

RACE BRIEFING

NOTES FOR PARTICIPANTS

As you are aware of by now, **this is event is quite different from usual** due to the many Covid-19 control measures implemented to reduce the risk of transmission.

PLEASE READ EVERYTHING CAREFULLY

Print off a copy and bring it with you to the event for reference if needed.

Welcome

On behalf of The Quest Team, welcome to the 2021 Cotswolds Adventure Race – the first of four events in the 2021 Questars Adventure Race Series.

The past 14 months have been tough and challenging for everyone, not least for events like Questars. But if there is one thing that has kept us going through the difficult times, it has been the kind words, understanding and unwavering support that many of you have shown us when difficult decisions had to be made.

Getting this event to this stage has not been easy. It has involved more than double the normal workload usually required to deliver a Questars event. We are sorry that, due to all the Covid control measures that have had to be introduced, we are not able to offer everything that regular Questars participants have come to expect. However, we hope that this is a short-term price worth paying for being able to get back adventure racing once again.

We thank you all for supporting us by taking part in the 2021 Cotswolds Adventure Race. And we hope you'll join us again at another event in the future when Questars Adventure Races can hopefully resume normal service.

Daniel Carrivick
Event Director

Race Overview

The start and finish are on the playing field next to Crophorne village hall.

The transition area is also on the playing field next to Crophorne village hall. This is where you transition between the run and bike disciplines. You can leave all your race kit including your bike in the transition area when you are not using them during the race.

No riding of bikes is permitted on the sports pitches, in the transition area or the start/finish area. You must dismount/get off and push your bike when in any of these zones.

The kayak transition is approximately 500m from the village hall. You must make your way to the kayak transition on foot. **No bikes are allowed at the kayak transition.** You must leave your bike in the transition area (at the village hall) when you are kayaking.

All routes and areas not shown on the course map are out of bounds.

Teams should stay together at all times (whilst maintaining 2m social distancing where possible if applicable). By together we mean close enough to easily communicate with each other without having to shout (or to put it another way 10-20 metres).

The course map has been shrunk (90% 1:25,000 scale) and rotated 10 degrees anticlockwise to fit.

Where routes are different on the ground to those marked on your map, follow the route/signs on the ground. Look out for the footpath/bridleway waymarkers and fingerposts to keep on the right route.

Course Planners Tip >>

"Novices have the same course/checkpoints as Masters, who have an hour longer (6 hours not 5). So if you are a Novice race participant you shouldn't be thinking you can visit all the checkpoints. You don't have sufficient time to do so. Most Novice participants won't visit more than about half the check-points. So set your expectations accordingly. Do not be too over-ambitious. And play to your strengths. Prioritise and spend more time doing what you enjoy most whether that be running, biking or kayaking."

Race Starts

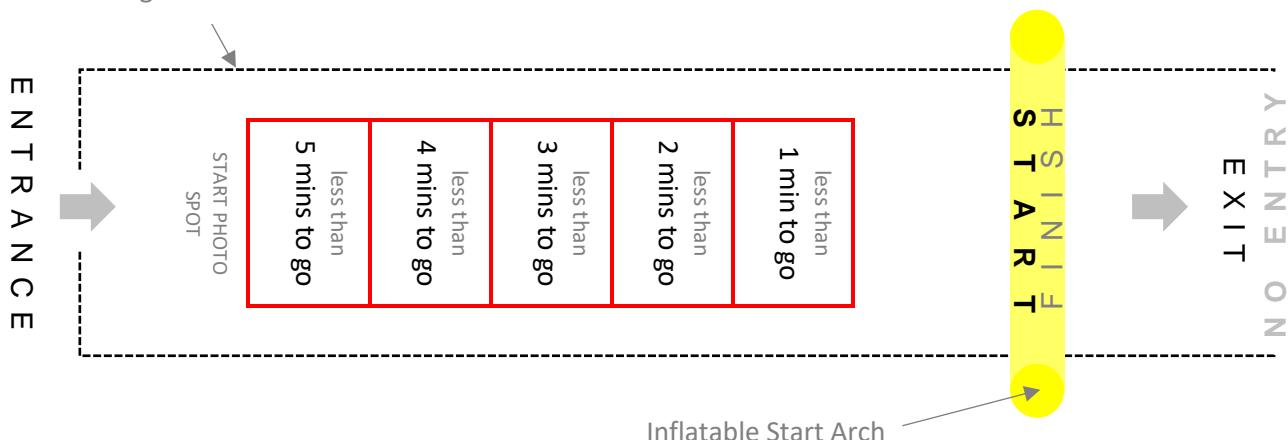
Teams start at one-minute intervals. See the [Start List](#) for your start time.

