

FINAL RUNNER INSTRUCTIONS AND RACE RULES FOR 2025 RACE

Registration:

Registration will take place on Friday 20 June 2025 between 9.00pm and 12.00 midnight at St Joseph's RC Church Hall in Milngavie. The church hall is located across the road from Milngavie Station, where the race starts. At registration you will be given your race number, which should be visible throughout the race, a timing device to be used at each checkpoint, and a tracker.

All runners will be required to show photographic ID to collect their race number. You will be given your goody bag and any merchandise you have purchased. One member of your support crew is required to attend registration with you and will be given a support crew permit which needs to be displayed on the support vehicle for the full race. You will be weighed and your weight recorded. Unlike earlier years, you will not be weighed at any checkpoint unless the medical team have specific concerns.

We would encourage those who are able to do so to register as early as practical, to help reduce congestion later in the evening. We are keen to keep the number of people inside the hall at any one time to a minimum, so please complete the registration process and leave the hall immediately afterwards. If you wish to leave drop bags, please take them to the drop bag vehicles which will be parked in the station car park.

The station car park can get very busy with race traffic. If you are unable to park there, additional parking should also be available in local car parks or in the nearby Tesco, which remains open well into Friday evening. Note that there is a 3 hour limit on using the Tesco car park, but if you are likely to exceed this you should on arrival advise the duty manager in the store of your car registration, and ask for the 3 hour limit to be waived.

Race briefing and race start:

All runners should gather at the start line (which is at the bridge beside Milngavie Station), ready to start the race, at 12.40am. There will be a short race briefing and then the race will start at exactly 1.00am.

Race numbers:

Race numbers will be posted on the website a few days before the race. If you would like to be allocated a special race number please e-mail me at ianbeattie@westhighlandwayrace.org before 31 May. Numbers can be requested from 1 to 200.

Race route:

The race follows the official West Highland Way trail from Milngavie to Fort William, apart from the five sections outlined below:

Approaching Tyndrum (53 miles): on arriving at the road just before the By The Way campsite, all runners should turn right and follow the road towards the village. They should turn left at the A82

junction, stay on the pavement past the Real Food Café, cross the road at the pelican crossing, and continue past the front of the Green Welly before rejoining the WHW official route at Brodies Stores.

Glencoe checkpoint (70 miles): as the path approaches Glencoe ski-centre, the race route leaves the main path and takes a left fork towards the ski centre, with the checkpoint in the car park. The official route is rejoined by following the main road down the hill.

Approaching Kinlochleven (80 miles): on reaching the bottom of the water pipe, runners should take the route past Blackwater Hostel and Campsite, pass the Ice Factor, turn right at reaching the main road, and head in to the checkpoint at the Leven Centre.

Glen Nevis (93 miles): on entering Glen Nevis and heading towards Fort William, runners should stay on the land rover track all the way past the Braveheart car park to the road, and should not follow the official route which takes a right turn down through the forest.

The finish: is in the Nevis Centre. As you come in to Fort William, go straight on at the roundabout, follow the pavement until you reach the old finish at Lochaber Leisure Centre, then cross the road at the traffic lights. Follow the pavement towards the town centre, run round the front of the railway station, and follow the pavement past the bus station until you reach the Nevis Centre.

All of the sections outlined above will be clearly marked, so there should be no risk of going off route. At all other sections you should follow the official West Highland Way trail markers.

Checkpoints:

Each runner is required to check in at a number of checkpoints throughout the race. The checkpoints and the cut-off times, along with the 'what3words' location, are as follows:

Balmaha (19miles) – 5hrs 0 mins (sums.touched.shuffles)

Rowardennan (27 miles) – 7hrs 30 mins (marble.handover.microfilm)

Inversnaid (35 miles) – no specific cut-off time (attitudes.cycled.revamping)

Beinglas Farm (42miles) – 12hrs 0 mins (reforming.mailings.conjured)

Auchtertyre (51miles) – 15hrs 30 mins (striving.exhaled.songbird)

