones. Sometimes there is a baton; sometimes it’s just slapping hands.
19. Timing: Events use gun timing, chip timing or a combination of the two. Typically groups will start in waves (gun time) and the last runner wears a bib with chip as they cross the finish line.
20. Leap-frogging: Some relays permit leap-frogging. Normally one person runs one leg at a time. For leap-frogging, two people run two different legs at the same time, allowing the team to finish sooner. In order to do this you need expressed permission from the race director. You will need to record individual leg times so an accurate team time can be calculated at the finish.
21. “Shadowing” may or may not be permitted for your event. Shadowing refers to when a van parks a mile or two ahead of their runner and waits for the runner to pass before driving ahead and stopping again. Obey traffic laws when pulling over (e.g. don’t impede traffic, don’t block roads, don’t park in private driveways, do park on the legal side of the fog line).
22. “Following” is usually *no*t permitted. Following refers to when a van follows 25-30 yards behind the runner while they are running. This is dangerous as it slows traffic. Bicycles may or may not be permitted to accompany runners on the road.
23. Do not stop in the middle of the road to drop off runners at exchanges as this causes traffic back-ups
24. Save the party for the finish. Open alcohol containers and drinking are prohibited on the course. Not only is this a violation of event rules, it is a violation of state law and you are at risk of being cited by law enforcement.
25. Typically, no oversize vehicles such as RVs, buses, shuttles or limos are permitted as support vehicles. If you’re unsure if your vehicle qualifies, please contact the race director. Most teams drive a van or SUV, but two small cars per team may also be permitted.
26. Remember that although runners may walk, walkers may not run.  Most relays are not judged race-walking event, so they expect walkers to police themselves. We know that walkers take competition as seriously as runners do.

**At the Finish**

1. Teammates usually cross the finish line with the last runner. Have your team wait in the corral and run the last 100 yards together. If you want to take photos at the finish line, don’t impede other teams as they finish.
2. Typically, all finishers get a medal.
3. Enjoy the post race party! Typically, runners, walkers, volunteers, friends and family are welcome. There may also be an awards ceremony.

# **Volunteers**

1. Volunteers are essential for the safety of participants. Typically, relays require that teams provide one or more volunteers to serve as a race officials. If providing a volunteer is a hardship, some events allow a “buy out” option where a team pays extra and volunteers are provided by local sports teams and/or non-profit groups.
2. Relays typically allow volunteers to pick their assignments on a first come-first served basis. If a designated volunteer becomes unavailable, the team is required to find a replacement and inform the race director. Usually, a race official checks to be sure volunteers have reported to their assignments, and answer any questions. Each volunteer should know the name of the team that they are representing.
3. Volunteers usually must be 18 years or older and physically able to carry out their assigned duties.
4. Typically, each volunteer works a 3 to 4 hour shift; most work as course marshals at exchanges or direct traffic/runners. Sometimes a participant may serve as the volunteer by working at a pre-race day activity such as early packet pick-up.
5. Volunteers are expected to arrive at their assignments on time and work their entire shift. Maps and detailed instructions for each assignment (including how to get there) should be provided.
6. Volunteers sometimes wear a Race Official T-shirt or sometimes wear a reflective vest.
7. Volunteers should bring: food, water, clothes appropriate for the weather, cell phone, and map/instructions for their assignment. They should NOT bring alcohol, young children or pets.
8. Because of seeded start times, it is impossible to predict exactly when the first runner will arrive and when the last runner will pass by. The shift times for volunteers are estimates, so may be a bit longer (or shorter). Get to your assignment a bit early and stay until a replacement arrives or until the sweeper tells you that the last runner has passed. Some positions have two shifts, so fill in your replacement on the duties when they arrive, and be on your way.
9. If you encounter a dangerous situation (e.g. loose dog or angry resident) or have a medical emergency, your first priority is to keep yourself safe. Once in a safe situation, please report the incident to race officials ASAP. Give specific details and information so we can follow up with EMS and law enforcement as is appropriate.
10. Smoking is prohibited on the course. This is fire season, so be cautious and aware of any sparks/smoke/fire that you see. Report any fires to race officials immediately.
11. Volunteers are usually welcome at the post race party.

Updated 4-29-24