



the Eco Gozo Ultra 50k and 21km Trail Run & 50k MTB RACE BRIEFING 2016

EVENT DATE - Saturday 30th April 2016
START & FINISH - Ghajnsielem Bethlehem Square

Description

The Eco Gozo 50km Ultra Trail run and 21km 'half marathon' are unique long distance races situated in the stunning countryside of the island of Gozo. The MTB is a very challenging route that follows the run course. The philosophy of the Hellfire Events has always been to bring the beauty of the Maltese countryside together with passion for personal challenges. As we always say, our aims are for you to Challenge YOURSELF.

The full distance race requires a complete circumnavigation of the island of Gozo, whilst the 21km (approximate) distance follows the north and east coast of the island to both finish in the Ghajnsielem Bethlehem Square (which will serve as Race HQ).

Our experience has shown that the race is relatively fast, with 1400m of total accumulated height gain, some technical routes but mainly an enjoyable run around the island. Unfortunately, our race does coincide with open hunting season and this has created some problems with race markings in the past. We cannot emphasise enough how important it is for you to familiarise yourself with the routes and use intuition if you miss a marker that may have been removed.

The Eco Gozo full distance is semi sufficient, and follows the UTMB guidelines. This necessitates a maximum of 4 rest stops throughout the route, meaning that you must carry water and sustenance in between check points.

The race organisers are grateful to Agones who will be providing chip timing this year. Also thanks to the ERRRC, who are providing a dedicated rescue and first aid team to ensure all participants are supported.

Schedule for Ultra

Ferry Crossings from Malta are at 05:45 and transport will be provided at 06:15 to Ghajnsielem. There is a later ferry at 06:45 and participants arriving on foot will need to walk 15 minutes to Ghajnsielem. Use the shortcut through Bethlehem. Those driving can follow regular directions to Ghajnsielem Bethlehem Square. Don't be late for check in closing at 07:30.

There will be transport from Marsalforn to Ghajnsielem that morning, leaving from in front of the Calypso at 06:45. THIS TRANSPORT IS FREE BUT PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU NEED THIS TRANSPORT AS WE MAY NEED MORE THAN ONE TRIP..

The Gozo 50km race will start at 08:00 and a briefing will be explained at 07:30. The first part of the route is on roads to get to the coast, however the rest of the route will continue (mostly) on trail in a clockwise direction.

All participants must carry a mobile phone with local roaming and the Race Directors and Rescue Crew numbers memorised. It is very important for health and safety crew, as parts of the route run very close to the cliff edge.

ALL the Hellfire Gozo Events have a final cut off at 18:00. Participants still en route must note that the check points will be closed. You MUST contact us if you feel you cannot reach the checkpoints in time so we can account for everyone at all times.

These are the waypoints you must pass through. Those in RED are food and water checkpoints. (The 21km includes Checkpoints 9-16)

- 1.Xatt l-Ahmar
- 2.Mgarr ix-Xini
- 3.Ta' Cenc
- 4.Ras il-Wardija
- 5.Xlendi
- 6.Ghadira ta' Sarraflu
- 7.Dwejra
- 8.San Dimitri Point
- 9.Qbajjar (Salt Pans)
- 10.Marsalforn
- 11.Ramla
- 12.San Blas
- 13.Dahlet Qorrot
- 14.Hondoq
- 15.Mgarr
16. Ghajnsielem Bethlehem Square FINISH (18:00 Cut Off)

Please note that the food and water stops provide simple food including some sweet and salty snacks. If you prefer your own specific gels or bars please carry your own. We will provide water and some isotonic.

Notes on the route

NB HUNTING SEASON CLOSES THE NEXT DAY SO PLEASE BE AWARE THAT SIGNS AND MARKINGS HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH IN THE PAST. USE COMMON SENSE WHEN IN DOUBT.

The routes, whilst 90% on trail, are open to traffic on the road parts. Care should especially be taken when crossing roads and all usual traffic rules apply. Paved and especially wide or barren sections of the route are mainly marked in RED paint. Trails are mostly marked with strips of red & white tape tied to branches, rocks or whatever nature provides.