Bridge of Orchy (60miles) – 18hrs 30 mins (contracting.animates.riverside)

Glencoe Ski Centre (71miles) – 23hrs 0 mins (movie.untrained.object)

Kinlochleven (81miles) – 28hrs 0 mins (refreshed.mole.splice)

Lundavra (88 miles) – 32 hours 30 mins (handbags.pining.juniors)

Fort William (95miles) – 35hrs 0 mins (husband.greed.lousy)

Any runner not reaching a checkpoint within the allocated time will be withdrawn from the race. This will be based on the electronic timing and all cut-off times will be strictly enforced. To give an example, a runner arriving at Beinglas Farm at 12 hours, 0 minutes and 0 seconds will be allowed to continue. A runner arriving at 12 hours, 0 minutes and 1 seconds will be withdrawn. It is a condition of entry that any runner failing to reach a checkpoint within the designated timescales surrenders their timing card and does not continue in the race. The only exception to this is where a runner has stopped to

help another runner in trouble and this has caused them to miss a cut-off; in that case the runner will be referred to the Race Safety Officer or Race Director, whose decision will be final.

If a marshal is concerned about the condition of any runner, this will be referred to the Race Doctor, the Race Safety Officer, or the Race Director. They will determine what action, if any, needs to be taken: this could include a variety of measures including, if considered appropriate, instructing withdrawal from the race. Such an instruction would only be given where it was considered necessary for the runner's own safety, and would not be taken lightly. However, it is a condition of entry that any such instruction must be followed, and that the runners must leave the course if instructed to do so. The decision of the Race Doctor, Race Safety Officer or Race Director is final.

In the event of extreme conditions which, in the opinion of the Race Director and Race Safety Officer, present a serious risk to the race participants, the race will be stopped. In this situation all runners should proceed to the next checkpoint and stop at that point.

As a general rule no food or drink will be provided at checkpoints; it all needs to be provided by the runner and carried by the support crew or put in a drop bag. The exception to this is that water will be available at Balmaha, Rowardennan, Inversnaid and Beinglas, so please do not put water into your drop-bags for these places.

Support crew:

It is a condition of entry that all runners must have motorised back up for the full duration of the event. Up until Auchtertyre you need at least one crew member, and from Auchtertyre onwards you need a crew of at least two people, one of whom must be capable of accompanying you during the last two stages if required. You are required to provide details of your support crew as soon as possible, but by no later than 26 May. The link for providing support and medical details is here:

<https://forms.gle/rwNGKi91MqV2VVhg6>

You will not be allowed to take part in the event unless these details have been provided. Please submit your details using the designated form and not by any other way: it makes it much easier for the organising team to access the information if required on race day.

The Support Crew must check in with their runner at registration, and must meet their runner at the following checkpoints:

Auchtertyre Farm

Glencoe

Kinlochleven

Finish at Fort William

Due to access difficulties, support crews are not allowed to meet their runner at Beinglas Farm checkpoint. It will not be mandatory for support crews to meet their runner at the checkpoints at Balmaha, Rowardennan and Bridge of Orchy. Although not mandatory, crews are welcome to meet their runners at those places if they wish to do so. Remember however that it is the support crew's responsibility to ensure their runner's safety between checkpoints, and they must be prepared to go on to the course and search for their runner if they do not arrive at a checkpoint. They must also be prepared to collect their runner at a checkpoint if the runner has decided to withdraw from the race.

Crews should therefore have arrangements in place to keep in touch with their runner by phone if they do not plan to meet up at the non mandatory checkpoints.

Faster runners are not allowed to have a support runner at any point during the race, and no-one is allowed a support runner before Auchtertyre farm. You are welcome to be accompanied by a support runner (or runners) if you leave a checkpoint after the following times:

Auchtertyre – after 10hrs 30mins race time (i.e. after 11.30am)

Bridge of Orchy – after 12hrs 30mins (i.e. after 1.30pm)

Glencoe – after 14hrs 45mins (i.e. after 3.45pm)

Kinlochleven – after 17hrs 30mins (i.e. after 6.30pm)

The check point marshals will advise on whether a runner is able to have a support runner. If you are allowed a support runner, the support runner is not allowed to carry their runner's kit for them – that must be carried by the runner themselves.

