

2021 Kodiak Ham Information (The Basics!)

By John Emig W6GC, Communications Director

It's been a couple of years since we all gathered to provide service to the runners of the Kodiak 100 so I thought it would be a good idea to review what it is we do and how we do it. Sort of a refresher for us "old hands" and a primer for the new folks.

So here goes:

Our mission at the Kodiak 100 Mile Endurance Run is runner safety, plain and simple!

Our job as a team is to keep track of runners as they move from aid station to aid station. That way we are alerted if a runner doesn't show up in a timely fashion. When that happens we can alert race management or possibly even Search and Rescue to locate the runner.

And we have a lot of help in doing that. The official Timers at each aid station keep track of runners as they enter the station, noting the bib numbers and times for each. Also helping us is an amazing program called RunnerTrack. And a team of dedicated folks (fellow hams) at net control to help when needed.

What Hams will be doing

Hams at individual aid stations enter the Bib Numbers and Times given to us by the station's Official Timer into RunnerTrack which is connected to a server Database which keeps track of all runners in the race.

Hams in the field can also query the Database for information on runners – Including where they are located on the course. For those of you who are used to fielding fan and crew member questions about "where is my runner" this can be especially helpful.

The equipment needed

To accomplish this, aid station hams need some equipment. First of all is a laptop running Windows and the power to keep the laptop running: a generator (accompanied by a shovel and fire extinguisher, the Forest Service says) or adequate battery power.

Also needed is some kind of cellular hotspot (most use their smart phone - but don't worry, RunnerTrack is very efficient [designed to run on Packet Radio] and uses very little of your data allotment.)

All of the aid stations except two, Green Valley Lake at 28.7 miles and Hannah Flats at 38.6 miles, have cellular service. Those two aid stations use ham radio to call in bib numbers and times to Net Control via voice. The other 12 aid stations enter times and bib numbers directly into runner track using their own computers running RunnerTrack and internet-connected hot spots.

At those 12 aid stations ham radio (VHF and UHF) is used for tactical information and emergencies. All stations will require more than a handie-talkie and a rubber duckie. Most stations use a mobile unit and antenna (I use a Diamond X-30A on an MFJ stand) running 25-50 watts.

About RunnerTrack

RunnerTrack is an amazing program that downloads and easily installs on a Windows laptop. It uses the computer's Wifi link to the hotspot which connects via the internet to the Database server.

A single keystroke results in a box on the screen in which you enter the runner number and the time. Upon the user hitting Return, the program sends the information to the Database server. It's that simple and quick.

Preparing

There will be training sessions as needed (on line or in person) to bring you up to speed on RunnerTrack, including downloading and hooking up to the server.

More info

For more information on the Kodiak 100 Mile Endurance Run races (yes, there are two, 100 miles and 100 kilometers, but they are run concurrently and we treat them as one race, for the most part) see the website at **kodiak100.com**. (You will note that actually there are four races but the other two happen on a different day [Saturday] and on a different course – for the most part, we will never see those runners.)

For more information on the Ham presence at the Kodiak 100, please contact me, by phone (any time) or e-mail:

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Also, please feel free to contact me regarding assignments and aid stations you might like.