

The Final Running. Really.

# Freedom Park New Year's Ultra

December 31, 2013 – January 1, 2014 • 6, 12, & 24 Hour Runs

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## General Information

(Updated 10/05/2013)

**The Freedom Park New Year's Ultra course is USATF certified (NC-09095-PH)**

Registration for the 2013-2014 Freedom Park New Year's Ultra Run is now open! This year will be our final year. Family, work, life: all of these things can get in the way when you plan races. Our goal for New Year's 2014-2015: something exotic (ie, indoors, warm, intimate), free from the smells of BO and vomit.

### **RETURNING FOR 2013-2014: Full and Half-Marathon Options!**

Both events have been popular add-on's since their inception a few years ago. Both courses are USATF certified and the races begin at 10:00am on New Year's Eve.

Our entry fees are ridiculously low, and you'll have the option of purchasing a commemorative shirt. Participants will be recognized in published results after the race. In the spirit of a casual, bare-bones event, no finishers medals or awards will be presented. What we do offer are an assortment of hot & cold food, lots of enthusiastic course support, the opportunity to share the course with some of the best ultra-runners in the USA and close out the 2013 running year with a bang.

### **DATE & TIME**

All time options begin Tuesday, December 31, 2013. The 24 hour option begins at 8:00am; the 6- and 12-hour options begin at 8:00pm. The full- and half-marathons begin at 10:00am.

## **BRIEF SCHEDULE**

### **Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**

- **6:30am – 7:45am:** Packet pickup for any runner who wishes to do so. Only the 24 hour runners are required to pick up packets and receive brief, last minute instructions at this time. Volunteers accompanying the runners should check in as well.
- **8:00am:** The 24 hour run begins.
- **8:30am – 9:45am:** Timing chip & bib pickup for any marathoners or half-marathoners who did not check in before the 8:00am 24-Hour start.
- **10:00am:** Marathon & Half Marathon begin.
- **6:30pm – 7:45pm:** Packet pickup and brief instructions for 6- and 12-hour runners. Volunteers accompanying the runners should check in as well.
- **8:00pm:** The 6- and 12- hour runs begin.
- **11:55pm:** Start thinking about the countdown to 2012.

### **Wednesday, January 1st**

- **12:00am:** Happy New Years!
- **2:00am:** The 6-hour run is signaled to an end.
- **8:00am:** The 12- and 24-hour runs are signaled to an end.
- **8:30am:** Breakfast for runners and volunteers, hand-crafted on site under reasonably sanitary conditions for your enjoyment. May be supplemented with reasonably nutritious but no doubt delicious take-out foodstuffs.
- **9:00am:** Presentation of awards

## **THE FIELD**

Over the past few years, we have proven that getting a late start on announcing the race, setting up registration, etc. can have a negative impact on turnout. This year we're getting a suitably early start. The field will be capped at 100 ultrarunners and 100 marathon/half marathon participants. If history is our guide, we can count on watching some of the best ultrarunners in the country. You can also expect some of the volunteers (and race directors) to join you for a few loops here and there.

## **WEATHER CONDITIONS (for December 31<sup>st</sup>)**

<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:35am	<b>Sunset:</b> 5:22pm
<b>Avg. High:</b> 47°F	<b>Avg. Low:</b> 32°F
<b>Record High:</b> 68°F (1996)	<b>Record Low:</b> 9°F (1983)

On average, the month of December in Morganton is among the five driest months of the year. Having said that, December here can be unpredictable at best, just as it is virtually anywhere else across the southeast. Come prepared for anything.

Weather for the 2012-2013 running was downright pleasant: from a start of 27°F we saw a high of 50°F and an overnight (New Year's Eve) low of 38°F. There was virtually no wind to speak of and zero precipitation. It has been colder (we've seen an overnight low of 9°F in previous years); it has also been wetter. We dodged the rain bullet last year as the clouds opened up just as the 24/12HR finished up.

### **THE COURSE**

The course at Freedom Park is USATF certified at 1586.721 meters (0.9859 miles) in length. It is smooth asphalt, with very few imperfections to snag the shuffling foot during the later miles.

The course meanders slightly with some left turns and some right turns along the way. The total elevation change from low to high is about **19 feet** (1,037' minimum, 1,056' maximum). The course may be viewed at USA Track & Field web site: <http://www.usatf.org/events/courses/maps/showMap.asp?courseID=NC09095PH> It's not a fancy map, but it served its purpose for USATF certification.

In addition to the closed loop certification, the following distances are also USATF certified, although none will be officially timed during this event:

50 kilometers	NC-09096-PH
50 miles	NC-09097-PH
100 kilometers	NC-09098-PH
100 miles	NC-09099-PH

Certification of the marathon- and half marathon courses are as follows:

42.195 km	NC-11126-PH
21.0975 km	NC-11127-PH

The full- and half marathons start at different locations on the closed loop but share a common finish line. You will be directed to your proper start location a few minutes before the 10AM start.

## **DIRECTIONS TO FREEDOM PARK**

### **From the hotels clustered near I-40 exit 105, Morganton**

- Locate the ramp to I-40 West and follow the freeway for 2.0 miles
- Take Burkemont Rd exit (I-40 exit 103) and turn **right**. Continue on Burkemont Rd for approx. 0.7 miles.
- Turn **left** onto W Fleming Drive (US70/US64 Bypass). Continue 2.2 miles.
- Turn **left** onto N Green Street/NC181. Continue 0.6 miles.
- Turn **left** at the Hardees, onto Independence Blvd. Continue approx. 0.2 miles.
- Turn **left** into the gate at Freedom Park. Follow this road all the way to the end.

