2018 ROAD BOOK

Taking place on Saturday the 25th of August 2018, Ultra Trail Wales will be special in that the race route will take in one of Wales’ most iconic mountains, a world renowned estuary and the majesty of Wales’ greatest forest.

Set in the beautiful Snowdonia National Park, Ultra Trail Wales will have one of the most iconic, challenging and mouth-wateringly beautiful race routes of any event in the UK. Over 50 stunning and challenging miles (80km) and with over 3400m / 11,000ft of elevation gain, the event is set to literally take the breath away!

Starting at 6am Ultra Trail Wales is set to capture the imagination of ultra runners from the across the sport, and by year three organisers hope to take the event to a national status and develop further Wales’ stature as a destination for truly world-class outdoor events.

Runners from across the UK are expected to descend on the historic market town of Dolgellau in South Gwynedd, Wales – home to the start and finish of the race.

Ultra Trail Wales 2018 - Weekend Programme

Friday 24th August, 2018

12pm (midday) – Registration opens
9.30pm – Registration closes

Saturday 25th August, 2018

4.00am - Race Registration opens for all events
5.00am – Race registration closes
5.15am – Race briefing
6.00am - Ultra Trail Wales 2018 starts
2.00pm – First runners expected
8.00pm – Prize giving takes place
12.30am (midnight) - Race closes
Registration

Registration will take place on Friday 24th at the Dolgellau Rugby Club (LL40 1UU) 12pm until 9.30pm. Registration will reopen from 4.00am on race day until 5.00am Saturday 25th August at the same location.

At registration you will be issued with your number, Harvey's Race Map, timing wristband, commemorative #UTW2018 wristband, UTW race tee (for those who have ordered), UTW race buff, 500ml Salomon soft flask, commemorative canvas UTW bag, post-race food ticket and other items from our sponsors Wild Trail and Torq.

Race maps will be also be displayed at the race registration to help with any queries regarding the route and checkpoints.

Facilities

The Dolgellau Rugby Club is a well-equipped base for the event. As well as race registration there are toilets, lounge, changing rooms, a bar and kitchens for the post-race runner food. We will also have tea / coffee and cakes on sale.

We are kindly being allowed use of this club and we expect all runners to respect the facility and tidy up after themselves and not leave litter / runner items.

Car Parking

Dolgellau is a bustling town and will be even more so on this Bank Holiday weekend, there are a number of car parks with the closest adjacent to the Rugby Club and the large Marian Mawr Car Park. Please note these are pay and display car parks. There are also free 1-hour parking bays in the town, a 5 minute walk from the registration.

Kit Check at Registration

As you will be aware we have a compulsory kit list for the race. This will be checked at race registration.

UTW Kit List

- Full waterproof body cover
- Thermal layers suitable for the conditions on the day
• Hat and Gloves (buff or similar acceptable)
• Survival/Space Blanket
• Head torch / spare batteries if required
• Mobile phone (fully charged)
• Compass
• Whistle
• Watch
• Map (provided)
• Emergency food of 400 kcals
• Basic first aid kit in a waterproof container (e.g. Lifesystems Nano to include)
• 1 x Sun Cream Sachet – 7.5g – Mountain SPF50 Formula
• 5 x Sterile Non-Woven Swabs (Gauze swabs) (5cm x 5cm)
• 2 x Alcohol-free cleansing wipes
• 1 x Zinc Oxide Tape (2.50cm x 2m)
• Dressings
• 1 x Sterile Low Adherent Dressing (10cm x 10cm)
• 1 x Pack of Assorted Plasters
• 1 x Sterile Blister Plaster
• 1 x Elasticated Cohesive Bandage (5cm x 4.5m)

Polos are allowed at UTW however please be respectful of other runners when using poles with vigour, especially on uphill sections.

Footwear

We advise all runners that you choice of footwear should be appropriate to the mountain running you will be undertaking. All legs of the course have sections that are slippery after wet weather and we advise shoes with good grip levels.

THE RACE

At 50 miles / 80km and over 11,000ft / 3400m of ascent across some of Wales’ most arduous terrain, Ultra Trail Wales is a serious challenge.

The event will be well marked, the event will be well marshalled, runners will be electronically tracked, the event will have major aid stations and regular check points for runners, the event will be covered
by experienced mountain rescue teams, who know the mountains and are ready to help if called upon.

As organisers we will ensure that Ultra Trail Wales is as safe as possible for all competitors but without undermining the nature of the race. Those undertaking the event should be clear that on the higher reaches of the mountains there is an element of risk of injury whilst participating in this event.

Depending on the weather at that time of year parts of the Ultra Trail Wales route could be subject to rapidly changing conditions.

Equally, heat could be a factor, as much of the route is uncovered and unsheltered terrain. For this reason, competitors must be capable dealing with running the route in all but the most serious weather conditions.

