GREAT FOREST ROGAINE 2026

PRE-EVENT BULLETIN FOR COMPETITORS

Welcome — we are really looking forward to seeing you at the Great Forest Rogaine (GFR) on Saturday 25 July.

Please read this bulletin thoroughly before the event — it contains essential information every competitor must be aware of. Someone from each team will be required to sign at registration to confirm their team has read it and understands the rules and safety information.

QUICK REFERENCE

Event Centre	Whakarewarewa School, Sala St, Rotorua	
Parking	Froude Street Reserve or surrounding streets – allow 10 min walk to event centre	
Key Times	**6 Hour Event**	**3 Hour Event**
Registration opens	8.00am	10.30am
Briefing	8.45am	11.15am
Maps handed out	9.00am	11.30am
Start Bike	10.00am	12.30pm
Start Foot	10.05am	12.35am
Finish Bike	4.00pm	3.30pm
Finish Foot	4.05pm	3.35pm
Pizza available from	3.45pm	
Prizegiving	ASAP – approx. 4.15-4.30pm	

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1. HOW GFR WORKS

A rogaine is a navigation event: teams must plan and follow their own route to visit checkpoints ("controls") marked on a map, aiming to score as many points as possible and get back to the finish within the time limit. There is no fixed course — you choose which controls to go for, and in what order.

Scoring and planning time

- Controls are worth 100 to 900 points, based on the control number (e.g. control 907 is worth 900 points).
- The winning team is whoever has the most points after penalties. Ties are ranked by the fastest time.
- Being late costs 100 points per minute or part-minute. More than 30 minutes late and you lose all your points.
- You will get about an hour to plan your route before your start time. Smart teams build in some flexibility to add or drop controls near the end.

2. COMPULSORY GEAR

All teams need to be self-reliant during the race. This list is for your safety and reflects the cold and/or wet conditions that can be expected in winter in Rotorua. All competitors and teams **must** carry the following at all times — the organisers will be doing spot checks.

Item	Carried by	Required for
Torch/headlamp with batteries to last a night	Each person	All events
Whistle	Each person	All events
Waterproof jacket	Each person	All events
Warm hat and gloves	Each person	All events
Spare thermal top (wool or polypro)	Each person	All events
Thermal long johns or tights	Each person	6 Hour events only
Race food and drink	Each person	All events
Mobile phone, waterproofed and fully charged	Per team	All events
Compass (at least 1)	Per team	All events
Thermal blanket and first-aid kit	Per team	6 Hour events only
Tools, pump and spare tube	Per team	Bike/Adventure events

3. SAFETY ESSENTIALS

IN AN EMERGENCY

Serious injury or medical event:

- Give first aid.
- Call First Response Unit 02108288199 or 0800 942 521.
- Send someone for help if your team has more than two uninjured people.
- If only two of you, stay with injured person and give six blasts on whistle, repeated every 1-2 minutes until help arrives.

Non-medical assistance:

- Call the GFR Controller on 027 302 4863.
- Advice and support can be provided depending on nature of issue.
- Phone numbers are printed on map. Note coverage is patchy in parts of the forest but can usually be found if move to high ground or new location.

Please let the event organisers know afterwards if any incident occurs.

Before you start let registration know about any health issues.

If you're lost:

There's no single safety bearing that works everywhere on the course, however heading Northwest will lead you towards Rotorua. If possible return to your last known location and/or locate one of the main forest roads which will take you to one of the forest access points or forest map locations.

Trail and road safety

- Whakarewarewa Forest is open to the public and is especially busy on weekends. Please be respectful of other users and be aware that all trails will be shared with the public on GFR.
- Treat every road, including forest roads, as open to traffic — keep left, be prepared to give way, and don't take blind corners at speed.
- Mountain bike shuttles operate throughout the forest, as well as other forest operator vehicles – usual road rules apply around these vehicles.
- Mountain biking is inherently risky — ride within your ability, control your speed, and be aware of other riders.
- Roads marked purple on the map are out of bounds — you may cross them but must not travel on them. Where a cycle or foot path beside one is marked black, that's fine to use.
- Be mindful of other trail users on bike and running tracks — do not block the trail and move to the side if you stop.
- Mountain bike controls are placed well to the side of bike trails – ensure you keep to the side, and if leaving your bikes, place them well off the track or roads.
- Mountain bike trails graded 4 or above are indicated with the grade number next to the track. Choose trails within your ability and/or be prepared to walk technical sections with your bike.