The checkpoint descriptions & values won't be handed out at the start like usual. You will receive this sheet in your race pack instead. As a result, **there are no dummy checkpoints**.

You may bring your bike to the start if you wish but remember no riding of bikes is permitted in the start/finish area. So, you may prefer to leave your bike in the transition area whilst you start.

A one-way system will operate through the start enclosure as shown by the schematic sketch below.

Enclosed start area fenced
off using mesh barrier



You/all your team members must be together (as a team) at the entrance to the start enclosure, ready to enter it, at or before your allocated start time (to avoid a penalty). Wait near the entrance to the start enclosure until you are called forward. On entry, stand on the designated spot for a start photo (marked by two sports cones on the ground). Then make your way to the next available vacant box marked out on the ground. A marshal will blow a whistle/sound a horn every minute. Every time it sounds...

- the participant/team in the “*less than 1 minute to go*” box moves forward to the start control underneath the yellow start arch to start their race and...
- the other participants/teams in the boxes behind move forward one box to fill the vacant box in front of them.

Your race time begins when you place your electronic scorecard (EMIT card) on the start control (as pictured opposite). This is when you should start your stopwatch so you know how long you have been going for.

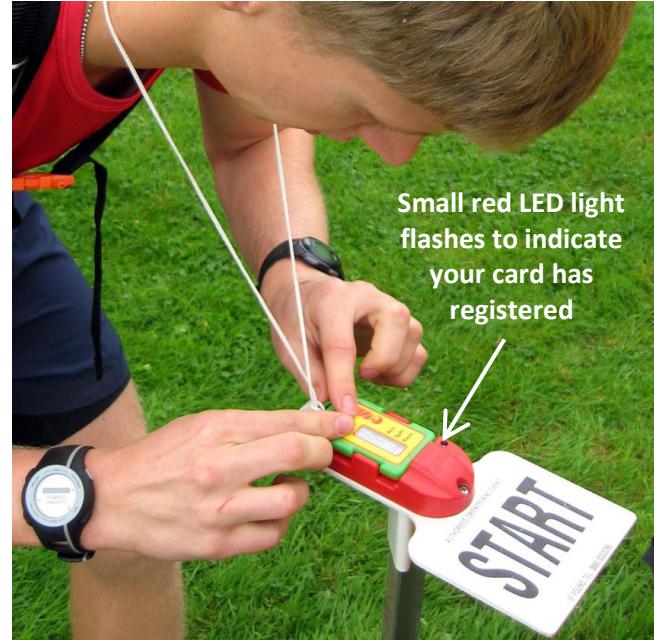
To reduce the risk of transmission, you should take care not to touch the control itself when you place your EMIT card on it.

Masters participants have a **6-hour** time limit.

Novices participants have a **5-hour** time limit.

Duo participants have a **5-hour** time limit.

You must vacate the start area immediately after you start.



The tables below show some of the key figures including the time penalties if you exceed the time limit.

Do not be late back – you will lose those hard-earned points very quickly! This info is printed on your checkpoint descriptions and values sheet for you to refer to during the race if needed.

Race Category:	Trio Masters	Trio Novices	Duo
Time limit:	6 hours	5 hours	5 hours
Max. Points Available: realistically possible in the time limit	1000	800	800
Points deducted for exceeding the time limit:	5 points per minute (or part thereof)	2 points per minute (or part thereof)	5 points per minute (or part thereof)

Penalties	Points Deducted
Late off the water after the end of your allocated kayak time slot	50
Going out of bounds / off the event map	200
Inadvertent use of a route which is not permitted (e.g. taking a bike on a footpath or using a private road / track – see details on map)	200
Losing EMIT card (electronic scoring device)	200 (plus replacement cost)

Checkpoints

There is an EMIT control at each checkpoint (like the one #202 in the photo with the cows below). All the EMIT controls are numbered. Use the checkpoint descriptions sheet to help you locate the EMIT control at each checkpoint.