The route is at times very rough underfoot and the descents off Cader Idris (mile 10) and Diffwys (mile 25) in particular are steep and require good descending technique.

**Route Detail**

The start of Ultra Trail Wales is on the ‘Marian Playing fields’ by Dolgellau Rugby Club.

Starting out on a tarmacked surface the route climbs 280m over about 3.3km towards Maes Coch Farm mainly on single tracked roads.

From here the path initially follows a quad bike path towards the ridge of Gau Craig. This is mainly grass, and after rain can turn quite wet in places.

After the Jacobs ladder, the quad track ends. Keep heading up here. As the path cross the 650m contour, don’t be tempted to go to the summit Cairn, but instead, enjoy some contour running with views back towards the start.

After following a fenceline briefly, a Jacobs ladder crossing puts you into a low piece of ground under Mynydd Moel. The steep line to the top heads North West with some scree. Keep to the best worn path here, and eventually you’ll arrive at the summit Cairn (863m and 7.3km from the start).

Not too far West of the summit another Jacob stile, from here to the top of Penygadair is the most open piece of mountain. In low cloud keep
your wits about you – there are some small sheep tracks that head down to Llyn Cau and the drop to the north is quite steep.

**The lowest point between Mynydd Moel and Penygadair is 790m – so don’t drop beneath that!**

Over the top of Cader and the next easy to identify place is where the Pony Path comes through Rhiw Gwredydd. This is part of the Cader Race route with the route marked on your map leaving the bridleway for 750m or so to enjoy some less rocky running.

The next section across Tyrrau Mawr follows a fenceline through Carnedd Lwyd, over Craig-Las and onto Twll yr Ogof. This is a less visited end to Cader, and the paths here can be wet, muddy and quite squelchy.

There are a couple of short sharp climbs along this section, but also some fantastic views North and South. If you get a chance to look over your shoulder, the views back to Penygader are pretty special too.

Then around Braich Ddu, before the start of the long descent. First onto Fford Ddu (a forest road) and then a quick turn right down through now deforested woodland. This part of the course can be extremely wet following rain.

The lack of the woodlands and heavy plant movement means that the puddles can be much deeper than expected!

Out of the woods and down over open fields on good tracks at Gest Ddu, a couple of switchbacks before heading past the Quarry.

A few stile crossings before joining the A483 for 50m (CAUTION ON TRAFFIC CROSSING).

500m of road brings you to the Morfa Mawddach Feed station and toilets. At this point the journey will have been 23km.

From the feedstation you follow the flattest part of the course, across the wooden footbridge. The route turns right, past the old Lifeboat station and up through the park by the brilliantly named Porkington Terrace. (CAUTION ROAD CROSSING).
Much the same as the start, the route climbs 220m over about 2.5km on tarmac. Passing the Barmouth Slabs before heading offroad once more at Gell Fawr.

The route follows round to Bwlch y Llan before a steep section to follow the ridge proper. The next 7km follow the wall (or fence in places) all the way up to Diffwys at 750m.

There are stiles or gates to cross the walls. The gradient along here is never too steep, but it is a fairly long climb that gives lots of opportunity to enjoy the views (if weather permits.)

Keep following the wall line from the summit. After about 750m the path descends steeply to the South East through an open Manganese mine.

**CAUTION THIS DESCENT IS STEEP AND ROCKY.**

Care is needed to pick your way down the old mining inclines, a variety of surfaces can be slippery and uneven. A stile crossing into some woodland, means you’re nearly off this descent. Having dropped 450m you will turn hard left on a Forest track in Cwm Mynach.

As the path bends slowly East and passes a crossroads at the top of Cwm Mynach, give yourself a pat on the back. That’s half way!

This forest road winds it’s way across the open moorland that is the catchment of the Afon Gamlan. As you cross the river on a concrete bridge, those that know Coed y Brenin, or Trail Marathon Wales will recognise this corner of the “Kings Forest”.

A couple of short rises put you into a long gentle descent. Here is a great place to stretch those legs out!

As you pass Maesgwm you briefly rejoin a road, past the old visitors centre, before crossing under the A470, and towards the new Visitor Centre and your second feed station.

At just over 51km, the opportunity to restock your water bottles, use the toilet, change your socks might be a welcome break.

From here, there are no big climbs like the previous two legs. But, there are still some climbs!
Away from the feedstation and up the shoe test route, turning left at the top on the Sarn Helen forest road. This climbs back up to 300m before turning right and descending on single track to cross the Afon Gain at the most northerly point on the course.

The run from here to the Mawddach Bridge is mainly downhill – but be careful on the big rocky descent!

Over the bridge by the impressive Rheader Mawddach, before firing up the ‘Slab Climb’. A very short section of forest trail, before a left hand turn up grassy paths and heading back on to a long fire road round Moel Hafod Owen.

