

## Blues Cruise 50K Participant Guide 2026

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### **Statement From Race Directors**

The Blues Cruise 50K Trail Ultramarathon circles the beautiful Blue Marsh Lake. The 31-mile loop with approximately 3000 feet of climb is very runnable, having varied terrain that includes fields, plenty of rolling hills, single track and less than .5 miles of public roadway. The “Ski Slope” is the only major climb (240 feet in vertical accent). We have one optional water crossing where you can choose to splash through or cross on a bridge. Our themed aid stations are well stocked and serviced by local ultra runners. A nine hour time limit is strictly enforced.

The race starts at 8:00 AM and finishes by 5PM.

Aid stations 5, 6, and 7 will have strict cut off times (review the Participant Guide, under “Aid Station Info”) to facilitate this deadline, and a sweep vehicle will be available for runners who are cut (expect some wait time).

Blues Cruise 50K RELAY: A captain should be designated for each team of 2-4 runners.

The captain must register the team and add a fun team name to Ultra Signup prior to others signing up. Each person must individually register as a relay contestant.

The per-person relay fee is lower than the 50K price.

Each member of the 2-4 person team will complete 1 or more of the 4 legs of the 50 K course. (1 runner per leg)

- Leg 1: “The Lead Out” start to Aid Station 1, ~4.7 miles
- Leg 2 “The Voyager” Aid Station 1 to Aid Station 4, ~ 13.3 miles
- Leg 3 “The Mountaineer” Aid Station 4-6, ~7.1 miles includes the famous Ski Slope
- Leg 4 “The Finisher”, ~6.8 miles to the finish, where the entire team can cross the line together and receive Blues Cruise Relay finisher awards. Prizes will be awarded for the fastest teams! Due to the speed of the relay teams, aid station support will be limited. All registered runners will have access to all post-race activities and the buffet.

Don't miss: The Pagoda Pacers *Triple Trail Challenge 50.3 Series*. Runners that complete the Charlie Horse Trail Half Marathon (May 24), Run for the Ages Trail Chase 10K (June 28), and Blues Cruise 50K will receive a sweet bit of runner swag at no additional price. Triple Trail Starter Pack racers complete the Dirty Pony 5K (May 24), the Run for the Ages Trail Chase 10K (June 28) and any leg of the Blues Cruise Relay.

No special registration is required. Links to the Triple Trail Challenge 50.3 and Triple Trail Starter Pack can be found at

<https://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=134404>

Race Directors Michael Whalen & Elaine Cook are experienced trail and Ultra runners and long-time members of the Pagoda Pacers. With more than 200 members, the Pagoda Pacers have years of experience organizing first class trail and road races.

[www.pagodapacers.com](http://www.pagodapacers.com) We expect to have over 100 members, most of them trail/ultramarathon runners, on site to support our participants and manage 7 of the best aid stations you ever encountered. If you have any questions about our race please don't hesitate to contact us. [bluescruiserd@gmail.com](mailto:bluescruiserd@gmail.com) Most questions and ongoing race information can be found on the Blues Cruise 50K Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/65364255002> ).

Early registration will be \$115.00. Price will increase to \$130.00 on August 1, 2026. Guaranteed swag deadline is September 1, 2026. Online registration will close on September 28, 2026 at midnight. Race day registration will be available for the 50K only (relays must preregister due to the logistics involved), but race swag is not guaranteed for anyone registering after September 1.

