

Show Me Your Free State Marathon and Ultra

Runners' Handbook



About the Race:

The “Show Me Your Free State Marathon and Ultra” is a single event offering 100 mile, 50 mile, 50 kilometer, 26.2 mile, and 13.1 mile race options that will take place on Saturday, October 24th, 2026 at Rosecrans Memorial Airport in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The name “*Show Me Your Free State*” was chosen because the course begins and ends in Missouri (the *Show-Me State*), while most of the course mileage is located in Kansas (the *Free State*). The flood of 1951 caused the Missouri River to change course near St. Joseph, so part of Missouri now lies to the west of the river. The 25-mile course will follow the riverbank, then skate along the edges of the Loess Hills, and then resume along the southern riverbank before returning to the start and finish area near the entrance of Rosecrans Airport.

This “Show Me Your Free State Marathon and Ultra” is an official fund-raising event for the Benton High School Cross Country and Track & Field programs. Benton is one of two public high schools in the St. Joseph School District - *Go Cardinals!*

Race Schedule:

- November 1, 2025: Early registration opens
- March 1, 2026: Regular registration opens
- August 31, 2026: Regular registration closes
- September 1, 2026: Late registration opens
- October 16, 2026: Late registration closes
- October 23: Packet pickup from 3:00 to 8:00 pm at Tubes Bike Shop¹
- October 24: Race Day!
 - 4:00 am: Race-day packet pickup open²
 - 4:00 am: 100-mi and 50-mi early start³

¹ Tubes Bike Shop, 1826 Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph

² Race day packet pickup (located at Start/Finish area) closes 30 minutes before the start of each race.

³ Early start is available for 100-mile and 50-mile competitors only, and runners acknowledge that there will be no support available at the manned aid stations during their first lap. Those requesting an early

- 6:00 am: 100-mi and 50-mi start
- 7:00 am: 50km and marathon start
- 8:00 am: Half marathon start
- 2:00 pm: Half marathon cutoff
- 5:00 pm: Marathon cutoff
- 6:00 pm: 50km cutoff
- 11:59 pm: 50-mi cutoff⁴
- Noon (Sun): 100-mi cutoff⁵

About the Course:

This is a flat, fast course built around a 25-mile loop that begins and ends just outside the entrance to Rosecrans Memorial Airport. Total elevation gain is 138 feet per loop. Approximately ten miles per loop is on paved roads with very little traffic. The remaining miles consist of well maintained gravel roads or a double-track crushed limestone vehicle path on top of the Elwood Gladden levee near the Missouri River. There is one major road crossing in Wathena, Kansas, where runners must cross US Hwy-36. However, the local speed limit is 30 miles per hour with strong police presence and there will be a manned aid station at that road crossing so volunteers will be able to assist runners. This is a quiet, peaceful route with some local vehicle traffic along portions of the course, but there will be no vehicle traffic whatsoever on top of the levee. Runners will see a variety of local wildlife to include deer and bald eagles. The foliage along the Missouri River and the adjacent hills will be in full autumn color. Runners can probably complete the entire course in either normal running shoes or trail running shoes.

