Bristol Backyard Ultra

Gravel & Grit Events

Race Handbook

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1. Welcome to the Bristol Backyard Ultra

Welcome to the inaugural Bristol Backyard Ultra — a community-driven, grassroots trail event set in the beautiful Blaise Castle Estate.

We're proud to bring the full Backyard Ultra format to Bristol, and to use it as a starting point for building a strong, inclusive community of runners. Thank you for being part of it from the very beginning — there will only ever be one founding-year Bristol Backyard Ultra, and this is it!

Whether you're here to push your limits, take on your first ultra, or simply be part of something different, you're in the right place. Race weekend is about more than just distance. It's about mental resilience, physical endurance, and — above all — community.

This is a race format unlike any other, and we hope you enjoy every moment of it!

Key timings

07:30 Parking and registration opens
09:30 Registration closes
09:45 Race briefing
10:00 Race start

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2. Race Format – How It Works

The Bristol Backyard Ultra follows the classic **"Last One Standing"** format — at 10:00am, all runners will set off together on a 6.7km loop. That same loop repeats every hour, on the hour.

Each hour works the same way. You leave basecamp on the signal, complete the loop, and return before the next hour begins. If you're back early, that time is yours — to sit, eat, change shoes, lie down, or just stare into the middle distance questioning your life choices. But when the next hour rolls around, you go again. This continues, hour after hour, for as long as you can keep it going.

The Start of Each Loop

You'll hear a warning whistle **3 minutes before the hour**, followed by a final whistle **1 minute before the start**. On the hour, the next loop begins. All runners must be inside the start corral when the whistle goes. If you're not there, you don't start — and if you don't start, your race is over.

Staying in the Race

To remain in the event, you must complete each loop within the 60-minute window and return in time to start the next one. If you arrive back even a few seconds after the hour, your race ends. Likewise, if you choose not to begin the next loop — whether through fatigue, injury, or simply knowing your day is done — you will be recorded as DNF.

When It Ends

The race continues until only one runner remains. To win, that runner must complete one final **solo loop**, proving they can still meet the time requirement alone. All other runners are recorded as DNF, regardless of how many loops they complete. Whether you run 2 laps or 20+, the outcome is the same — in a Backyard Ultra, there is only one finisher.

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3. Key Rules

The Bristol Backyard Ultra is built on a simple format, but it relies on a clear set of rules to keep the event fair and consistent for everyone. By taking part, all runners agree to the following:

- You must be present in the start corral at the beginning of each loop. If you are not there when the next loop starts, you will not be allowed to start and your race will be over.
- Each loop must be completed within the 60-minute time limit. There are no extensions, no grace periods, and no exceptions. Returning even a few seconds late will result in a DNF.
- Runners must follow the marked course at all times. Cutting the route, taking shortcuts, or deviating from the marked course is not permitted.
- Outside assistance is not permitted on the course. You may only receive support within the designated basecamp area.
- Runners are strongly encouraged to bring friends and family to act as a ‘crew’ of helpers at basecamp. If you are running without a crew, our “Crewless Crew” area will be there to support you.
- All runners are expected to treat other participants, volunteers, and members of the public with respect. This event takes place in a shared public space — please be mindful of other users of the estate at all times.
- Littering is strictly prohibited. Any waste should be disposed of responsibly in basecamp, or taken home to dispose of correctly.
- Race organisers reserve the right to remove any runner from the event if their behaviour is deemed unsafe, disrespectful, or in breach of these rules.

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4. Event Schedule

Race weekend is designed to be simple and relaxed, but there are a few key timings to be aware of:

07:30 Parking and registration opens
09:30 Registration closes
09:45 Race briefing
10:00 Race start

We strongly recommend arriving early to allow enough time to park, set up your space, and get organised. A mandatory race briefing will take place shortly before the start. This will cover any final updates and important safety information. From that point onwards, a new loop will begin every hour, on the hour, until only one runner remains.

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5. Registration and Check-In

All runners must check in before the start of the event. This will take place at Basecamp, and will involve collecting your race bib, as well as signing any relevant waivers. Please have your confirmation email on hand, and be prepared to allow plenty of time for this process. We recommend arriving at least 60–90 minutes before the start to ensure you are fully set up and ready. Your race number must be worn and clearly visible at all times during the event.

If you have any questions or issues on arrival, a member of the team will be available to help.

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6. Basecamp & Runner Setup

Basecamp is at the heart of the Bristol Backyard Ultra. It's where you'll return every hour to reset, refuel, and prepare for the next loop. There is ample space available for runners to set up their own area. This can include chairs, small tables, bags, and any equipment you may need throughout the event. Many runners choose to create a simple, efficient setup that allows them to move quickly between loops.

You are strongly encouraged to bring a crew to support you. Crew members must remain within the basecamp area and must not enter the course at any point.

If you are attending without a crew, our Crewless Crew area will be available to provide support, encouragement, and basic assistance throughout the event. Please note, the Crewless Crew area will be roughly 6m x 3m, and will be designed to give those on their own a space to connect with others going solo. Space will be limited, so we strongly advice runners to bring their own set up.