## Race Schedule

- February 14: Blues Cruise Registration opens on UltraSignUp
- May 24: Triple Trail Challenge Race #1, Charlie Horse Trail Half Marathon

<https://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=133085>

- June 28: Triple Trail Challenge Race #2, Run For the Ages

<https://www.pagodapacers.com/Races-Results/Races/Run-for-the-Ages-10k-Trail-Chase.aspx>

- July 11: 3rd annual Blues Cruise “Justa Fat Ass” Blues Cruise Training run #1 at Justa Road
  - Follow our Facebook group for details <https://www.facebook.com/groups/65364255002>
- August 1: Fee increase for Blues Cruise on UltraSignUp
- August TBD: Blues Cruise Training Run #2
- September TBD: Blues Cruise Training Run #3
- September 1: Last day to register with guaranteed race swag
- September 28: Registration closes on UltraSignUp
- Saturday October 3: Dry Camping at Race Headquarters (5 miles from start/finish– must sign up)
- Sunday October 4: RACE DAY
  - 7:00 AM Registration opens
  - 7:00-7:50 Coffee, swag sales, photo ops, sponsor freebies
  - 7:50 Pre Race announcements
  - 8:00 Race Start!!!

- 2:20 PM Aid Station #5 (Rat's Nest) Cut off
- 3:15 PM Aid Station #6 (Fleet Week) Cut Off
- 4:10 PM Aid Station #7 (Rocky) Cut Off
- 5:00PM Finish Line Closes–runners must cross the line by 5 PM (9 hours total time) to earn a finisher award.
- ~12:00 PM-5:30 PM Post Race Buffet, Recovery Zone, swag sales
- 6:00 PM All runners, crew, spectators, volunteers out of the park GATES LOCKED BY PARK STAFF

## **General Information**

### **Blue Marsh Lake**

From the official website: Blue Marsh Lake is a 6,100 acre-project having a 1,150-acre lake. Facilities include a day use area with swim beach, bathhouse, food concession, picnic areas, volleyball courts, pavilions available for rental; visitor center; three boat launches; and a stilling basin. Trails include a 30-mile multi-purpose hiking/biking trail and three interpretive trails, one being ADA accessible. Activities include swimming, picnicking, boating, water-skiing, hiking, equestrian and mountain bike riding, fishing, hunting, bird watching and other nature-oriented and outdoor activities. <https://www.recreation.gov/gateways/195>

There is NO camping or alcohol anywhere on lake property, in spite of some misleading Google search results!

### **Race Start/Finish**

Lakeview Pavilion at Dry Brooks Day Use Area (NOT Dry Brooks Boat Launch–watch for Pagoda Pacers signs)

[40° 23' 11.2808" N 76° 2' 32.8816" W](#)

The public restrooms will be closed in October, but we have plenty of porta johns. Notice the ample paved parking lots surrounding the pavilion. YOU MUST PARK IN A LINED SPACE. No parking along roads or driveways or in the grass. There is a large covered pavilion but no indoor space, so please have your crew and spectators plan accordingly if the weather is cold. There is a lot of grassy space with a lovely view of the lake for hanging out to watch the finish or relax with your entourage after your run!



## Pre Race

Registration will begin at 7:00 AM. We will have day-of registration, but we will not have swag ordered for runners who did not register by the swag cut off on September 1. We will be selling a variety of Blues Cruise and Pagoda Pacers items from 7AM until about 5:30 PM.

You can also check out a table of free items from our sponsors.

Race day, morning coffee service will be available

We'll have the race arch and banners up for pre-race photos.

Pre race announcements at 7:50—IMPORTANT!

Race starts at 8:00 AM sharp!

## Drop Bags

Please keep the size reasonable! (We suggest 1 or 2 gallon ziplocks.) Write your name on your drop bags for easy identification. We will have a marked area near registration for you

to leave your bags. The drop bags will be taken to a blue tarp at the Margaritaville (aid station 4, ~mile 18). Drop bags will be returned from AS 4 to the finish line area after the last runner exits the AS. This is a very spectator friendly aid station, so if your crew wants to grab your bag after you pass, that's fine.

### **Spectator and Relay Info**

For runner safety, the driveway in and out of the start area at Dry Brooks will be **CLOSED** from the time of race start until the last runner has crossed it. Relays should move their team car before the start, and spectators should be prepared to either leave early or wait a few minutes to exit the park.

All pre-race and on-course food is for registered runners only. Post race food is only for registered runners.