The EMIT controls aren't deliberately hidden from you but they may be facing the other way to that which you approach them. And sometimes they can be around the back of objects so they don't attract unwanted attention from passers-by.

Also, use the checkpoint descriptions sheet to cross-reference the EMIT control number with the checkpoint on your map to make sure you are at the right checkpoint. You must not punch a run control whilst mountain biking or vice versa, otherwise, you will be penalised. **Check before you punch!**



Where possible, the EMIT controls for the kayak checkpoints will be fastened to objects on the side of the river, like control #202 is attached to the fence in the photo above. So, you should be able to lay your EMIT card on the control without touching the control or getting off your kayak. However, if it's not possible to do that, then the EMIT controls will be attached to white fenders floating on the surface of the water (like control #245 pictured above).

HOW TO REGISTER & RECORD YOUR VISIT

Your EMIT card (electronic scorecard) will have a card insert on one side (with your team number on). Place your EMIT card on the EMIT control with the card insert face down. This card insert acts as a manual backup should your electronic scorecard fail (this is why it's important to lay the card flat on the control, and the right way round).

A small red LED light on the EMIT control will flash within less than a second of you correctly placing the card on the control. This tells you that your visit has been registered and recorded on your EMIT card. Once you've seen the red LED light flash once, remove your card and continue to the next checkpoint.

If for any reason the LED on a control does not flash, press your card firmly down on the control to record your visit manually on the card insert. This is no more than a pinprick and is virtually invisible to the naked eye (so it can't be forged). So, don't expect to see any noticeable difference to the card insert.

Mountain Biking

All the mountain biking is either on roads (coloured yellow/orange) or public bridleways (long green dashed lines). No riding, pushing or carrying of bikes is allowed on footpaths, tracks or any other trails.

The only routes you may take bikes on are:

Permitted Mt Bike Routes	
	Bridleway
	Other routes with public access
	Public road (yellow / orange)

White / uncoloured roads may only be used if they're public e.g. residential streets. They must not be used if they are private roads / driveways.

BRIDLEWAY

You can take your bike along here (long green dashes)



FOOTPATH

You must NOT take your bike on footpaths (short green dashes)

It's a legal obligation in England to give way to walkers and horse riders when cycling on bridleways. Please make sure you slow down and do this. Use your bike bell or politely say hello to let others know you are behind them. When descending narrow sections, you must give way to anyone coming uphill.

Close all gates behind you **AND** ensure they are properly fastened, unless of course they are tied/proped open.

TAKE CARE – Get off and push your bike if needed. It's better to be safe than sorry and can be quicker!

Most of the bridleways are rideable in one direction or another (hint). However, expect to encounter short sections where you may need to get off and push your bike. There are steep slopes, loose rocky sections, hard compact uneven sections (think muddy cattle footprints baked hard) and even a few wet/muddy/boggy patches in places. But don't let that put you off. The rewards are worth it!

You must wear a cycle helmet. Always follow the [Mountain Bike Code](#) and the [Highway Code](#)

Course Planners Tips >>>

"There are quite a few gates across some of the bridleways. We make no apologies for this. It is the same for every participant. If we avoided these routes then the mountain biking would be all on road."

Look carefully at the map. If a bridleway follows a vehicular track (shown by two parallel short-dashed black lines on the map) then it's likely to be more of a 'through route' than bridleways that don't. And if the bridleway crosses lots of field boundaries then expect a gate at each. Use this to help you decide whether to go the direct route along the bridleway, or the long way round by sticking to roads as much as possible.

There is really only one hill on the map. It's a big one. It's not the biggest in terms of height. But it is big in terms of area, filling over half the course map. The north side of this hill (the side closest to the start/finish) is the steepest side. If you try to cycle up the hill using one of the bridleways on this side of the hill you will end up doing a lot of pushing. So best to plan your route either to descend one of the bridleways on the north side of the hill (but take care – they are steep and some are technical) or avoid them altogether. The bridleways on the south and east side of the hill (the furthest side of the hill) are not quite so steep (though all but the best MTB riders will probably still need to get off and push their bike at one point or another for 50m or so). But don't be put off. Up on the hill is where the best Mt biking is!"

Kayaking

REMEMBER: No bikes are allowed at the kayak transition. You must leave your bike in the transition area (at the village hall) and make your way on foot to/from the kayak transition.