If you are ahead of these times, your support crew are only allowed to run with you in the area one quarter of a mile before the checkpoint and one quarter of a mile after the checkpoint, and are not allowed to run with you at any other times. The support crew are however allowed to meet you at any safe point on the route, except the section between the top of Loch Lomond and Crianlarich as outlined below.

Please note that in the event of particularly adverse weather, all runners may be instructed to 'pair up' with a member of their crew or another runner for any of the later stages of the race. Support runners should make sure they have adequate waterproof kit with them, and it is recommended that they follow the same guidance as that given to the runners below. If adverse weather is predicted, runners and support crew may be instructed to carry full waterproof gear at any point and will not be allowed to continue without this.

We would encourage all support crew to use the tracker website to identify their runner's location throughout the race.

Support vehicles:

Many of the roads on the route are narrow and not suitable for a large campervan / motorhome type of vehicle. We would recommend that this type of vehicle is not used at all for support, but in particular large campervans are not permitted for travel to Rowardennan, Auchtertyre or Lundavra. At Bridge of Orchy campervans are prohibited from going down the minor road to the checkpoint, and must park in the car park just before the Bridge of Orchy Hotel.

We have had a number of problems with large campervans in the past, and it is important that support crews use common sense in their choice of vehicle. We reserve the right to withdraw any competitor whose support crew or support vehicle are causing serious problems for the smooth operation of the race.

There are a number of car parks on the route where parking charges apply, including the finish at the Nevis Centre in Fort William. Please note that those charges need to be paid as your race vehicle permit does not exempt you from any parking charges.

Electronic timing:

A SPORTident Timing Card (SI-Card) will be issued to each runner at registration. At each of the checkpoints shown above, you need to dip the SI-Card flat in the hole in the SPORTident Timing station and the station will beep or flash. This indicates that a timestamp has been recorded on your card.

This procedure is an essential requirement of the race. Follow the same procedure at the Finish and hand your SI-Card to the SPORTident Timing Team. You will be given a small printout showing your split times through each checkpoint on the route.

Each time you register your SI-Card at a checkpoint, data is uploaded onto the SPORTident webserver in real time. This allows friends and family to follow your progress throughout the race, either at home on a computer or on any web enabled phone as they support you along the route.

Details of the website link will be confirmed nearer the race. This should help your friends to plan where and when they will meet you during the race as the information it provides includes an ETA for each runner at the next checkpoint.

Should you need to retire during the event, wherever possible please hand in your SI-Card at a checkpoint on your route. If you are “rescued” by a support vehicle, please ensure that you deliver your SI-Card to the NEXT checkpoint on the course.

Until each SI-Card has reached the finish or been handed in at a checkpoint, the event organisers will assume that you are still on the course. Failure to hand in your SI-Card at the event will cause an unnecessary search by rescue teams and you may be barred from taking part in future events. There is a charge of £30 for each SI-Card that is not handed in.

Trackers:

A GPS tracker will be issued to each runner at registration. The number on the tracker will match your race number. It will be issued to you in a waterproof bag. Please keep it in this bag. The tracker needs to be stowed securely in an external pocket on your person. Don't store the tracker under any other kit, as it needs to be as close as possible to the outside.

The tracker will be turned on and ready to go when it is issued to you, so you do not need to do anything to it. The battery will last the duration of the event.

For friends and family that wish to follow you can do so via a smartphone, tablet or laptop. Details of the link will follow.

For a better user experience for your supporters, please advise them to download the Geo Tracks App <https://geotrackslive.com/pages/event-live-tracking-app>. The App enables your supporters to focus just on you and it will also show them where they are in relation to you, making it easy to meet up during the race. There is a charge of £3.99 to download the app.