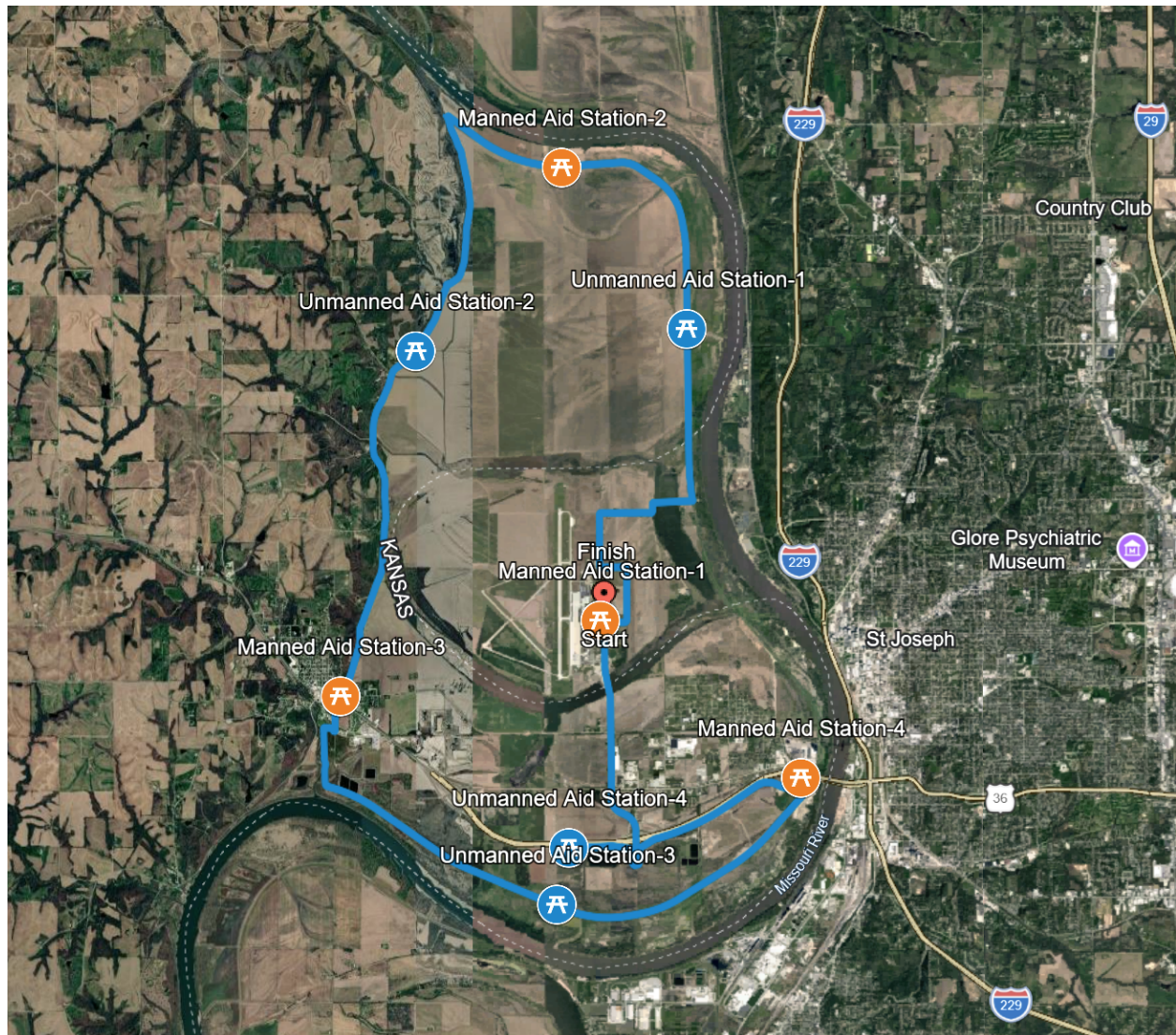
The 100- and 50-mile competitors will complete four or two laps, respectively. The 50km runners will complete one full lap and then proceed along the same course as if beginning a second lap, but will then return to the start point after reaching the turn-around point at mile-3. Marathon runners will complete one full lap and then complete a 0.6-mile out-and-back leg before returning to the finish. Half marathoners will follow the same route as all other runners, but will turn around and return to the finish at mile-6.55 (there will be a manned aid station at the turn-around point). The course will be marked with yellow paint at various intervals and at all turns. There will also be signage at all turns providing directions.

Those who successfully complete the 100-mile, 50-mile, and 50-km races will receive a unique, distance-specific finisher's buckle. Marathon and half-marathon finishers will receive event-specific medals. All participants will receive an event tee-shirt and other swag. Mile-90 Photography (www.mile90.com) will be on-hand all day Saturday to photograph runners at various points on the course as well as to capture as many candid shots as possible. These high-resolution photos will be available for download at the Mile-90 website after the race.

start must declare their intention to do so at packet pickup Friday night. Early start requires a donation of one 30-pound bag of dog food or a 12-pound bag of cat food to be collected at Tubes on Friday night. Pet food will be donated to the St. Joseph Animal Shelter (<https://petforu.com/>).

⁴ 50-mile competitors must complete their first lap no later than 3:00 pm on Saturday or they will be pulled from the course.

⁵ 100-mile competitors must complete their third lap no later than 4:00 am on Sunday or they will be pulled from the course.



Aid Stations, Drop Bags, Crew Support, and Pacers:

There will be four fully-manned aid stations along the route.

“Start-Finish” aid station at mile 0/25.