Traps and bait stations
Some parts of the forest have animal control traps and bait stations. Please don't touch or interfere with them — there is a risk of injury.

4. COMPETITION RULES

It is essential that all competitors abide with the rules for GFR. Note that there have been some rule changes from 2025.

There are **specific rules for Foot competitors and Bike competitors**, so please ensure you are familiar with the rules for your class, detailed below.

The rules are there to ensure safety, fairness, and to protect our access to the forest which relies on compliance with the forest managers requirements. Specifically, this means:

- Mountain bike-only trails are for bikers only, no walking or running at all on these.
- Foot-only trails are for walkers and runners only. No bikes at all allowed on these – even if pushed.
- One-way bike trails must be travelled in the right direction.
- Teams stay together, no more than 50 metres apart at any time. All team members must visit each control together.
- No GPS/digital devices with mapping software are allowed to be used for navigation purposes. GPS devices may be used to log the activity but must not be used to assist with navigation.

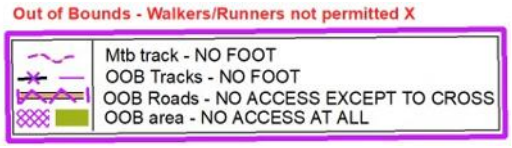
The Foot and Bike/Adventure event maps use different specifications to show what is allowable from non-allowable.

- In general, tracks shown as black on your maps are allowable.
- Tracks shown as purple are not allowable and must not be used.

Foot Rules — 3 Hour and 6 Hour Foot events
The Foot event courses use a mixture of controls on allowable trails, roads, and off track. The following table specifies where Foot competitors can and cannot go:

You can:

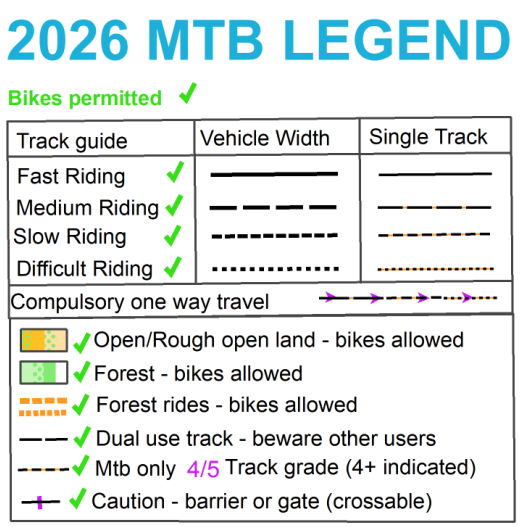
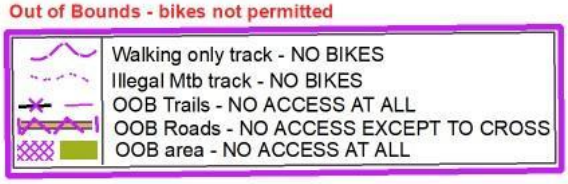
- Use any walking or dual-use trail (marked black).
- Travel anywhere off-track in the forest.
- Carefully cross BIKE-only tracks or out-of-bounds roads (marked purple) directly.
- Use "illegal" mountain bike tracks (marked in green dashes) — but stay alert and be ready to give way to riders instantly

You cannot: • Travel through out-of-bounds areas (purple hatching or olive green). • Use ANY track marked purple — bike-only tracks, tracks under construction, horse trails, spray lines, or out-of-bounds roads.	

Bike & Adventure Rules — 3 Hour Bike and 6 Hour Adventure events
Both classes are predominantly on mountain bike and dual-use tracks and roads. Some controls — especially in the 6 Hour Adventure event — require off-track travel.

Off-track controls are reached on foot. You can leave your bike behind or bring it with you — but under no circumstances can you take your bike onto a foot-only or illegal (purple-marked) track. Anyone found doing so, even walking their bike along one, will be disqualified.