We will have a large map near registration with preferred spectator sites identified. Below is driving information to AS 1,4, and 6. These are the preferred spectator areas

Finish line: Feel free to run in with your runner, but do not block the bib number or other finishers.

#### *Driving directions for spectators and relay vehicles*

**Blues Brothers** (Capt. Steve) AS1: From the start area turn right onto Palisades Drive, go 2.0 mi and turn right onto Rebers Bridge Rd. Go 1.5 mi and pass Ganley's Pub, on Brownsville Rd. Go approx. 0.4 mi and turn right onto State Hill Boat Ramp entry. Follow the road to the end. The AS is on the left side of the main parking lot. **State Hill Boat Launch 599 Brownsville Rd, Wernersville, PA 19565**

**Margaritaville** (Capt. Pippy) AS4 and **Fleet Week** (Capt. Matt) AS6: Exit the start-finish line driveway and turn left onto Palisades Dr and drive 1.0 mi, then left onto PA-183 (Bernville Rd) north. Drive 2.7 mi and turn left onto Old Church Rd. The Parking lot (with porta potties) will be located on the left, shortly after you turn onto Old Church Road. AS 4 is across the bridge to the left, AS 2 is across the street from the parking lot. For runner safety, we ask all spectators to park in the lot and NOT along the road.

**Relay TEAM CARS** with a proper windshield sign (provided on race day) can park on the shoulder of the road beyond AS4 (ask volunteers for guidance) and then move to the lot at AS6. No spectator cars should be parked along the roadways.

### **Post Race Food and Activities**

All registered runners will get a full hot meal at the finish. Menu includes pulled pork, vegan hot dogs, pierogies, soup, and dessert. Only registered runners should eat from the buffet! Please plan accordingly and bring food or stop in nearby Bernville for sustenance if needed.

Alcohol is prohibited at the park. The finish line Recovery Center will have water, soda, gatorade, and some NA Athletic beers available for registered runners, as well as recovery care including first aid and massage for donation.

Awards are handed out as participants finish. There is no award ceremony. Finish line volunteers will give out finisher awards and age group or overall awards as runners cross the line. Results will be posted on UltraSignUp.

We MUST have everyone out of the park by 6PM, when the gates are locked. This is why we have a hard cut off of 9 hours (finish by 5PM) to allow runners to recover enough to safely drive, and to allow our volunteer staff to clean up.

### **Aid Station Info**

Due to documented medical evidence, we will NOT be offering Ibuprofen at any of the Aid Stations. We WILL have Gatorade, gels, fuel, Ultra-style food and of course GREAT costumes at each of the 7 on-course stations.

Remember Blues Cruise is cupless. Please carry a reusable cup or water bottle!

### Clockwise Years (even years)

Even years	Aid StationName	Total miles	Distance from previous AS	Crew access	Drop bag	Cut off time	Restroom Facilities	Relay exchange
AS1	Blues Bros	4.7	4.7	Yes	No	none	Yes	Yes
AS2	Fugawi	9.4	4.7	No	No	none	No	No
AS3	Oktoberfest	12.3	2.9	No	No	none	Yes	No
AS4	Margaritaville	18.0	5.7	Yes	Yes	none	No	Yes
AS5	Rat's Nest	21.8	3.8	No	No	2:20PM #	No	No
AS6	Fleet Week	25.1	3.3	Yes	No	3:15PM #	Yes	Yes
AS7	Rocky	28.2	3.1	No	No	4:10PM #	No	No
finish	Finish line	31.8	3.7	Yes	No	5:00PM #	Yes	No

#Note: Runners must average under 16:59 pace per mile over the entire course to earn a finish (remember: GPS data varies!!!). The cutoffs are slightly more generous than that pace to account for minor issues that might delay you temporarily such as shoe change, bathroom stop, etc. IF YOU LEAVE AS 7 AT THE 4:10 CUTOFF YOU WOULD HAVE TO RUN

13:31 PACE TO THE FINISH LINE. Aim to be at least 30 minutes under the cutoff if you are moving at a steady pace!