This path gives amazing views towards Cader – have a look and think you were running over that 50km ago! Another gradual descent leads you to a right hand turn, single track a few rocks here, so try and pick up those tired legs.

Across the road, and off down a little single track like something in Mordor – a slippery railway sleeper needs careful footing in the wet!

This next piece of fire trail is 8km long – it doesn’t gain or lose much height overall before heading off on single track, but though on fresh legs you might call in undulating, it might not feel like that at this point.

The fire road hair-pins back but you nip left down some single-track.

**CAUTION HERE** as the path steepens over broken ground (only about 50m in length) and crosses a stream at Ceunant Hyll (meaning ugly Gorge). As you cross this stream you have 10km to go.

Along the fire trail for 500m and then a quick right up over Gallt Ffridd-Goch – lovely views, and great single track bring you down through the woods, and then steeply over some rooty ground and back out on the fire road.

This fire road is another gentle descent, sweeping down hill before dropping off to the left by a lovely big Beech Tree.

**CAUTION ROAD CROSSING** as you enter the Arboretum with trees from all over the world.

Follow the path down, and over a wooden bridge by the parking area. 75m on the tarmac, downhill, and a right onto the levels into Glasdir
Coppermine. Just before the path crosses a stream your path heads up the cleaved oak steps to the left.

Over a small slate bridge, a short stretch of fire road, and then your last significant hill (160m) up to join the Precipice Walk.

We’re grateful to all the landowners on the course, especially to the Nannau Estate for allowing us to ‘freestyle’ off paths across the fabulous estate.

You’ll pass close to an old castle (but you might not spot it) before joining a farmer’s track by a sheep feeding area. Turning left out onto a quiet piece of road by Pandy Bach, before a hard right and 300m of tarmac.

Over a simple stile, beneath a very small arcade of trees, and then over another small stile and some bracken covered fields.

A small metal kissing gate leads you over a small stream, before running South straight at Mynydd Moel – through a gap in the wall, and at the last Jacobs ladder of the course (it’s also a little tricky, so caution here).

Follow the path steeply down and onto tarmac. Turn right on the footpath past the petrol station and a hard left onto the main bridge brings you in sight of the finish.

**CAUTION** cross the road and follow the finish funnel to complete the first ever Ultra Trail Wales!

**Bad Weather Route**

The course covers mountainous terrain and into forestry. These areas can be affected by certain wind conditions. We will make every reasonable judgement on the weather and as mountain runners we are likely to provide you with information on the conditions and allow you to make a judgement on whether you are able or not.

If in our opinion we need to alter (or cancel) the course on the day to ensure your safety, we will. This decision will be final and we know you will support us on ensuring the route is realistic for the conditions. We are unlikely to alter Leg 1 (unless there is snow or ice), but for the safety of runners and marshals on Leg 2 there is a lower level route if the conditions dictate.
The overall length of the route will not be dramatically changed, but the high ground is avoided. this route links Barmouth to Sylfaen (SH63153 18495) to Cae Gorowny (SH65689 20183), on passed the famous Gold Mine of Clogau (SH67509 20311) before heading into Cwm Mynach and re-joining the 'ordinary' UTW route.

This diverted section is 13km with 770m of ascent (the 'ordinary' equivalent to the same point is 16km and 900m). This track is mainly rocky fire road, but with a few washed out areas and sections of grassy foothills. We will 'insert' 3 km in Coed y Brenin to ensure you still run 80km (50 miles).

**NOTE - This route will not be marked on the provided race map, but we will sign and marshal this if required, and explain in the race briefing on the day.**

**Feed Stations, Check Points and Cut-Off Times**

There will be two main, well stocked feed stations

**Feed Station One 22.4km** (Morfa Mawddach) will contain water, Torq electrolyte, Torq gels, Wild Trail bars, coke and savoury snacks. There are also toilet facilities and car parking facilities for runner support.

**Feed Station Two 51.4km** (Coed y Brenin) will contain water, Torq electrolyte, Torq gels, Wild Trail bars, soup, tea / coffee, coke and savoury snacks. There are also toilet facilities and car parking facilities for runner support. We are also hoping to have a massage facility here too for those extra tired limbs!

There will also be **marshalled water points** at:

- **19km** Crossing of Ffordd ddu on the descent off Braich Ddu
- **38.5km** Bottom of Diffwys descent where it rejoins the fire road
- **61.5 km** at Moel Hafodowen
- **72.5km** Copper Mine

Runners will need to plan to be self-sufficient between those points and we encourage runners' support crew to try and meet at these points if possible.

**NOTE: In the advent of hot weather additional water will be provided on course. This will be communicated at race registration.**
Bag Drop

We will have a bag drop facility for competitors at UTW. This will be for feed station one and two only. Your bag should be as compact as possible, so please no large holdalls. These bags must be left at race registration on the FRIDAY before 9.30pm. You will be issued tags corresponding with your race number to affix to the bags and you must state FEED ONE / FEED TWO on the correct bag.

