

2018 Racer Manual



June 17-23, 2018
Fruita, CO – Moab, UT

Hello RATS Family!

We can't wait to see all of you this June - hopefully with fresh legs and a powerful spirit, ready to fully experience the Kokopelli Trail! We feel so lucky to be around people like you, and it is for you that we have worked hard to create a fun week long adventure. We hope you all health, happiness, and smart training in the weeks to come!

Welcome to the 15th Annual *Desert RATS*! This manual should aid the racer and his/her support team with information to help prepare for this year's race.

Unique beauty, amazing wildlife and profound solitude – all the elements of true adventure – reward racers willing to brave the strenuous Desert RATS journey. Vast landscape and ancient obstacles combine to create the rugged and stunning beauty of the Kokopelli Trail. Desert RATS is more than just a race. It is not only a journey through true backcountry desert but within yourself. While some will race, most are there to test their mental and physical limits. Don't expect to set personal records for the distance you'll cover; you will need to pace yourself for the heat and terrain. You must have patience and grit in order to not be fighting your own frustration. The race is about the experience, pushing yourself and making friends along the way.

At Desert RATS, the adventure is the goal. It's about reaching deep within yourself, adapting to adversity and overcoming the challenges in front of you. Those who enjoy Desert RATS the most come into the experience prepared and willing to be flexible in every way.

The racers who truly enjoy the event and gain from the experience are those who appreciate the beauty of the land, the camaraderie of other adventurers and the thrill of relaxing in the Colorado River at the end of the day. This adventure is not for everyone. It's not an expedition to survive or a race to win, it's an experience to live.

While every racer's week is different, the common experience is the grand scale of the event. The heat is extreme, the beauty is vast and the friendships run deep. Our hope is that as you travel this incredible landscape you will discover a piece of yourself.

After a challenging day on the trails, racers sit down to a hot meal and share stories around a campfire. The course is a carefully laid out, truly authentic, wilderness experience. Bathe in the Colorado river, sleep in tents and run across the amazing desert landscape while dining on delicious meals and mingling with friends that will last a lifetime.

Now in our 15th year, we are the longest-running stage race in North America. We have a full medical staff of doctors specializing in expedition medicine, along with experienced base camp and aid station crews that can't be matched. We designed the toughest race possible then put together the infrastructure and a caring professional crew to get you safely to the finish line.

Racers will run from Grand Junction, Colorado to the world-famous Moab, Utah along the beautiful 143-mile Kokopelli trail. Distances will range from day to day between 9 and 42 miles. This is a grueling event that will challenge the most seasoned athletes, yet it is designed so that less experienced ultrarunners can train for and successfully complete the course. The entire length of the trail is stunningly beautiful with jagged canyons and breathtaking vistas.

Racers will rendezvous in Moab, UT on Sunday to receive their Expedition Journals with detailed course maps and final race instructions. Early on Monday, runners will be transported to the start line near Grand Junction and head off for the first of six days. Each day runners will be greeted at the finish line and directed to the tent city where they can mingle, access their gear, enjoy a hot meal provided by Gemini Adventures and rest up for the next day. Each morning runners will rise for a light breakfast, also provided by Gemini Adventures, and an early morning start of the next stage from the site of the tent city.

Each night the camp buzzes with excitement as the day's results and overall standings are posted and the nightly meeting is held to make announcements.

Runners finishing the entire 143-mile course will arrive in Moab, UT with the satisfaction of having completed the ultimate adventure running race. That night, all runners completing the entire course within the established rules will be presented with a finisher's award at a memorable post-race party at Eddie McStiff's – King of Moab Restaurants - open for all runners and their families.

Organization

The Race Director, Reid Delman, will have the final say in any race-related matter. If there are any questions prior to the race, please contact any of our staff. If there are any questions during the race week, feel free to ask staff members at the aid stations or base camps.

Race Director

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What does Gemini Events provide?

Gemini Events will provide tents and meals for racers. In the morning, breakfast will be provided prior to race start. Racers will make their own sandwiches the night before each stage and will be available at a designated aid station on the course as lunch the following day. A hot, full meal will be provided at camp each night. Sleeping and overnight supplies will be transported to the finish line/Base Camp for the racers. Each racer is limited to one 50L bag. Racers may bring their own tent but are then responsible for set-up and break-down.

