

Comprehensive COVID-19 Information

(as of May, 2021)

The Bemidji Blue Ox Marathon is excited to get back to holding an in-person Bemidji Blue Ox Marathon Weekend, October 8th & 9th, 2021. Safety is top priority and organizing a COVID-safe marathon weekend is the plan. Runners want to get back to running in-person events, and we are doing what we can to plan on that happening, and happening safely. We are planning the event as if COVID conditions don't improve, or even get worse. Our hope in doing this is if we make changes, it will be to expand what we are able to do, but not have to take away anything we're planning. We feel strongly that creating the safest event possible gives us the best chance of having a successful in-person event. We missed seeing you all in-person last year, and plan and hope to see you all this October!

Accordingly, this year's event will look different. Some of the most noticeable changes include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced field sizes
- Mask-wearing requirements except while racing (Facility, City, and State guidelines will be followed)
- Social distancing requirements across the event weekend
- Reduced touchpoints whenever possible

Event protocols will be evaluated throughout the year to be properly calibrated to the public health situation in the fall.

COVID-Related Event Changes and Considerations

Expo & Packet Pick-up

- Specific arrival times may be assigned
- Expo and packet-pickup facility capacity may be limited
- Reduced vendor presence
- One-way traffic for packet pick-up
- It is asked that use of the indoor facility is limited
- It is asked that, when possible, 1 person picks up multiple packets
- Packets may also contain post-race items, like medal and individually packaged food items
- Runner may be provided with a water bottle

Friday Events

- Specific race start times may change to rolling starts and a starting window may be assigned
- There may be modifications to the Kids, 5K, and 10K routes to limit the amount of runners at one time
- It is asked that use of the indoor facility is limited to packet pick-up and booth visits, but not be used as a gathering spot pre or post-race

Saturday Events

- Specific race start times may change to rolling starts and a starting window may be assigned
- Spectators will be asked to spread out and practice social distancing
- It is asked that use of the indoor facility is limited to just packet pick-up time and not be used as a gathering spot pre or post-race

Start Area

- Gear Check will be eliminated
- Transportation modes used to access Start Area of the Half Marathon may be modified in order for distancing. Buses may run back and forth to and from the Half Marathon Starting Line within the rolling start window. More info will be sent to runners as we get closer to the event
- Pre-race amenities may be reduced (e.g., portable toilets) or eliminated (e.g., Gear Check, etc.) and runners expected to show up self-sufficient and ready to run

Course

- Participants will NOT be required to race with their mask on
- Participants will be encouraged to be self-sufficient and run with their own fluids and nutrition
- The number of on-course locations where fluids are provided may be reduced to 2-3 refill stations (there would be cups at stations for those not carrying a water bottle), and nutrition (gels) may not be distributed on-course

Finish Area

- Finish Area food may be limited to pre-packaged items only and will most likely be put into the picked-up packet pre-race
- Medals may not be given to runners as they finish, and instead may be put into the packets
- Space blankets will be available to those that request them

As the status of the pandemic recovery becomes clearer during the spring and summer, event protocols will be evaluated so as to be properly calibrated to the public health situation at race time. The Bemidji Blue Ox Marathon will provide updates to policies and protocols as they are confirmed.

-This document will be updated as things change between now and October-