You can only kayak during your kayak time slot. See the [Start List](#) for your kayak time slot. In addition, you must kayak either first (before visiting any run or bike checkpoints) or last (in which case you must not visit any more run or bike checkpoints after you've kayaked).

You will receive a 50-point penalty if you exceed 60 minutes - the maximum time allowed on the water for the kayaking. The kayak time slots are longer than 60 minutes to spread you out (so you don't all get on the water at once) but you must not go over the 60 minutes, not even by one second!

You must also be back at the kayak transition before the end of your kayak timeslot. So, if your kayak slot ends at 15:20 and you get on the water at 15:00, you'll only have 20 minutes left in which to kayak.

Getting ready to kayak and on/off the water is NOT part of the race if you follow the correct procedure below (also printed on your course map for your reference during the race).

GETTING ON THE WATER

When you arrive at the kayak transition, this is the procedure to follow...

1. Punch EMIT control #100 on land (to pause your race time clock and begin your timeout)
2. Put on a buoyancy aid (the correct size for you) and do it up properly (both zip and buckles)
3. Collect a paddle, clean shaft/grips with soapy water provided. Wash your hands at the same time
4. Join the queue/wait in line if necessary (only one team to get on the water at a time)
5. Collect a kayak when told to do so by the marshal
6. Carry kayak to the water. Put the kayak on the water and get on it
7. Punch EMIT control #200 on the water (to end your timeout)
8. Visit kayak checkpoints

GETTING OFF THE WATER

When you return to the kayak transition to get off the water, this is the procedure to follow...

1. Punch EMIT control #200 on water (to pause your race time clock and begin your timeout)
2. Wait on the water if necessary (out of the way), until there is space for you to get off the water
3. Get off your kayak and lift it out of the water
4. Carry your kayak up the river bank and stack it neatly
5. Return your paddle to the pile
6. Take off your buoyancy aid and pop it on the 'used' pile
7. Wash / sanitise your hands
8. Punch EMIT control #100 on land (to end your timeout).
9. Continue with the rest of your race

TIMEOUT – SUMMARY

When getting on the water, you must punch control #100 followed by control #200, consecutively and in that order. The time taken between the two will not count towards your race time limit (6 hours for Masters, 5 hours for everyone else). When getting off the water, you must punch control #200 followed by control #100, consecutively and in that order. The time taken between the two will not count towards your race time limit. If you forget to punch a control, or do not punch them in the correct sequence then you will not be timed out. It is your responsibility to do this correctly (not the marshals).

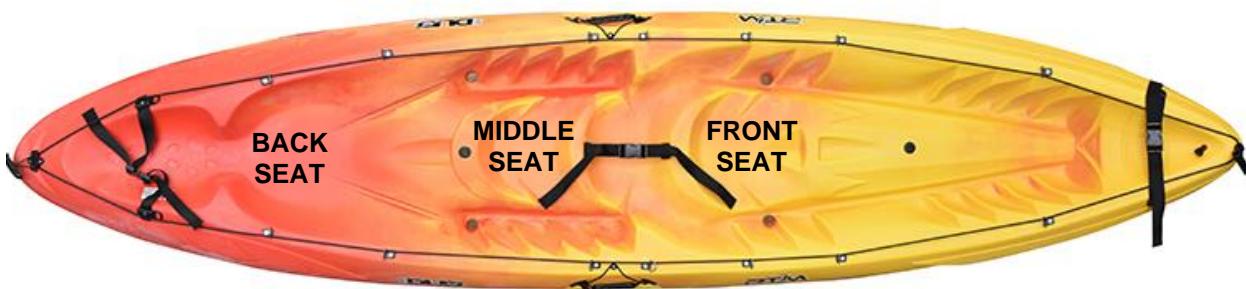
There are two of each control i.e. 2 x control #100 and 2 x control #200, to ease any potential congestion. The two #100 controls are both the same. So, you only need to punch one of them. Likewise with the two #200 controls. Use whichever control is free / not being used by another participant.

The location of the two EMIT controls #100 and the two EMIT controls #200 are not marked on your course map (because they would be on top of each other at the kayak transition). Use the descriptions on your checkpoint descriptions and values sheet to locate them during the race. You can also see where these controls will be located on [this annotated Google Map](#) of the kayak transition.