The finish line team will collect your tracker from you once you have finished. Should you need to retire during the event, wherever possible please hand in your tracker at a checkpoint on your route. If you are “rescued” by a support vehicle, please ensure that you deliver your tracker to the NEXT checkpoint on the course. If you do not return your tracker, you will be charged a fee of £50 to replace it.

Medical advice:

Please ensure you have read, and taken heed of, the medical advice document which is attached to these instructions.

Specifically, please do not take Ibuprofen or other NSAIDs, such as naproxen or diclofenac. These can cause serious medical problems during endurance events and if we become aware of any runner taking Ibuprofen or other NSAIDs that runner may be disqualified. It is also very important that you note the dangers of over-hydration, and ensure you only drink to thirst.

'Cloudy eye' is a problem which affects a small number of ultra-runners at our event and can bring your race to a premature end. Experience suggests that it is mostly caused by the prolonged exposure to the stresses of a long run in the outdoor environment. Its likelihood can be reduced, to a certain extent, by wearing eye protection for most or all of the distance. It can be readily identified through behavioural changes in the runner who is colliding with the landscape more frequently, combined with an inability to make out fine detail. For some, the eyes will actually look cloudy to an observer. This can of course be confused with the other issues mentioned in the race medical advice document, so our clear recommendation is to report anyone evidently affected to the medical team for review. It is normally self-correcting within a few hours once the runner is removed from the environmental factors but should always be investigated.

Please remove rings from fingers and toes. Numerous unfortunate runners over the years have found that over a long race, the combination of swollen hands and then a simple fall leading to hand injuries can seriously damage fingers through restricting blood flow past a tightening ring.

If you are in any doubt about a medical or safety issue during the event, ask for the medical team at any checkpoint. The team are very experienced and not here to stop you; they are here to make your completion of the race as safe as possible.

You are required to complete the medical details that are requested on the support and medical details form, at the link shown above.

The medical team may in some cases ask additional follow up questions of runners with a more complex or challenging background, with a view to mitigating any additional health risks as far as possible.

Mandatory kit:

We are insisting that every runner carries a lightweight space blanket and a waterproof jacket (with taped seams), throughout the race. These items could make a significant difference if you are unfortunate enough to have a fall, particularly if it is in a remote part of the trail.

We are also insisting that every runner carries a mobile phone, with the following emergency numbers programmed in to it:

Sean Stone, Race Safety Officer – 07768 642314

Ian Beattie, Race Director – 07939 535523

In the event of an emergency, Sean should be the first point of contact. If contact cannot be made with Sean, Ian is the second point of contact.

There are other items of kit that you must have available if directed by a race official, although whether you need to carry them on the day will depend on the conditions at any particular time. These include the following:

A head torch, with spare batteries;

Waterproof trousers;

A whistle.

Other recommended items include:

Harveys map of the West Highland Way

Small Backpack/Bumbag or both

Towels

A number of complete changes of clothes

Various pairs of shoes

Sunhat/Woolly Hat

Gloves

First Aid Kit

Insect Repellent

Blister Repair Kit

Water Bottles

Skin Care

Suncream

Toilet Roll

Remember, conditions can vary considerably throughout the course of the race and it is better to carry too much kit in your support vehicle than find yourself short. Kit checks may be made at any time during the race.

Walking poles:

Walking poles are not essential, but if competitors wish to use them they may do so at any stage of the race except the first 4 miles (i.e. up to Carbeth huts). Please be aware of other runners around you if you are using poles.

Dogs:

Dogs are not allowed to run with any competitor at any stage of the race, nor are they allowed to run with any person who is supporting a runner. This is a condition of our event insurance.

iPods/MP3 players:

iPods/MP3 players are permitted, but competitors must be able to hear what is going on around you at all times. Earphones must be removed at checkpoints, at road crossings, when approaching marshals, and at all times when running on public roads. If a marshal signals you to remove your earphones, you must do so immediately.