Pre-Race Registration and Gear Check

Pre-Race Packet Pickup and Gear Check will be Sunday, June 17th from 4-6pm at [The Gonzo Inn](#) at 100 West 200 South Street, Moab, UT. *You will need to bring all of your required gear.* Racers will also need their [medical form](#) (if not previously submitted via [email](#)) and their two passport-sized photos with entrant's name on the back – one will be affixed to the Expedition Journal and the other in the racer's emergency information. Gemini Events will not have medical personnel on hand to provide medical examinations at check-in.

Mandatory Pre-Race Meeting

All racers must attend a pre-race meeting at [The Gonzo Inn](#) on Sunday, June 17th at 7:30pm. At this meeting runners will receive necessary information that they will need for the week. We will also introduce the staff and take questions.

Parking

Parking will be offsite from [The Gonzo Inn](#). You will have a place within walking distance to leave your car for the race week; parking passes will be handed out in Moab at registration. Please do not leave cars at the Inn.

There will also be minimal parking available at each base camp for your family/support crew.

Accommodations

The host hotel is [The Gonzo Inn](#) and it is suggested you reserve rooms here for Sunday night as well as Saturday the 23rd. However, there are many options very close by. This will be easier for you to attend the pre-race meeting/gear check, and to celebrate post race.

Daily outdoor camping will be available at pre-selected sites. Gemini Events will provide tents (6-8 persons per tent). Participants may bring their own tent but are then responsible for their own tent setup and breakdown.

Awards

Each day's stage finisher will receive a dog tag memento of that day's journey.

Stage Race Overall first place male and female will receive champion awards.

2nd – 5th place male and female awards will also be given.

All non-placing finishers of the entire course within cut-off times will receive a finisher's award.

All racer's finishing with a total of less than 30 hours will receive a sub 30 hour finisher's award.

Gear Checks

Mandatory gear must be carried at all times while out on the course and will be checked at aid stations. Racers must be able to present gear upon request or will be penalized (see required gear).

Bib Numbers

During check-in, Gemini Events will provide each participant with a race number. This must be worn in plain view by race staff. Each participant is obligated to ensure that his/her race numbers are clear, visible, in good condition and in the proper place.

Starting Order

All participants will start together on the first stage. Stages 2-5 will have staggered starts according to rankings. The back half of the field will begin a half hour before the front half and the times will be adjusted at the finish line. This is to minimize the wait time at the finish line. If, on the last stage, there is a close race between the first and second place, we will do a "rabbit" start ensuring the first person to cross the finish line is the winner of the entire race.

Aid Stations

These are located throughout the course of each stage of the race. There are up to five aid stations per stage determined by the length of the stage. The participants must allow the race officials to record their time and undergo a gear/medical check.

Water Supply

Gemini Events will supply racers with unlimited water for drinking purposes and limited evaporative cooling. No bathing. Water will be available at the start of the stage each morning, aid stations and water drops. Each racer must supply his/her own drinking containers. Cups will not be supplied at aid stations. Each night's camping area (except for the first night) will have opportunities for rinsing off in a river.

Camping

Daily outdoor camping will be at pre-selected sites. Gemini Events provide tents (6-8 people per tent). Participants may bring their own tents and they will be transported to the camp area. However, racers that decide to bring their own tents are then responsible for setup and breakdown of personal tents.

Dropping Out/Missed Cut-offs

There will be cut-offs at some aid station as well as the daily finish lines. Each leg must be completed in the time allowed. These cut-off times are lenient and designed to ensure the safety of runners. Times will be adjusted if start times change.

In the event a competitor drops out of the race or misses a cut-off, it is imperative that he/she advise return their race numbers to a Gemini Events official. Racer safety is our #1 priority – please don't make us use valuable resources searching for a racer that is not lost.

Several options are available to participants who withdraw from the race. A participant who is in adequate physical condition but withdraws from official standing may elect to:

1. Racers may also continue subsequent stages after dropping out of a stage. They will continue unofficially and their times will not be recorded.
2. Be driven to Moab (subject to viability) with lodging and meals being at his/her own expense.
3. Be driven by Gemini Events every morning from the start of that day's start point to the finish point of that day.

Competitors who drop out and stay on the course must continue to follow the race/camp rules. No refunds of unused days is made.