WARNING: The timeout is ONLY to be used for getting ready to kayak and getting on/off the water, which is expected to be a couple of minutes for most participants and certainly no more than five minutes. It is not for you to rest and recover or sit down and have a picnic for 10-15 minutes. You must not hang around the kayak transition unless you have been told to wait in line to get on the water by a marshal. And when you return to the kayak transition after visiting kayak checkpoints, you must stay within 50m of the kayak transition after punching control #200 (and hence beginning your timeout). As soon as you have come off the water, and returned your kayak equipment, you must punch control #100 and leave the kayak transition. Anyone who doesn't follow these fair-play rules will have their timeout time added back on to their race time. You have been warned!

GENERAL NOTES

Solos and pairs use one kayak. Teams of 3 or 4 people use two kayaks. A picture of a kayak (from the top) is shown below. Sit in the front and back seats if there are two of you paddling a kayak. Sit in the middle seat if you are paddling the kayak on your own. If it doesn't feel comfortable, you are not sitting in the right place, so slide forwards / backwards as necessary. Note: front of kayak is yellow; rear is red/orange.



The river is wide. You should keep to the right-hand side (so oncoming kayaks/vessels pass on your left), but away from the river bank where anglers are fishing. Due care must be taken with regards to all other river users. You do not have any priority. Please be considerate to others.

If you do end up in the water, stay with your kayak unless you can safely reach the river bank to get out. A safety boat will be on the water, largely patrolling the stretch of water closest to the kayak transition. If you go beyond the two kayak checkpoints closest to the kayak transition (K41 and K42) then you should be competent enough i) not to capsize and ii) to sort yourself out if you do.

All kayak checkpoint controls can be reached from your kayak. So, the only place you should get on/off your kayak is at the kayak transition.

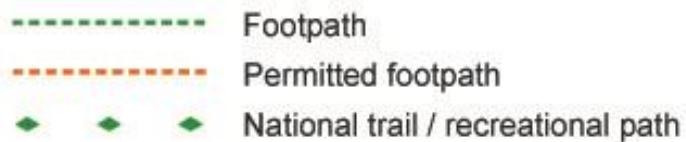
The kayak transition is a public space that we have kindly been permitted to use. Please be respectful of other members of the public and do not block any routes/pathways. Anything you leave at the kayak transition whilst you are on the water is done so at your own risk. We recommend you leave things in the transition area at the event base rather than at the kayak transition.

Course Planners Tip >>

"The river flows from north to south (and east to west depending on which stretch of the river you are on). You may not notice much flow when you get on the water but it does make a difference, especially when you turn around to come back the other way. If you plan to kayak for the full 60 minutes, then we would recommend paddling for no more than 25 minutes downriver, to give yourself 35+ minutes to paddle back upriver and return to the kayak transition."

Trail Running

You must remain on public rights of way and permitted paths at all times during the trail run. In addition to the routes that you are allowed to use for the mountain biking, you may also use the following routes on the Trail Run...



For the majority of the time when you are off-road, you will be running along public footpaths (short green dashed lines) and bridleways (long green dashed lines).

Take care when running on and crossing roads. Use pavements if present and verges where not. If you do have to run along the road itself, you should face oncoming traffic.

Always follow the [Countryside Code](#) – respect other people and the natural environment.

Course Planners Notes >>

"The Trail Run is not what we planned when the venue was booked way back in the Summer of 2019. Covid put paid to our plans for a remote transition point, so we've had to make do with using the paths around the event base. Because of this, the Trail Run is a bit of an out and back (close to the venue). The further you go from the venue the more options and choices there are."

If when you get the map you are wondering why certain paths/areas haven't been used, there is a very good reason for this. It may be they are overgrown and not used much. Others had so many styles (we counted 8 in 200m) that it would be more like an obstacle course than a trail run! And some go through farms/activity centres/other sensitive areas which politely asked us not to use them due to Covid-19."

Course Planners Tips >>

"Due to the position of the trail run checkpoints you will want to do all your trail running together in one go. It does not make sense to visit a few trail run checkpoints before you bike and others after you bike."

The ground is generally hard/firm and is likely to remain so underneath. However the surface on some paths can quickly become sticky when they are wet or damp, and this mud can stick or clump together on the soles of your shoes. You may therefore wish to wear shoes which have tread that isn't just going to clog up and gather the mud."