Please be considerate of other runners when setting up your space, and keep walkways and shared areas clear at all times. This is a communal environment, and part of what makes the event special is the atmosphere created by everyone within it.

At Basecamp, we will provide a small amount of food and drink. This is designed to supplement the food and drink that participants drink. We strongly advise runners to practice fuelling ahead of race weekend, and to come prepared with a fuelling and hydration plan.

We now will not be using a generator throughout the weekend. This will mean that there will be hot water, but it will be limited. We will do our best to keep it hot and topped up, please don't rely on hot water for your fuelling plan unless you plan to provide your own.

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7. Mandatory Kit & Self-Sufficiency

Mandatory kit list:

- Sensible footwear
- Food and drink (enough to last you the duration of your run)
- Headtorch (if running through the night)

Additional suggested kit list:

- Chair
- Tent/gazebo (shelter from the weather)
- high-visibility clothing and spare light source (if running through the night).
- Basic first aid kit

The Bristol Backyard Ultra is designed to be accessible, but runners are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and fuelling throughout the event. By taking part, runners acknowledge that this is a trail endurance event and accept responsibility for managing their own pacing, fuelling, and wellbeing throughout.

As the race continues into the hours of darkness, all runners must carry a headtorch for use on the course. Runners must also ensure they have access to adequate food and drink to sustain themselves for the duration of their race. We will provide a small amount of food at basecamp, along with access to hot and cold water. However, this should be considered supplementary — runners should not rely solely on event provision.

Further to the list of mandatory kit, we have outlined additional provisions we strongly suggest you bring with you. These are items that, from our own experience taking part in BYUs, well help you to make sure that you get the most out of the weekend. A chair is hopefully self-explanatory – a tent or gazebo provides shelter from the weather and demarcates your rest zone nicely. High visibility clothing at night will help us keep track of you, as well as to help you see other participants out on the course.

Further guidance on running at night will be provided in a later section of this handbook.

We are thrilled to Partner with Up & Running Bristol, a local, independently run shop that stocks all the kit you could need to run a BYU. Yvette and the team are super knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and have played a large role in supporting the event take shape. If you

need any kit ahead of race day, pop into Up & Running, quote the code **Gravel&Grit15** or show them your race entry, and enjoy a **15% off** RRP.

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8. Course & Navigation

The course is a 6.7km loop within Blaise Castle Estate, designed to showcase a mix of trail, grass, and woodland terrain. Therefore, the route is not a simple out-and-back or single-track loop. It includes a number of turns and directional changes.

To ensure clarity, the course will be fully marked with clear signage at all key junctions, including advance warning markers, directional arrows, and confirmation markers. Marshals will also be positioned on the course during the early stages of the event. A GPX file is available for download and can be used as an additional navigation aid if required.

The route is clearly marked and designed to be straightforward to follow. However, as with all trail running, runners are expected to remain aware of their surroundings at all times.

The route has been fully tested and refined following the recce run. Final course marking will be completed immediately prior to the event and checked by the organising team. Additional marshals will be positioned at key junctions during the early stages of the event and during the first hours of darkness to ensure the route remains clear and easy to follow.

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9. Running at Night

As the event progresses, some runners will continue into the hours of darkness.

To ensure safety:

- A **headtorch is mandatory** for all runners continuing after dusk
- A **backup light source is strongly recommended**
- High visibility clothing is advised
- The course will remain marked, but visibility will be reduced
- Marshals will be present on key sections during the first loops of darkness

Runners should:

- Adjust pace to suit visibility and terrain
- Take extra care on uneven or technical sections
- Remain aware of other participants and members of the public

There will be a small security presence during the night. There role will be to act as a visible deterrent at basecamp and to patrol the car park. They will also be on hand in the unlikely event that the event encounters a security threat.

If at any point you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, speak to a member of the team and we will do everything we can to support you.

10. Parking

Parking is available at Blaise Castle Estate main car park (BS10 7QS, off Kings Weston Road). We'll be using the overflow car park, which has space for around 170 vehicles — enough for all participants and some supporters.

Participants should enter as normal and show their ticket to the marshal, who will direct them to the overflow car park.
If you have spectators staying for a short time (a few hours), please ask them to use the main car park and pay as usual. If you have crew staying for longer periods, we'll try to accommodate them in the overflow car park, but priority will always be given to participants.

If the overflow car park becomes full, all spectators will need to use the main car park and pay standard charges.

There is also limited on-street parking nearby. Where possible, we encourage car sharing or using public transport.

The car park will close to the public overnight. Event organisers will have access to the gate and will allow participants/spectators to leave once they have finished the event.

After Your Race

This is a long-format event, and many runners will finish at unusual times or after extended periods of fatigue.

- Do not drive if you feel tired or unsafe to do so
- Consider bringing a tent or sleeping setup to rest before travelling home
- Take your time — there is no rush to leave

We also encourage runners and supporters to stay and cheer others on where possible — this is a big part of what makes a Backyard Ultra special.