Medical Assistance

A crew of medical doctors specializing in expedition medicine and heat related illnesses will be in attendance throughout the race and will use assistance vehicles throughout the course. Medical personnel will be available each day and will ensure that any participants who are suffering from physical ailments have the option to be brought back to the base camp. The medical team is allowed to remove from the race any participant they feel is physically unfit to continue the race.

Night Travel

The 43 mile Expedition Stage is the only stage where night travel is permitted. Racers are required to carry glow sticks, and headlights are strongly suggested.

Timing

The daily rankings are done by adding the time used to run that stage of the race. Overall stage race ranking is done by adding times for each stage of the race. Times will include penalties, if applicable.

Weather and Terrain Conditions

Temperatures in June

Daytime: 95 F

Night: 58 F

Record high: 113 F

Record low: 37 F

The 143 mile (approx) course encounters a wide variety of terrain (sand, rocky desert, stony ground etc). In case of sand storms lowering visibility to zero, the racers must stop in their tracks and wait for instructions by the organizers.

Gemini Adventures reserves the right to modify the course and the length of the various stages as a result of unfavorable weather conditions or regulations in certain areas.

Markings

The participants of the Desert RATS must follow the course as marked by Bureau of Land Management. Stage #1 will have additional markings at difficult-to-read turns. There are several natural landmarks which will also serve as additional points of reference. GPS is allowed and recommended.

Crewing

Gemini Events must remind all participants that the Desert RATS is a race through the desert where climatic and ground conditions can be extreme.

Crewing is permitted in designated areas only. Designated areas are defined as start lines, aid stations and finish lines. Camping and meal plan for crew members will be available on a first come first serve basis for a fee. It is the responsibility of the racer to notify us if they are planning to bring crew. Some crewing expenses could be waived in exchange for volunteering on behalf of the race (contact Race Management for details). Crews are not allowed to remove racers from the race course or camping area. If a participant is supplied by persons at unauthorized areas during the race, he/she will be heavily penalized. Crews are also subject to all race regulations and all local, state and federal land management rules and regulations.

Expedition Journal

An Expedition Journal will be supplied to each competitor upon check in. One of the passport-sized photos you provide at Check-In will go into the Journal. The photos do not need to be official passport photos; they are for safety purposes. This book will reveal the exact course and will include maps, course description, crew information and various points of interest along the course. This book must be carried with you at all times and must be presented at each Aid Station. A lost Expedition Journal will result in a 1 hour time penalty. Each evening a briefing will be given relating to the next day's stage by the organizers.

Mandatory Equipment for Participants

- Capability to carry 140 oz of liquid
- Minimum 1000 calories in reserve in addition to what you plan to consume
- Expedition Journal
- One lightweight survival blanket
- Salt tablets
- Compass
- Whistle
- Emergency mirror
- Small flashlight with spare batteries
- Knife with folding blade
- Disinfectant ointment or spray can
- Backcountry/Coast Guard-approved strobe light. LED lights with a strobe are generally not considered emergency lights.
- 2 luminous signal (glow) sticks (expedition stage only)

If you have questions on any gear specifics, please email [Kyla](#).

Each participant must present all required gear at Check-In and at each Aid Station throughout the race.

Nightly Supplies

These supplies are required but do not need to be carried each day. These items along with your other personal belongings (fitting into one 50L bag, sleeping bag included) will be transported forward by Gemini Events for each racer.

- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad, Warm Clothing
- Eating Utensils (i.e. plates, spoon, fork, cup etc.)

Penalties

Gear: If a racer cannot show mandatory gear, he/she will be penalized 1 hour in addition to the time it takes to gain possession of these materials. If this penalty puts the racer over the allotted time he/she will be eliminated from that stage and the official standings. If the materials can not be obtained the racers will be eliminated from the race.

Food & Water: Each competitor must in all circumstances carry of a minimum of 1000 calories and 80oz of liquid. This means entering each Aid Station with 1000 calories and leaving each Aid Station with 80oz of water. When spot checks are made, any competitor unable to present the minimum will receive a 1 hour penalty.

Race Stage Start: Timing for each stage begins with an official start time. If for any reason a participant is late to the start, he/she will be on the running clock.

Cut-Offs: Exceeding the maximum allowed time for a daily stage will result in elimination from the race.

Expedition Stage (approximately 43 mile stage): During this stage, when night time traveling is permitted, any use of distress signals without valid reason will be subject to a 1 hour penalty.