You should find a route marking at least every 100mtrs or so. This is especially the case at junctions. If you haven't seen anything for 200mtrs you are most probably off course. Re-trace your steps to the last route marking and look for the turn you have missed.

The running route follows the coastline all the way around Gozo. Under MOST circumstances if in doubt, head towards the trail on the coast.

A number of checkpoints will be set-up to ensure participants are following the correct route. Athletes missing any of these checkpoints will incur a hefty time penalty. The organizers also reserve the right to hold 'rolling' additional checkpoints along some of the most remote parts of the route. The trails can be very exposed and technical. Caution is advised; do not over-estimate your ability. **PACE YOURSELF WELL, AND FINISH STRONG.**

Since feed stations are located at approximately 12km intervals, it is highly recommended participants carry enough water to see them through an hour or 2 between feed stations. Cyclists must wear a helmet and carry adequate tools & spares to see them through minor mechanical problems.

Notes for 21km challenge 11:00 START - Salt Pans

The 21km will require participants to be either in Ghajnsielem at 10:00 to check in and be transported to the start point towards towards the salt pans beyond Marsalforn. The bus leaves at 10:30. Alternatively you can arrange for your own transport that would be very helpful. You will follow the same route as the 50km from thereon and finish in Ghajnsielem.

Notes on the Mountain Bike Challenge - non competitive 10:30 START Ghajnsielem

The MTB Challenge is non competitive. This means that you get to experience the beautiful island, benefit from our Rescue and First Aid team, Rest Stops and ancillary activities without the stress of racing.

It also means that you are going to have a TOUGHER time because you must follow the run route, which at times will require you to shoulder or push your bike. We **STRONGLY** recommend you do not use carbon soled cleated shoes; indeed we suggest regular pedals and shoes for those that are not super-confident on two wheels. Make sure you take spares to replace parts as there is no assistance on the route.

Mandatory Equipment

All events require the following:

Mobile phone, fully charged and useable in Malta, with Race Director and Rescue Team numbers in memory or speed dial.

Hydration pack or bottles equivalent to 500ml minimum.

Energy Bar or gels.

Sun Hat and Sunblock in the case of bright sunshine

Pockets to store any used gel packets.

Post Race

You will be given water post race on your arrival. Seek any medical support with the organisers or the ERRC at the finish. A meal will be provided at 18:30 as part of the After-Party and Presentation.

Participants will be asked to hang around at the finish. Locals can shower at the ARKA Foundation or in the public convenience after the race. Please bring your own towels and soap etc. You can leave a bag at Race HQ throughout the race.

We encourage everyone to stay for the party and presentation at 18:30 which is included in your entry. Family & friends that want to attend can pay the €10 pp for food and drink.

All participants will receive a teeshirt. Trophies will be given to best performances. The Race director's decision will be final on these positions. Our photographers will be posting event photos on our Facebook page after the event and you can download these free of charge. We hope you will help us promote our races by sharing these photos with your Facebook friends.

Some general rules

Please carry, and then throw any plastic cups, bottles or empty gels used en route in the bins at the checkpoints.

Any people caught throwing gels or plastics en route will be immediately disqualified. We please ask you to care about our beautiful environment and protect it.

All signs and markings will be removed after the race by a 'sweeper'. If you are overtaken it is clear you will not meet the cut-off.

At no point will the route go through nature reserve or out of bounds protected environments, but may pass adjacent - so stick to the obvious trails.

Any person stopped by the ERRC first aid crew and deemed to be incompetent to continue will be stopped immediately for their own safety.

Getting 'lost' or adding distance to your race is not the fault of the organisers and final results will not be adjusted to reflect this. **Anyone missing a checkpoint by taking a shortcut will lose their final placing.**

In Conclusion

The Hellfire Team is a small group of passionate people that care about the environment and human experience. We believe that our challenges should be seen as a personal journey, and not a race against a competitor. We hope that you will appreciate our informal approach, flexibility and somewhat limited resources in organising such an event, which is surely made up for by our tireless energy and positive attitude.

Keep safe, and enjoy yourselves!

Please follow our facebook page for any last-minute updates.

The Hellfire Team :)