The following table specifies where Bike/Adventure competitors can and cannot go:

You can: • Ride any BIKE trail (marked black with orange dashes). • Use dual-use trails and roads (marked black). • Leave the tracks and travel cross-country on foot (with or without your Bike) anywhere on the map. • Carefully cross out-of-bounds roads (marked purple). • Dismount and walk (with your Bike) through sections that are technically beyond your riding ability. • Backtrack up to 50 metres where there has been an accidental overshoot of a control site – dismount and walk you Bike on the side of the track.	
You cannot: • Travel a one-way track in the wrong direction — the correct direction has a purple arrow. A directional arrow means the whole marked section of track is one-way. • Ride or take your Bike on a walking-only track (marked purple). • Ride or take your Bike on an illegal mountain Bike track, a track under construction, a horse trail, a spray line, or an out-of-bounds road (marked purple).	

• Travel through out-of-bounds areas (purple hatching or olive green).	

Penalties for rule breaches

- Minor, unintended infringements get a points penalty at least equal in value to the controls immediately before and after where the infringement took place.
- Blatant cheating or major infringements may result in disqualification.

Strava / GPS file submission

- Placegetters in each class must submit a GPS or Strava file of their course within 6 hours of finishing. Placegetters who do not submit a file will have their results recorded as unofficial.
- Submitting a GPS/Strava file enables us to check courses and confirm placegetters kept to the rules. Files must be sent to the Event Controller at orienteeringbop@gmail.com.
- We recommend using Strava (get the app at strava.com), which is free. GPS devices and smart phones are all capable of tracking activities on Strava. We will also accept a GPX file if you would rather not use Strava.

Withdrawals and not finishing the race

- Anyone who withdraws during the race MUST inform the organisers, ideally by going to the finish and advising the organiser, or at the very least calling the Controller to let them know they have withdrawn – 027 302 4863 (number also printed on map).
- Failure to do this can trigger a search for the person/s which creates significant cost and hassle for the organisers.
- We do not advise anyone to continue solo in the event of losing a partner, and if they do, they will be unofficial in results.

5. MAP AND NAVIGATION INFORMATION

- Off-track control sites are a step up in navigational difficulty from those on or near tracks. If you're attempting one, you must know how to use a map and compass.
- Map scale is 1:16,000 for Bike events and 1:12,500 for Foot events. Both use a 5-metre contour interval.
- Foot and Bike/Adventure events share the same base map but use different colours for what is allowed — see section 4.
- Each event (3 Hour Foot, 3 Hour Bike, 6 Hour Foot, and 6 Hour Adventure) has different as well as some shared controls. Check the control code matches your course.
- Off-track terrain is generalised as light green, but ranges from open, fast-moving forest to slower going areas. Most off-track controls sit in forest with good to reasonable travel. Dark green or dark green stripe means slow or more difficult travel — though only some of it is mapped, so slow going can be encountered in light green areas too.
- We have put a lot of work into map updates, however inaccuracies may still be found which may require judgement.
- Illegal trails are indicative and may not be accurately mapped. There are many illegal trails which are unmapped, so attention to other terrain features will be important for successful navigation in some areas.

6. ON-THE-DAY INFORMATION

Event centre

- Whakarewarewa School, Sala Street, Rotorua. Toilets are on site.

Parking

- Park at Froude Street Reserve or on surrounding streets, following the parking marshals' instructions.
- Don't park in the Whakarewarewa Village carpark at the end of Tryon Street.
- Helpers and volunteers can park at Whakarewarewa School.
- A marshal-watched bike security area will be outside the event centre while you're in the school hall for registration or the briefing. If you leave a bike on a vehicle, make sure it is securely locked.

Registration

- Registration will be located in the Whakarewarewa School Hall. Please remove your shoes before entering the hall
- Let us know about any changes to your team name, category, or members.
- Pre-entered and paid: confirm your details and collect your SI stick, control descriptions and (optional) map bags. Someone from your team needs to sign to confirm you have read and understood the rules and safety information.
- Registered but not paid: please settle up at registration.
- Entering on the day: an extra $15 per person, first-come first-served, and subject to maps being available.

SPORTident timing

- The event is timed with electronic SPORTident (SI) sticks/dibbers — one per team, issued at registration.
- “Clear” and “Check” your stick at the registration boxes before you start — this wipes old data so it is ready for GFR. Skipping this means your scores will not record, and it cannot be fixed afterwards. Help is available at registration if you are unsure.
- Insert your stick into the SI box at every control you visit — a beep (and on newer sticks, a light) confirms it has recorded your visit.
- Your team is responsible for looking after the stick and handing it in at the finish. A lost stick costs $130 to replace, and your results cannot be recorded without it.

