

## **Pre-Race Briefing #1**

Hi Klipspringers!!

Just under 3 weeks to go! Hopefully you're nearly ready and that all of your preparation and training is coming together. Keep healthy, eat your veg and vitamin C, and depending on your dietary religion, make sure you're getting lots of carbs / fat / protein etc :-). Take it easy on those training runs - you don't want to do an ankle now.

For those new to the Klipspringer, we find that the electronic Pre-race Briefing is a very useful method of communication before a big event, and a great way to provide news, updates, race requirements and changes. It is also a convenient place to put out some race tips, which many of you have asked for, and some training tips for those entrants who are relatively new to trail running. All of the important info will also be put up on the race website and Facebook Page, and of course there will be a comprehensive Race Briefing on site at the Augrabies Falls National Park after Registration on the evening of Saturday 29 April. As usual, please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any specific questions you may have (contact details below).

### **Compulsory and Recommended Equipment**

Being a desert run in winter, one of the upsides of being virtually guaranteed of no rain is that it makes it easy to compile the compulsory equipment list – water, headlamp, phone and space blanket!

Every competitor in both the Challenge as well as the shorter Lite races will be required to carry a minimum of 1.5 litres of water from the Start. Why? The idea is that runners have sufficient water to get them from watering station to watering station. It is properly DRY and often very HOT out there. For most of us running in the desert, it is not even a thought that this 1.5 litres could last for the whole race. For you racing snakes used to running with very little water and then hydrating like mad at the Finish, this includes you!

As far as headlamps go, it is very likely that both races will enjoy a dark start. Running through the desert watching the sun come up is a real treat, but it does mean that every runner must pack some suitable form of illumination. Exact Start times will be confirmed a bit closer to Race Weekend, but for now work on 06h00 for the Challenge and 06h30 for the Lite.

Regarding space blankets, remember that much of the precaution around the idea of having a Compulsory Kit requirement is not aimed at your perfect running day but rather that day where things go wrong. A missed step and a broken leg on an inaccessible stretch of trail, shock sets in and your core body temperature plummets – even in +30C that space blanket can literally save your (or somebody else's) life.

Please also note that I said that we are “virtually” guaranteed of a dry run. We are unfortunately suffering the unpredictable effects of climate change, so as we all know, anything could happen. Final kit requirements can thus only be confirmed much closer to the time.

### **Race Tip #1 – Footwear & accessories**

This is true Kalahari Desert trail running. It is hot, hard and technical. We do not prescribe specific

footwear, and certainly would not want to impose on those hard-core barefoot runners, but we do ask that you take your footwear seriously for this race. Protect your feet!

In addition, being the desert, expect to run through a fair amount of soft sand which can get into your shoes. It shouldn't be a major problem, but it does cause some discomfort as it builds up. It is quite fine so it also tends to get into your socks, which wastes time having to stop to take off shoes & socks to get rid of it. Gators might help but we find that they add some discomfort and extra weight, and don't actually cover the parts of the shoe where the sand gets in. If you have a choice of shoes to wear, look for which ones have less chance of letting sand in through the actual material.

### **Race Tip #2 – Following the trail and Orientation**

The trails will be comprehensively marked with traditional SANParks Hiking Trail markings (remember that we ARE running the legendary Klipspringer Hiking Trail) as well as a host of Klipspringer Challenge race specific trail markings. However please always be aware that this is a remote and inaccessible trail in extremely tough terrain. It is unlike the Otter Trail, for example, where the trail is kept clear and visible by the feet of thousands of hikers and tourists every year, and where if the ocean is not to your left, you know you've gone wrong somewhere. Although you shouldn't, there is always the possibility of getting lost. Runners will be provided with maps at the race, but the best advice here is that each and every runner take responsibility for their own run – do NOT just follow other runners, always be looking for the next trail marker, and pay attention to the actual DIRECTION of the arrows on trail markers (and Race Organiser instructions in Race Briefings). Also try and just be generally aware – if you've run for more than 50m-100m without seeing a marker, the chances are that you are off the trail and should double back to the last one you saw. We will repeat this advice many times before the Race :-)

### **Training Tip #1 – Train with weight**

There is not a lot of time left for any real neck & shoulder muscle conditioning, BUT it is still worth taking this to heart. Being even slightly weight-conditioned for a hard race with a full pack can mean the difference between an enjoyable experience and a grueling, back-cramping, neck-spasming slog. Also very importantly, get used to your pack, know how it should be adjusted for maximum comfort, know how all the straps and clips work, practice where you will want to keep what, and train with the weight. It will be worth it.

Two last quick points: Accommodation and food. The whole area is pretty booked up by now so if you haven't secured your accommodation you have to do some phoning around. The Park itself still has lots of camping capacity, and the facilities are really good. It's a great option. Also remember that given the nature of the roads (long and open) and the traffic (non-existent) in the area, it really is viable to stay as far away from the Race Venue as Kakamas and Keimoes. As far as food goes, we guess as usual that most of you love to self-cater :-). For those that don't, there is a store on-site with most basic essentials, as well as the exceptionally good quality Quiver Tree Restaurant. REMEMBER that bookings are essential for dinners, so call ahead at (054) 451 5031 or [quivertreerestaurant@gmail.com](mailto:quivertreerestaurant@gmail.com).

That's it for now. Good luck with the important last couple of training weeks, and as always feel free to shout with any questions.

Looking forward to seeing you all in the Desert!

Warren

Klipspringer Challenge Team

+27 83 449 4113