Dropbags:

There will be a facility for runners to leave drop-bags for Balmaha, Rowardennan, Inversnaid, Beinglas Farm and Bridge of Orchy. Please ensure these drop bags are clearly marked with your race number, and take them to the marked vehicle at the start at Milngavie Station. They should be as small as possible and should not contain water, as that will be provided. It will not be possible to return the contents of any drop bag to you after the race.

Litter and general behaviour:

The West Highland Way is a route of outstanding beauty, and we try to ensure our race is well regarded by the West Highland Way rangers, by those living near the route, and by other users. To this end please make sure you do not drop any litter anywhere on the route, but that you carry it with you to the next checkpoint. Please also show consideration for walkers and other users.

Noise during the night:

In previous years we have had complaints from residents at Drymen about the noise made by support crews. To try and address this we would discourage support crews from meeting their runner at Drymen at all.

If you do intend to go there, you must not park either on the main road or in the dead-end road outside the houses. Instead you should park on the road heading down towards Drymen or in the car park in Drymen village, then meet your runner in the field before the route crosses the road. We will have marshals in place to make sure this is enforced.

We have also had complaints in the past from Kinlochleven residents about the noise levels during the Saturday night / Sunday morning. We are very keen to maintain good relations with people who live near the route, so please make every effort to keep noise to a minimum, particularly during the hours of darkness.

Noise at the finish in Fort William can also cause problems during the night-time hours. Again we would ask you to respect the local residents who do not wish to be disturbed.

‘Low’ route after Rowardennan:

The race follows the ‘low’ path between Rowardennan and Inversnaid. The turn off for the low route is just less than 2 miles north of Rowardennan, and one third of a mile after the gate at Ptarmigan Lodge. It is well signposted.

Area from the top of Loch Lomond to Crianlarich:

Parking in the area between the top of Loch Lomond and Crianlarich is very limited, and we have had problems in previous races with businesses and landowners in that area. For that reason, support crews are not permitted to meet their runner at any point on the A82 between Beinglas Farm and Bogle Glen, above Crianlarich. This restriction includes Beinglas Farm, Derrydarroch Farm, Carmyle Cottage, and any of the lay-bys on that section of the A82. This will be strictly enforced, and any breach could lead to a time penalty or even your disqualification, so please make sure that your support crew are aware of this rule.

If your support crew wants to meet you after the Beinglas Farm checkpoint but before the next checkpoint at Auchtertyre, it is possible to park in Crianlarich, walk for a mile or so up the hill, and meet your runner at the point the West Highland Way comes in to Bogle Glen.

Parking is also restricted at the checkpoint at Auchtertyre. The one vehicle per runner rule will also apply at this checkpoint, and your crew will need to show their parking permit to gain access. Your support crew should not arrive at Auchtertyre too early, as there is limited capacity. We would strongly recommend that they have a sleep after leaving the east side of Loch Lomond, and should do this in a safe place such as a car park in Balloch at the southern end of Loch Lomond. It is also possible to reach Auchtertyre Farm using the A84 through Callander. There are plenty of places in Callander to stop for crews to stop for a sleep. Support crews arriving too early at Auchtertyre Farm will not be permitted access.

Route into Tyndrum:

This year we will once again be leaving the official route through Tyndrum, and will be taking runners through the centre of the village. This is explained in the ‘race route’ section above.

Parking for support vehicles at Tyndrum:

We have access to the car park at the Muthu Royal Hotel in Lower Station Road, Tyndrum, for the duration of the Saturday. All race traffic should use this car park if space is available. Coming from the south, support vehicles should take the first road on the left as they come into Tyndrum (after Tyndrum Holiday Park and before the Real Food Café). The parking is in the grounds of the hotel on the left hand side of the road. It will be signposted; do not use the Muthu Ben Doran Hotel on the right hand side.

You should not park in the car park of premises such as the Green Welly, Real Food Café or By The Way in Tyndrum unless you are a customer of those establishments, and even if a customer you should not park there for an extended period.