Returning / Retiring Runners

Organisers plan to be able to return retiring runners to the start/finish in Dolgellau from the two feed stations only.

Those electing to retire between these points must make their own way to either the start/finish or one of the feed stations and inform the race team of their retirement.

When you retire we will inform race control and you must return to the Dolgellau Rugby Club HQ to hand in your wristband and inform our timing team OR if you are unable to do this you must detail a member of your support to do so.

PLEASE do not retire from the event and not inform the race. This is an irresponsible action and can cause many issues for the race and rescue services.

Race Timing

Our partners at Race Tek / Fabian 4 will be responsible for the timing of runners at UTW. Your timing wristband that is issued at race registration will be activated at the race start and checked in at each race checkpoint on the race route.

At your passing of these checkpoints information will be relayed back to race control and added to the race CPs online. This means that runners supporters will be able to track you on the race.

There will be 11 mandatory checkpoints (marshalled) at key points in the route, which include the feed stations and water stations.

Your number must be also be clearly visible at all times during the race and you are reminded that failure to wear your timing wristband will result in you being omitted from the results.
Cut offs

Runners should also be aware of the cut off times. These aren’t draconian but meant to help guide entrants.

Our cut off points are devised with the safety of all participants and race crew and volunteers in mind.

A pace of 6km/h +1hr/1000m +30mins a given CPs will be enacted – this gives the competitors maximum course time of 18hrs 30mins.

Detailed cut offs are:

6hrs to Morfa Mawddach (Feed station Leg 1)
12hrs 30mins to Coed y Brenin (Feed station Leg 2)

UTW directional signage

UTW will be marked clearly in all major junctions. The route will be marked on fencelines, forestry posts and where possible on open mountain. However, a degree of mountain sense and the ability to follow the Harvey race map will certainly be of advantage on this race.

To aid this navigation of the wonderful 50 miles will have directional arrows and signs as detailed below. PLEASE RESPECT signs at areas where caution / care is needed, farm gates and road crossings. These are placed for your safety and to help in our relations with landowners across the route - without whose kind permission this race would not have been possible.
SOUTH SNOWDONIA / ABERDYFI SEARCH AND RESCUE

At will have the expert local knowledge and safety back-up from the local South Snowdonia and Aberdyfi Search and Rescue Teams.

Teams will be position around the route for runners safety with a number of members including 4x4 vehicles. **We will also have first aid facilitators from the teams at each feed station.**

**Finishers Prize**

The history and landscape of this area is at the heart of the event. This is reflected in each rock and plaque that will presented to every finisher at UTW.

Sue and Peter Barnes (who incidentally is taking part in the race!) from Ddraig Dipsy Dragon in Dolgellau have been commissioned to make a bespoke finishers prize. This will be a polished rock from the area with a small UTW race plaque, which depicts the race route, affixed to each one.

Though we realise runners like a 'medal', the ethos of UTW is reflected in this finishers prize. We are supporting local business, using materials from the surrounding landscape, no one rock will be the same and all are individually hand-made!

**This will be given to each finisher in race registration after they have completed their epic journey.**

Each race winner (one male and one female) will also receive a sizeable local rock as their winners trophy, something that will also take pride of place at home!

**Photography**

We will have race photography from Sport Pictures Cymru and James Mackeddie at this year's event.

Photographers will be positioned around the route at locations with beautiful and significant vistas (weather permitting!). **For those who have purchased a race image your voucher code will be delivered to you post-event**, and we hope to have race galleries available to view within 24 hours of the race.
**Race presentation**

The prize giving for Ultra Trail Wales 2018 will take place in the *Eisteddfod stone circle* close to the race start and finish line at approx **8pm on Saturday evening**.

Category winners will presented as follows:

Open first 3 men  
Open first 3 women  

1st M40  
1st M50  
1st M60  
1st M70  

1st W40  
1st W50  
1st W60  
1st W70  

**Post event**

As detailed each runner will receive a hot meal after the race, this will be served up courtesy of *Sandra's Suppers*. The bar will also be open from **2pm**.

Dolgellau also has a host of great cafes, restaurants and pubs for runners and supporters to enjoy before, during and after the event.

Should competitors be unclear on any of the above pre-event enquiries should be directed to Matt Ward (Race Co-ordinator) at m matt@runcomm.co.uk, however please be understanding in the final few days before the event replies could take a while.

Thanks for entering the 2018 Ultra Trail Wales race and good luck – we hope you will be part of our race history in the future!

Pob lwc i bob un cystadleuwyrr Ultra Trail Wales 2018 – da ni yn gobeithio byddwch yn rhan o hanes y ras yn yr dyfodol!

**The #UTW2018 Team**