

Hey Klipspringers! Counting down!!

Please read this one properly - it is an important one (and statistically only 25% of trail runners listen at the actual physical Race Briefing, so some of the important info is repeated here for reading at your leisure).

1. Start Times

Challenge 40km - 06H00

Lite 21km - 06h30

As far as Race Day weather goes the news is neutral. A cool start, with a low of 12C, mostly sunny with some clouds, reaching a high of 31C. Pretty normal for the desert at this time of year, but still HOT! Fortunately the pattern is to peak around 14h00 – 15h00, so most people will be enjoying their awesome Bushman Brewing Co beers before the sand really starts to burn. However you cut it though, this is a hot day in a dry desert! Please take hydration and heat factors seriously. In addition to the mandatory 1.5L that everybody must be carrying, the water tables are well placed and more than sufficient, but still make sure you look after yourselves and your trail companions out there. Both races will have a dark start to beat some of the heat, so a headlamp or some sort of suitable illumination is compulsory for every runner.

Please note that any runners not carrying the required water will not be permitted to start. Race Organisers also reserve the right to pull runners off the course if they are clearly not equipped to be carrying sufficient water. (By way of example, obviously there can be instances where a runner times his water requirements well and runs into a water station with none of his own water left, filling up and carrying on. We are not prescribing to runners how much to drink or how much to fill up – that is each runner's responsibility. But where a runner is observed anywhere along the course carrying nothing but a 500ml bottle, they are clearly in violation of the compulsory equipment rule and will be pulled off the course). We don't plan to be school-teacherly about the Race Rules, but this is serious and we trust you will all respect it.

2. Registration

Official Registration will be on Saturday 29 April from 15H00-18H00 at the Park Conference Centre (right next to the Park Reception). The Official Race Briefing will be held in the Conference Centre at 18H00 and shouldn't take more than 30 minutes (nobody listens anyway!).

As mentioned before, we will have a small Registration facility on Sunday morning to accommodate those runners coming in from the surrounding areas and not staying in the Park. This will also be at the Park Conference Centre and will be open from 05H00. If you're using this, please try and be here with as much time to spare before your start as possible.

3. Route Marking

Not to labour this point, but this is a real trail. We have strived to mark the routes to perfection, but still stress that all trail running involves significant runner responsibility. Read this carefully, concentrate out on the trail, don't rely on others or follow the group, and try and get into the rhythm of the trail and the markings.

Principle #1 - If you think you might be lost, you probably are! If you haven't seen a marker for 50m, you are off the trail and need to backtrack to find the last marker. There will be no sections of the route that have long stretches with no clear markings.

The one exception to this principle for Challenge participants is the section of trail in the Gorge along the river. This section will be very lightly marked with the traditional SANParks Hiking Trail boards (see more below), and is in essence self-guided. This is an incredible section of trail that compares with anything in the world, and it is not possible to get lost. The trail will take you down from the top of the Canyon to the river, where you will turn left and run along the river / canyon bottom until the trail takes you out again with another left turn. Entry point and exit point will be clearly marked, but this section allows every runner to choose his or her own line, along the soft river sand, through some serious boulders, or higher on the cliffline. You will love this. Again, strong recommendation, take the time to swim!

The rest of the trail will be marked in a number of ways. The two primary markings (which will be more than enough in themselves) will be the traditional SANParks Hiking trail boards. These are green hard boards with the Klipspringer logo marked clearly in white. The first section will also include reflective markings on the boards to accommodate the dark start. Remember that BOTH races follow the Klipspringer logo ONLY, NEVER the Dassie logo except where they are together on the same board. The other primary marking will be the bright orange material ribbons that you will quickly become familiar with. If at any stage you cannot see either a green Klipspringer board or an orange trail marker on a branch or rock, pause and think and maybe backtrack.

Other markings that will be helpful are the old-school white arrows painted on rocks that SANParks doesn't use anymore for obvious reasons. We are not relying on these but they sometimes catch the eye quite nicely. Similarly, that old hiking favorite, keep an eye out for cairns - piles of rocks that have been deliberately and obviously piled on top of each other by past hikers to indicate the trail. These are harder to see but when you see them you will know, and can also be quite helpful.

Lastly, again, if you think you might be lost you probably are! Rather lose a couple of seconds backtracking and finding the trail than pressing forward and risking extra hours out in the desert.

That's all for now. Get some rest this week, eat properly and see you all in Augrabies!

See you soon!

Warren