“Northern Levee” aid station at mile-6.5. *Closes at 7:30 am Sunday.*

“Wathena” aid station at mile 13. *Closes at 9:00 am Sunday.*

“Roseport Landing” aid station at mile-19. *Closes 10:30 am Sunday.*

Manned aid stations will offer water, gatorade, and soda-pop; salty snacks, PB&J sandwiches, fruit, cookies, and candy. Starting in the late afternoon and into the evening and early morning, the manned aid stations will also have hot coffee, hot soup, and other hot food.

There will be unmanned aid stations approximately half-way between each of the manned aid stations. Unmanned aid stations will have water and limited snacks such as saltines or animal crackers. All aid stations (manned and unmanned) will have limited first aid supplies to include petroleum jelly, Neosporin ointment, ibuprofen, and antacid tablets.

All runners are required to carry a personal hydration system at all times, such as a hand-held water bottle, a belt or vest with water bottles, or a Camelback or similar device. To minimize the amount of waste generated during this event, paper cups will not be available at any of the aid stations.

100-mile and 50-mile runners may bring up to four drop bags. All drop bags except those to be left at the start-finish must be dropped off at Tubes Bike Shop Friday night during packet pickup or they must be dropped off at the start-finish no later than 5:00 am. The size limit for drop bags will be the same as the TSA requirements for commercial airline carry-on bags. No cardboard boxes, paper sacks, or trash bags. All drop bags must be clearly marked with the runner's last name, bib number, and the designated aid station. Drop bags will be organized next to each aid station tent according to bib number. 100-mile runners' drop bags will be returned to the start-finish by 12:00 noon on Sunday. 50-mile runners' remaining drop bags will be returned to the finish by 10:00 pm. No drop bags for 50k, marathon, or half-marathon runners.

Friends and family (crews) may meet their runners at the Wathena or Roseport aid stations as well as at the start-finish area; these are the only crew access points. Crews may not provide any kind of support along the route outside those three aid stations (crews may not stash supplies outside the aid stations). Crew vehicles are strictly forbidden from shadowing or linking up with their runners on any of the unpaved portions of the course, even on maintained gravel roads. Any violations of this rule will result in immediate disqualification of the runner associated with any vehicle transiting unpaved roads anywhere on or near the course, *no exceptions!*

50- and 100-mile runners may have one pacer join them on the course any time after completion of the first lap. Pacers must wear a pacer bib that may be obtained at packet pickup at Tubes on Friday night in exchange for one bag of pet food (see footnote-3 on page-1). Pacers with a bib may help themselves to any of the food or drink at the aid stations. Runners may rotate different pacers throughout the race, but runners may only have one pacer on the course with them at a time. Pacers must follow all race rules; any rule violations by pacers will result in consequences for the runner, to include disqualification. Pacers may link up with their runners at any of the manned aid stations except the first ("Northern Levee"). No bicycles allowed on the course.

Environmental Data:

October days in Northwest Missouri are typically warm with low humidity and moderate winds. Average daily highs are in the upper-60s and average night-time lows are in the lower-40s. However, as with just about anywhere in the Midwest, there can be significant variations to these figures and the weather can go from beautiful to miserable in a matter of hours, so be prepared and pack your drop bags accordingly.

Saturday:

Sunrise:	7:39 am
Sunset:	6:27 pm
BMNT:	6:08 am
EENT:	7:26 pm
Moonrise:	5:25 pm
Moonset:	7:06 am (Sun) – 98.7-percent illumination

Sunday:

Sunrise:	7:40 am
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Race Registration Timeline and Fees:

Early registration: November 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026
Regular registration: March 1, 2026 – August 31, 2026
Late registration: September 1 – October 16, 2026

	Early	Regular	Late ⁶
100 Mile	\$180	\$200	\$240
50 Mile	\$120	\$140	\$180
50 Kilometer (31 mi)	\$90	\$100	\$140
Marathon (26.2 mi)	\$70	\$80	\$120
Half Marathon (13.1 mi)	\$50	\$60	\$90

Participants in the 50k, 50-miler, and 100-miler must be at least 18 years of age by the day of the race. Marathon runners must be at least 15 years of age and accompanied by a parent or guardian (present at the race if not running). Half marathon runners must be at least 12 years old and accompanied by a parent or guardian.

“Dropping down” (ex: changing from the 100-mile to the 50-mile race) is not allowed once the race has begun. Runners may drop down to a shorter distance at any time prior to the time packet pickup closes, but there will be no refunds.