Leaving litter on the course is unacceptable and won't be tolerated. Please make sure all empty wrappers are securely stowed and carried back to transition / the finish with you.

Transition

Corridors/clear passages will be marked out inside the transition area. Any kit you leave in the transition area (e.g. bike), must not be left in or encroaching any of these corridors as they will get in the way of other participants and could hold them up. Offenders will be penalised as it's not fair on everyone else.

Marshals will keep an eye on the transition area during the race but they can get busy at times. A couple of people have in the past, returned to transition, unable to find something because they left their things loose/on their own and these became muddled up with other participant's belongings. We, therefore, recommend you take the following precautions to safeguard your equipment:

- Attach Mt Bike items (e.g. helmet) to your bike or leave them in a bag/box next to your bike
- Slip a lock around your bike(s) to prevent it from being moved (either by mistake or deliberately)

There is an EMIT control (#219) at the exit of the transition area. You should **punch this control when you transition between the trail running and mountain biking disciplines** to indicate either...

- You have finished your trail running and are starting the mountain biking, or
- You have finished your mountain biking and are starting the trail running

Most participants will therefore only punch this transition control once during their race.

You do NOT need to punch this control if i) you have come directly from the start or ii) you are going directly to the finish or iii) you are going directly to the kayak transition or iv) you have come directly from the kayak transition.

Finish

Make your way back to the finish when your time limit (6 hours for Masters, 5 hours for everyone else) is nearly up. If returning by bike, remember to dismount your bike and either leave it in the transition area or push it across the finish line. Punch the finish control underneath the start arch to stop your race clock

A one-way system will operate through the finish area. So, once you cross the finish line, continue in the same direction until you exit the fenced area (do not turn around and head back the way you came).

Return your electronic scorecard (EMIT card) to the gazebo where you collected your race pack. You MUST do this so we know you have finished and are back safely.

The course closes at 17:30 on Saturday and 16:20 on Sunday, and the furthest checkpoints removed before this. If you aren't going to make it back to the finish by the course closure time, use the **Emergency Number** printed on your map to let us know that you are safe and well and just running late.

In an Emergency

If you have a serious accident and need to summon help, do so by blowing six short blasts on your whistle every minute. If you hear this go immediately to assist (times of teams that assist others can be adjusted accordingly). Phone 999. Tell the ambulance service where you are - install the [what3words app](#) on your smartphone to help with this. Then phone the emergency contact number (on your map) to let us know.

Final Word

Remember to...

- Respect the area and the local community
- Be great ambassadors for adventure racing
- Stay on the permitted routes at all times
- Give way to other members of the public
- Give all animals a wide berth
- Close and properly fasten gates behind you

Each team must carry a first aid kit and a whistle with them.

Ensure that your competitive instincts do not override your common sense.

Have a good race. We hope you enjoy it. Stay safe!

Finishers Memento

No finishers mementoes will be handed out after this event. If you would like one of the usual Questars finishers mementoes – a fridge magnet to proudly display your results and remind you of your achievement each time you open your fridge – you need to do one of the following...

1. Put an envelope with your name on it in the ‘fridge magnet’ box at registration (i.e. when you collect your race pack). If you require more than one fridge magnet (e.g. for other team members) then write the quantity required on the inside flap of the envelope. We will then return this to you, with your finisher’s memento inside, at the next Questars Adventure Race you do this year.
2. Put a stamped addressed envelope with your name and address on it in the ‘fridge magnet’ box at registration (i.e. when you collect your race pack). If you require more than one fridge magnet (e.g. for other team members) then write the quantity required on the inside flap of the envelope. We will then post your finishers mementoes to you just as soon as they have been produced (NB. this may not be until the next Questars Adventure Race in July if the minimum quantity is not reached).

Acknowledgements

Today’s event simply wouldn’t have been possible without the help and support of a large number of people and organisations including...

- Croftorhne & Charlton Village Hall Committee
- Avon Navigation Trust
- Worcestershire County Council
- West Mercia Police
- Terry, Jerry and Allan from EMIT
- Medics: Graham and Adam
- The Quest Team – Richard, Martyn, Dan, Robert, Darcy, Fraser, Emily, David & Matt