Start information and timetable

- Briefing is 75 minutes before your start, followed by map release. Have your race gear ready so you can use all your planning time.
- Bring permanent markers, highlighters and pens to mark up your map. There will be some help available during planning time if you're new to rogaining.
- A final briefing happens 5 minutes before the start. Sync your watch to the official clock at the event centre — the 6 Hour events finish exactly 6 hours after their start, and the 3 Hour events 3 hours after their start.
- Note this year there is a 5 minute gap between the Bike Events starting and the Foot events starting.

Key Times	6 Hour Event	3 Hour Event

Registration opens	8.00am	10.30am
Briefing	8.45am	11.15am
Maps handed out	9.00am	11.30am
Start Bike	10.00am	12.30pm
Start Foot	10.05am	12.35am
Finish Bike	4.00pm	3.30pm
Finish Foot	4.05pm	3.35pm
Pizza available from	3.45pm	
Prizegiving	ASAP – approx. 4.15-4.30pm	

Maps and control descriptions

- Make sure you collect the right maps for your event — the Foot and the Bike/Adventure events all use different maps. The 3 Hour events fit on a single A3 map. The 6 Hour events fit across two different A3 maps.
- Only some controls are shared between the Foot and Bike/Adventure events, so check control codes carefully.
- Each team gets two waterproof copies of their map(s) and two copies of the control descriptions.

	3 Hr Foot	3 Hr Bike	6 Hr Foot	6 Hr Adventure
Map (2 sets per team)	Foot 1/1 (A3)	Bike 1/1 (A3)	Foot 1/2 (A3) Foot 2/2 (A3)	Bike 1/2 (A3) Bike 2/2 (A3)
Control descriptions (2 per team)	3 Hr Foot (A5)	3 Hr Bike (A5)	6 Hr Foot (A5)	6 Hr Bike (A5)

7. PRIZES, FOOD AND THANK YOUS

Pizza

We allow half a pizza per competitor. Please be considerate of this when you are getting yours. Vegetarian, gluten-free and vegan options are available. Please take your pizza boxes home with you!

Fundraising Bake Sale

OBOP junior club members, Alfie Cochrane and Oscar and Elena Burns, have been selected in the NZ team to attend the Southern Cross school challenge in Australia in October. As a fundraiser there will be homemade baking and cans of drinks for sale at the event registration. Grab something to eat before you race or take it with you as race food. Cash or online payments accepted.

JPC Raffle Tickets

John Paul College students will also be running a raffle to fundraise for attending the Hilary Challenge later in the year.

Silva Compasses Available

These are great reliable compasses that are discounted from RRP so grab a bargain. Available from the Fundraising Base Sale table. Email Rachel, reachrachel@hotmail.com if would like to preorder.

- Silva Field $40 each (RRP currently $50-$55)
- Silva Ranger $65 each (RRP currently $75-$90)

Thank Yous

We would like to acknowledge the following for their support of OBOP and this event: CNI Iwi Holdings, the Department of Conservation, Rotorua Lakes Council, Kaingaroa Tipu and the Rotorua Trails Trust.

Thanks also to the sponsors of our spot prizes Cyclezone, Mountain Bike Rotorua, Secret Spot Hot Tubs, Eastwood Cafe and Redwoods Treewalk.

In addition to the spot prizes, Secret Spot Hot Tubs and MTB Rotorua are also offering GFR competitors the following discounts:

- **Secret Spot Hot Tubs**: Code Rogaine26. Discount 10% between 20th and 31st July. Redeemable at check out. Book in early at https://secretspot.nz/
- **MTB Rotorua**: Code GFR2026. Discount 10% until September 31st when booking online at www.mtbrotorua.co.nz

Community commitment
OBOP is appreciative of all landowners and stakeholders who enable our great events to happen. To this end we are especially appreciative of the work of the First Response Unit and Trails Trust and donate a contribution from every entry to this event to those organisations .

8. CONTACTS

- Event Organising team — Erin Swanson: orienteeringbop@gmail.com, 021 386 977
- Event Planner & Controller — Peter Swanson: 027 302 4863
- Great Forest Rogaine Strava club: strava.com/clubs/958601

Good luck and see you all there!