### Counter Clockwise Years (odd years)

Odd years	Aid Station Name	Total miles	Distance from previous AS	Crew access	Drop bag	Cut off time	Restroom Facilities	Relay exchange
AS1	Rocky	3.7	3.7	No	No	none	No	No
AS2	Fleet Week	6.8	3.1	Yes	No	none	Yes	Yes
AS3	Rat's Nest	10.1	3.3	No	No	none	No	No
AS4	Margaritaville	14.0	3.8	Yes	Yes	none	No	Yes

AS5	Oktoberfest	19.7	5.7	No	No	1:45PM *	Yes	No
AS6	Fugawi	22.6	2.9	No	No	none**	No	No
AS7	Blues Bros	27.2	4.7	Yes	No	4:00PM *	Yes	Yes
finish	Finish line	31.8	4.7	Yes	No	5:00PM	Yes	No

\*Note: Runners must average under 16:59 pace per mile over the entire course to earn a finish (remember: GPS data varies!!!). The cutoffs are slightly more generous than that pace to account for minor issues that might delay you temporarily such as shoe change, bathroom stop, etc. IF YOU LEAVE AS 7 AT THE 4:00 CUTOFF YOU WOULD HAVE TO RUN 12:45 PACE TO THE FINISH LINE. Aim to be at least 30 minutes under the cutoff if you are moving at a steady pace!

\*\*Also note: In odd (counterclockwise) years, there is no cutoff at AS6 simply due to the fact that it is inaccessible to crew. Runners who leave AS5 Oktoberfest close to the cutoff would need to cover 7.6 miles to AS7 Blues Brothers in order to get a ride if they are unable to continue. Plan and train accordingly!



### Race Rules—Infractions can lead to disqualification

1. NO DEFERRALS, except per Trail Sister Guidelines. In cases of pregnancy, we allow 1 year deferral or a refund.
2. NO BANDITS. Registered runners only. No pacers. 50K races typically do not accommodate pacers. If you want to run with a friend they must also register.
3. Race swag cannot be mailed to those who are unable to run. You may pick it up yourself or have a friend get it for you.
4. Park in designated lined spaces only. No parking along roads or in grass.
5. Race is cupless. Please bring a reusable cup. We will have a limited number for sale at the race.
6. Wear bib number on the front of your body so that numbers can clearly be read by volunteers. Exception: relay runners not running the finish leg will wear numbers on their BACKS so ultra runners who are passed by them will be able to tell they are in the relay competition.
7. Aid station captains, course marshals, sweepers, and fire police guidance must be followed. Failure to yield at road crossings (there are 2) or not following race official requests can lead to disqualification.

8. Cut Off times strictly enforced. See charts above. Aid station captains may also pull runners who are clearly unable to continue safely. Runners who continue after being pulled for cut off times or safety will be disqualified.
9. No course cutting. If you accidentally leave the course you must return to the point where you left to rejoin the race. The course will be well marked, but trail racing requires you to be alert and attentive to the markings! The course will be flagged with pink ribbon, orange will mark do not enter, and there will be some supplemental spray chalk and signs.
10. No dogs on course.
11. Crew may not assist you anywhere other than the 3 designated aid stations (see chart above). Drop bags only at AS4. No unofficial drop bags.
12. Do not litter. Carry your trash to the next AS.
13. Be courteous. Announce yourself when passing, allow faster runners through, yield to horses, allow bikers and hikers space in this public park.
14. If you find you cannot finish, tell the nearest aid station captain and turn in your bib. Otherwise we will be unaware and will notify authorities to search for you!
15. No relay registration on race day. All relays must preregister due to the logistics involved.

### **Course Records**

Men: 3:32:53

Women: 4:07:30

Non Binary:

Men's Relay: 5:06:51

Women's Relay: 5:26:14

Mixed Relay: 4:55:31

### **Safety Plan**

The Race Directors have created a detailed Race Safety Plan that will be emailed to all runners prior to race day