Food and refreshments:

A number of businesses on the route have kindly agreed to open their premises and provide facilities for support crews.

St Mocha coffee shop at the Oak Tree Inn in Balmaha (19 miles) will be open from around 1am and will offer hot rolls and refreshments. Note that the Oak Tree Inn itself will not be open, so do not try and gain entry to the hotel. Toilet facilities will be available in the nearby visitor centre. If using the toilets please ensure that you leave them in a decent state and do not put things like coffee granules down the sink – we had a few complaints last year and want to maintain our very good relationship with the National Park team.

The Real Food Café in Tyndrum will be open throughout the day on the Saturday.

The Muthu Ben Doran Hotel in Tyndrum is offering a breakfast and packed lunch deal for all support crews:

Buffet Breakfast @ £ 10 per person (Full Scottish Breakfast)

Packed Lunch @ £ 12 per person (Veg / Chicken / Tuna Sandwich, Tetra Pack juice, Crisp & whole Fruit)

10% discount food & beverages including Beer and Liquor

To book this call 01838 400373 beforehand and mention you are part of the race.

The Muthu Fort William Hotel is also offering a special deal for runners and support crews:

Buffet Breakfast @ £ 12.50 per person (Full Scottish Breakfast)

Packed Lunch @ £ 12.50 per person (Ham & Cheese Sandwich, Tetra Pack juice, Crisp & whole Fruit)

For Evening / Dinner 10% discount food & beverages including Beer and Liquor.

This can be arranged by calling 01397 702614.

The cafe at Glencoe Ski Centre (71 miles) will stay open late on the Saturday night and will serve food until 10pm. There are a number of pubs and a fish and chip shop in Kinlochleven.

We are very grateful for the help of these businesses; please support them if you can.

The finish:

The race finish is inside the Nevis Centre in Fort William. This is about half a mile further on from the old finish at Lochaber Leisure Centre, beyond the Morrisons store and the station, and will be fully signposted. More details are given in the 'race route' section above. At the finish your time will be recorded and you will be given a printout of your splits. Showers are available for runners and crew (this will be badly needed!), and tea and coffee will be available. Please note that no alcohol is allowed in the Nevis Centre, nor in the car park outside.

Race merchandise:

All runners will receive a race garment and a race buff in their goody bag. Additional race merchandise for you or as a 'thank you' for your support crew will be available for purchase by the end of May. We

will send a separate mail and post on our social channels as soon as it becomes available. Meantime there are a few ongoing items available on the race shop web page <https://westhighlandwayrace.org/shop/>

Prizegiving:

The prizegiving will take place in the Nevis Centre in Fort William (same venue as the race finish) at 12 noon on Sunday 22 June. Please try and attend – it is a great occasion where every finisher is presented with his or her hard earned goblet, and helps continue the great ‘family’ feel of the event. It is expected to last about an hour and a half. If you are unable to attend, please let a marshal at the finish know and we will arrange for you to take your goblet away with you. For those staying in Fort William, there will be the chance to meet up for drinks and some food on the Sunday evening. This is an informal gathering and all are welcome – it will take place from 7pm in The Great Glen, 104 High Street, Fort William.

Withdrawal from the race:

If you need to withdraw from the race, please notify this by e-mail to ianbeattie@westhighlandwayrace.org. A refund of £85 will be made for withdrawals notified on or before 31 May. No refunds will be given for withdrawals notified after 31 May, but it is still important that you let us know. **Please note that it is not possible to defer any entries to the following year’s race.**

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram:

The race twitter site can be followed at @WHWRace and the Instagram site is @whw_race. If you or your support crew are tweeting or posting on Instagram before, during or after the race, please use the hashtag #whwrace. The race also has a Facebook page which will provide updates.

2026 race:

The entry procedure for the 2026 race will be similar to this year, with entries open throughout November 2025. All entrants will be required to have completed an off-road ultra marathon of 65k or more, within the official time limits for that race, in the period from 1 January 2023 to the date the entry is submitted.