Registration fees are non-refundable and there are no deferrals. Registration transfers from one person to another are not allowed. For safety and accountability purposes, runners must show a valid identification at packet pickup.

Rules:

- ❖ **Be respectful!**
- ❖ **Be responsible!**
- ❖ **Be safe!**

Be respectful:

- Use good manners when dealing with any other person from the time you pick up your packet at Tubes until you leave St. Joseph after your race is finished.
- Greet others in a friendly manner.
- Be mindful of others’ personal space while on the course. Sometimes, some people would rather be left alone.
- Say “please” and “thank you” to each and every volunteer.
- Do not handle others’ drop bags or other gear without their say-so.
- Runners may not play music over loudspeakers that can be heard more than 10 feet away.

⁶ There may be limited availability of some swag items for those signing up during the late registration period.

- Be tidy in and around the aid stations. Take only what you need. Admit it or not, your hands will be filthy, so don't touch any food that you don't intend to consume yourself.
- This is your day! You've worked hard to get yourself ready for this. Also, you paid a hefty registration fee to participate in this event. But remember, you are a competitor, not a customer, so please do not act entitled.

Be responsible:

- Bibs must be worn visibly on the front of the torso or pinned to the thigh portion of the runners' lower garment. All runners must be identifiable by their bib number at all times.
- Absolutely no littering along any part of the course. There will be trash cans at all of the aid stations. Put all trash in the trash cans. Anyone observed littering anywhere on the course will be immediately disqualified.
- Ensure that any crew members or pacers adhere to all rules and procedures found in this handbook. Runners will be held accountable for their associates' conduct on or near the course.
- There will be portable toilets at all manned aid stations...please use them.⁷
- No dogs allowed on the course other than ADA-defined service animals. The ADA defines a service animal as one that is trained to perform a task that directly relates to the individual's disability. An emotional support animal does not qualify as a service animal. Dogs are allowed at the start-finish area but must be kept on a leash at all times.

Be safe:

- Run against the traffic on any paved or unpaved roads where traffic may be present. If you sense traffic approaching from either the front or rear, groups of runners must break off and run single-file on the far left-hand side of the road.
- Do not deviate from the route. Stay on the course, even if you believe you must DNF. Walk toward the nearest aid station...if you are in distress, a safety vehicle will come to you and assess the situation. This can't happen if you leave the course.
- All runners must wear a functioning headlamp any time before sunrise or after sunset (see Environmental Data above).
- All runners must also wear a belt or vest with at least 155 square inches of reflective material (ANSI Class-1) any time after sunset. We will waive the before-sunrise requirement for reflective gear at the start of the race on Saturday since most of the runners will be fairly close together, but headlamps are required.
- Use of earbuds is discouraged but not prohibited. Your situational awareness decreases significantly when you wear earbuds which compromises your safety as well as the safety of others. Consider wearing just one earbud or keep the volume as low as possible.
- 50- and 100-mile runners must check in with a race official at every manned aid station after the first lap. If you believe you must DNF, check in with a race official at the nearest aid station. If you DNF at the "Northern Levee" aid station, a support vehicle will transport you back to the start.
- All runners must provide an up-to-date emergency contact number at packet pickup. This should be someone who is immediately available to come to your assistance if required.

***Be Respectful...Be Responsible...Be Safe!
It's the Show-Me Free-State Way!!!***

⁷ If you must relieve yourself at some point far from a port-a-john, please be discreet.

Additional Information:

- Park in designated spaces at the start-finish area at Rosecrans Airport. Do not block any roads or entrances to the start-finish area.
- There will be plenty of space for RVs or primitive camping at the start-finish area, but tent camping must be within a designated area that will be clearly marked. There are no public restrooms other than the portable toilets we will contract for the event.
- If traveling from outside the area, please take the time to explore St. Joseph before or after the race. Check out these websites for additional information:
 - St. Joseph Convention and Visitors' Bureau: <https://stjomo.com/>
 - Explore St. Joseph: <https://uncommoncharacter.com/>
 - St. Joseph Museums: <https://www.stjosephmuseum.org/>
 - Missouri Western State University: <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/>
 - St. Joseph Trail Alliance: <https://www.saintjosephtrailalliance.com/>
 - City of St. Joseph, Missouri: <https://ci.st-joseph.mo.us/>