Leaving the Trail: Under no circumstances are racers permitted to leave the trail. While penalties are not given for getting lost, a 1 hour penalty will be given for the first time a racer leaves a trail. If the racer leaves the trail again, they will be removed from the course and eliminated from the race.

Drugs: Any use of illicit drugs by a participant noted by the medical team will result in the elimination of that person from the race.

Ground Assistance: The use of any transportation will result in elimination from the race.

Trash: Any littering will result in elimination from the race.

Appeals

Every night there will be a staff meeting. Any race decision can be appealed and must be presented to the staff before the nightly meeting in order to be discussed that night. Upon discussion a decision will be made shortly thereafter. Appeals regarding missed cut-offs must be made before the nightly meeting in order to gain access to the following day's stage.

Community and the Gemini Family

Keeping in touch with our racers is important to us. In order to continue to improve this event there will be a post-race survey sent out to each participant. Please take a couple minutes to fill out the online survey with both positives and aspects we can improve on. Also, we love to hear how everyone's training has been, what races are on the horizon, countdowns to Gemini Events, and the support and advice each of you give to one another for your "first-times," injuries, or adventures. If you want to stay connected - Friend us on [Facebook](#) for updates, news, advice and pictures from the events.

Racer Updates

Each evening, we plan to post an update for the day's happenings on our [Facebook](#) page and [Blog](#). A computer will be made available to racers to add their own thoughts and commentary. A charging station will likely also be available for participant devices. Our ability to provide these services can vary with conditions, but can typically be counted upon.

Qualifying Standards

The Desert RATS Kokopelli 150 stage race is a true adventure. To truly enjoy and get the most out of the experience runners must be both mentally and physically prepared for the challenges of remote trails, extreme weather, and distance between aid stations. With this in mind the Gemini Adventures team has decided to implement qualifying standards for the race. Our requirements are not especially strict but we feel that they're necessary for racers to understand the potential risks of the event. Qualifications will need to be submitted during the registration process and will be reviewed before registration is complete. Email a brief list of your category 1 and/or category 2 experience to our Race Director, [Reid Delman](#). He will respond and confirm your approval, once that's received you will be all set to officially register and become a Desert RAT.

These qualifiers are not based on athletic performance as much as they are on experience and trail time. The important factors are the ability to follow trail signs and keep your head about you in extreme conditions.

Runners will also be required to have a [medical form](#) completed by a physician within 30 days on the start of the race. [Letter for the participant's physician](#)

Course Records

Stage 1:

Suzanna Bon (2011) 3:33
Shaun Martin (2010) 2:34

Stage 2:

Ashley Arnold (2013) 7:09
Allen Belshaw (2008) 5:08

Stage 3:

Ashley Arnold (2013) 1:15
Sean Meissner (2010) 1:09

Stage 4:

Becky Kirschenmann (2015) 8:09
Ryan Guldán (8:09)
*Becky Kirschenmann (2014) 10:11
*Shaun Martin (2009) 8:40

Stage 5:

Becky Kirschenmann (2015) 3:55
Scott Jaime (2008) 3:23

Overall:

Becky Kirschenmann (2015) 22:55
Ryan Guldán (2015) 21:39
*Suzanna Bon (2011) 25:45
*Shaun Martin (2009) 21:27
*Old Course

Sunday:

4:00-6:00pm Registration/Gear Check @ [The Gonzo Inn](#)
 7:30pm Pre-Race Meeting @ [The Gonzo Inn](#)

Monday:

(Breakfast will be on your own)
 7:30am Meet in front of [The Gonzo Inn](#)
 8:00am Bus departs for start line (Gear must be separated and you must be ready to run)
 10:00am RACE START!!!! (water and toilets will be available)
 5:30pm Stage 1 Cut-off
 Dinner
 7:30pm Evening Announcements

Tuesday:

6:00am Breakfast
 7:30am First Wave start of Stage 2
 8:00am Second Wave Start of Stage 2
 1:45pm Westwater Cut-off
 3:30pm Cottonwood Wash Cut-off
 7:30pm Dinner
 8:00pm Stage 2 Cut-off
 8:30pm Evening Announcements

Wednesday:

6:30am Breakfast
 8:00am First Wave Start of Stage 3
 8:30am Second Wave Start of Stage 3
 12:00pm Stage 3 Cut-off
 Lunch
 5:00pm Dinner
 7:00pm Evening Announcements

Thursday:

6:00am Breakfast
 7:00am First Wave Start of Stage 4
 7:30am Second Wave Start of Stage 4
 3:30pm Onion Creek Cut-off
 6:00pm Dinner available at Base Camp
 9:00pm Gateway Cut-off
 Midnight Stage 4 Cut-off

Friday:

(Morning snacks available)
 11:00am Brunch
 1:30pm Optional Beach/Hike/Activities
 6:00pm Dinner
 7:00pm Evening Announcements

Saturday:

6:30am Breakfast
 8:00am First Wave Start of Stage 5
 8:30am Second Wave Start of Stage 5
 11:00am La Sal Cut-off
 1:00pm Porcupine Rim #1 Cut-off
 2:30pm Porcupine Rim #2 Cut-off
 4:00pm Stage 5 Cut-off
 7:00pm Post-Race Party
 @ [Eddie McStiff's](#)

Course Description

This is a general description of the course. Exact details will be given at the beginning of the race. Each racer will be given an Expedition Journal with a course description and daily requirements. This Expedition Journal must be carried with the racers at all times and be presented at all Aid Stations. All mileage on this page is approximate but will be updated for exact distances at the time of the race. We have included links to Strava for each stage to illustrate approximate mileage and distance. These were recorded by the overall men's champion and individual times will vary – considerably!

Total Mileage: 143.0 miles
Total Elevation Gain: 16,280'+

[Download GPX files for the course](#) – individual stages and full course.

STAGE 1

(19.8 miles – 2040'+ Gain) From Loma to Rabbit Valley, this section is truly one of the most beautiful sections of the entire course. Amazing canyons and overlooks make this section a great way to start the race.

Two Aid Stations will be available:
6.0mi - Cottonwood Creek Aid Station
13.7mi - Salt Creek Aid Station

[Salt Creek Stage Strava Link](#)

STAGE 2

(39.1 miles – 2520'+ Gain) From Rabbit Valley to Fish Ford you will get your first taste of how remote this trail could make you feel. A climb to the top of the mesa will add a nice steep half mile challenge in the middle of the day.

Five Aid Stations and one water drop will be available:
5.0mi – Rabbit Valley Aid Station
13.1mi – Mesa Aid Station
17.5mi – Westwater Aid Station
21.4mi – Water Only
28.2mi – Cottonwood Wash Aid Station
34.2mi – Boat Landing Aid Station

[Milt's Stage Strava Link](#)

STAGE 3

(9.3 miles – 761'+ Gain) No aid stations will be available on the section between Fish Ford and Highway 128. As you enter the trail you will travel through remote rolling cow pastures and over slickrock, until you finally make the climb away from the river. Although there are many twists and turns, the footing is good and will make it a short, fast day and allow more time to anticipate the Expedition Stage to follow.

[Sprint Stage Strava Link](#)

STAGE 4

(41.4 miles – 7810'+ Gain) This stage is what this race is all about. The day starts with a steep five mile climb away from the Colorado River. The Canyon aid station will be a welcome site after a five mile rolling climb. This aid station is the kick off point for the most remote section you will experience. After the second aid station, the trail widens and will be pleasant as the temperatures cool. A fast downhill paved section is the reward for all the climbing earlier. This is the only stage where racers will be allowed to travel in the dark therefore racers will have more required gear during this stage. Front runners will need to push the pace during this section because such a long stage could make or break a racers time. For those looking to just survive, the cut-off times will be lenient.

Four Aid Stations will be available:

5.5mi – Top of the World Aid Station

17.8mi – Onion Creek Aid Station

30.2mi – Beaver Mesa Aid Station

33.7mi – Gateway Aid Station

Expedition Stage Strava Link

STAGE 5

(26.0 miles – 3150'+ Gain) A wonderful finish to such a challenging race is a full marathon finishing at the Slickrock parking lot in Moab. A staggered start will allow all the front and back of the pack to share the trails together for an exciting finish. Starting with the steep climb on pavement this section will allow beautiful views of the La Sal mountains and Fisher Valley to the east. A gradual downhill on jeep road brings you to the Slickrock parking lot and the finish line.

Three Aid Stations and one water drop will be available:

6.3mi – La Sal Aid Station

9.8mi – Water Only

15.0mi – Porcupine Rim #1 Aid Station

19.5mi – Porcupine Rim #2 Aid Station

Marathon Stage Strava Link