

FINAL INFO AND REMINDERS TO 2020 BX ENTRANTS: PART TWO

Please take the time to read this info which is the second of such briefs. It is designed to make life easier for you, for our other entrants and the BX Convening Team. We want you to have the BEST BX possible!

1. ROUTES

- The Blue Cross Ultra Distance Event demands self-sufficiency in every respect. You must come to the start understanding that you will need to have the right vehicle, the right equipment, including nav aids, the right skillset and the confidence to take on the challenge **WITHOUT ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE FROM THE EVENT ORGANISERS**
- We have just completed our Ground-Proving recce of the route and we can confirm that heavy rains earlier this year have caused extensive damage to the road infrastructure south of Chipinge. It will be impossible for 2WD vehicles to manage some sections of the first 200kms of the route.
- The waypoint "Obstacle" (a gully formed by successive rainy seasons starting with Cyclone Eline in 2000), 42kms from the start point (Day 1 for all entrants) will allow participants to cross, but all vehicles will need to follow the detour which circumnavigates the obstacle. **Drivers must use their navigation devices to follow the detour route.**
- The next obstacle labelled "Xtreme", 79.1kms from the start (Day 1 for cyclists and Run/Walk (RW) relay entrants; Day 2 for horses and RW solo participants), is **extremely hazardous** as the narrow track on a bend passes between a 3m deep gully on the one side and a robust crop fence on the other, requiring each vehicle to be directed through. **Please take exceptional care here!**
- The first section along the Tuzuka road between Musikavanhu School and old Barbara's (Day 2 for cyclists and RW relay entrants; Day 3 for horses and RW solo participants) is very steep and stony in places, requiring some 4WD, low range and even diff-lock work. The final approach to the miombo woodland on the crest of the ridge beyond Tuzuka School is seriously challenging with large rocks to be negotiated on steep gradients.
- After the section along the broken tar of the Junction Gate road north of Fiddlers (Day 3 for cyclists and RW relay entrants; Day 5 for horses and RW solo participants), the roads begin to improve and are generally negotiable to 2WD vehicles all the way to Nyangani Mt.
- As of Sunday evening 19 July 20, the updated routes and route descriptions for each discipline will be uploaded to the website. **Please ensure that you download the latest routes onto your navigational device and that you familiarise yourself with the route descriptions on the website.**
- For those without access to GPS units, it is possible to use mobile phones and GPS-enabled tablets and iPads for navigation although they will need frequent re-charging. Instructions for loading these devices with the route data will also be posted by Sunday evening onto the website on the 'Routes Download' page.
- The start of any Blue Cross can be very stressful, especially if you are a first-timer. **Relay runners/walkers can benefit from a "bedding-in" and some coaching on change-over techniques provided that you RV with the BX organising team at the Chilo Lodge turn off near the Jack Quinton Bridge (over the Save River near Rupangwana BC) by no later than 1030 hrs on Monday 3 August 20. Departure from there to the back-tracking start point will be at 1100 hrs sharp and it will be assumed that any no-shows will be happy to handle their own procedures.**
- Day 0 (zero) involves back-tracking to the official start point in the Save R opposite the old Mahenye Camp. En route, all participants will need to set up their tents and camping equipment if staying at the Jamanda Community Camp. Those will be safe while everyone carries on to the start point for a photo shoot, briefing and sundowners.

2. COVID-19

- Permission from the Sports and Recreation Commission (SRC) to hold the Blue Cross this year has taken several agonising weeks to obtain. It is incumbent on all of us to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols agreed with the SRC, a copy of which is attached and which will be posted onto the Downloads page of the website. Also attached and to be uploaded to the website is the SRC letter, just received. That now gives us the muscle to obtain from the ZRP, and distribute to participants, an unequivocal letter of introduction and safe passage to minimize hassles en route.
- ***Please ensure that you read through the protocols carefully and that you make a commitment to abide by the rules.***
- Throughout this year's Event, the main cycling and walking/running groups will:
 - Have temperatures taken each day and be asked to declare any feeling of unwellness.
 - Be required to carry Face Masks with them in case a situation arises where physical distancing is impractical.
 - Be required to remain in their teams and NOT interact closely with other participants. That will extend right through to the final awards (picnic) lunch at Susurumba Bhuddist Retreat which is reached by passing through the Pine Tree Inn in Juliasdale.
 - Observe physical distancing of 2m.
 - Not be permitted to share items outside of their teams.
 - Be expected to practise proper hygiene, particularly when using the shared facilities such as pit latrines and showers at the Bushcamps.
- Although we will forward to you all the relevant permission/introduction letters (SRC,ZRP,SPCA), they will also be uploaded to the Downloads page of the website. ***Please ensure that you download them and print them out to take with you.***

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE FINISH, IF NOT BEFORE, OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY BLUE CROSS ULTRA DISTANCE EVENT

**KEEP SAFE AND HAVE
FUN!!**