### **From Asheville and points West**

- I-40 East to the Burkemont Rd exit (I-40 exit 103) and turn **left**. Cross over I-40 and continue on Burkemont Rd for approx. 0.7 miles.
- Turn **left** onto W Fleming Drive (US70/US64 Bypass). Continue 2.2 miles.
- Turn **left** onto N Green Street/NC181. Continue 0.6 miles.
- Turn **left** at the Hardees, onto Independence Blvd. Continue approx. 0.2 miles.
- Turn **left** into the gate at Freedom Park. Follow this road all the way to the end.

### **From Statesville and points East**

- I-40 West to the Burkemont Rd exit (I-40 exit 103) and turn **right**. Continue on Burkemont Rd for approx. 0.7 miles.
- Turn **left** onto W Fleming Drive (US70/US64 Bypass). Continue 2.2 miles.
- Turn **left** onto N Green Street/NC181. Continue 0.6 miles.
- Turn **left** at the Hardees, onto Independence Blvd. Continue approx. 0.2 miles.
- Turn **left** into the gate at Freedom Park. Follow this road all the way to the end.

## **PACKET PICKUP**

Race packets may be picked up on race day only, starting at 6:30am. Runners are encouraged to check in **at least** 30 minutes before the start of his or her time option, i.e. 7:30am for 24-hour runners, 7:30pm for 6- and 12-hour runners. Race packets will contain your bib, chip, and some miscellaneous stuff. Last year's schwag was pretty well-received, and we hope to do even better this year. We'll rummage a bit to see what we can come up with.

## **HOST HOTEL**

The host hotel we partnered with last year is now under new ownership. It doesn't look like it's changed any (it is a pretty nice place), but we figured we might want to take a look at some of the other properties in town that have recently remodeled. Stay tuned for updates. Hotels in Morganton, NC aren't typically full over the New Year's holiday.

## **PARK ACCESS & TENTS IN THE PARK**

The City of Morganton never ceases to impress with its support of athletic events. Freedom Park ordinarily closes at 10:00pm but the Parks & Recreation Dept has invited our runners to put up tents alongside the course near the start/finish so you can stow gear, change clothes or catch a nap. Access through the main gate will be controlled between 10:00pm and 5:00am, but if you or your families need to leave the park overnight we can accommodate you. If you cannot bring your own tent, we will have a fairly large "Headquarters Tent" that you may use to keep dry clothes and other necessities nearby. Space for napping will be limited in the big tent, but we'll do our best to accommodate you.

## **THE START**

The gun will sound at 8:00am sharp on Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup> to start the 24 hour run. Likewise, a second gun will sound at 10:00am for the marathon & half marathon, and again at 8:00pm for the 6- and 12- hour ultrarunners.

## **LAP COUNTING**

Laps will be tracked for each runner using a ChampionChip timing & scoring system. As each runner crosses the mat to mark a "split," the system will record it. Since the mat will be crossed each time the runner circles the course, each split is thus equal to one lap. A backup counter will be utilized in parallel to all but guarantee an accurate, reliable count. And it sure beats having to manage a marker board!

One word of caution regarding the counting of laps. An entry/exit point will be designated near the start/finish line which will require you to exit the course before completing a lap. When you re-enter the course at the same point, your incomplete lap will be counted as complete. Do not cross the mat, leave the course, and cross the mat again on re-entry.

## **TIMING CHIPS**

In the interest of accuracy and reliability, you will be issued a REUSABLE timing chip for use at this event. Although we would prefer the convenience of distributing disposable timing chips and then not worrying about getting them back, experience has shown that the reusable ChampionChip is the best, most reliable means of collecting lap counts and times. Please be sure you turn in your timing chip before you pack up and head home.

## **THE FINISH(ES)**

The first finish will take place at 2:00am on New Year's Day. A signal will go off indicating that all 6-hour runners must immediately stop and move to the outside of the track, off of the paved surface and wait for an official to record his or her location. No runner should have to wait for more than 5-10 minutes to be logged. The next signal will come at 8:00am, and the drill will be the same. Hang tight and we'll log your position as quickly as possible.

Full- and half-marathon runners are finished, of course, once they've completed the 42.195km or 21.0975km distance.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Although a short, closed loop course demands far less support than, say, a 50K point to point course, we will still be relying on a crew of dedicated volunteers to make things run smoothly and allow the runners to focus on running. Of course, asking someone to spend the New Year's holiday up all night supporting a race is above and beyond the call of duty, so we'd like to offer up our appreciation in advance to everyone who comes out to help.

## **AID STATIONS**

One aid station will be open from 7:30am on the 31<sup>st</sup> through the end of the 24 hour race. It will be stocked with the usual ultra fare and maybe a few unexpected niceties. We welcome your suggestions: what would you like us to have on hand for you?

## **TOILETS**

Freedom Park has public restrooms (heated!) located just a few steps from the course. Porta johns will be added for extra capacity during the event.

## **AWARDS**

Awards will be presented to the top male and female in the 6, 12, and 24 hour divisions. No awards will be presented in the marathon- and half marathon divisions, but if you win, you will gain the satisfaction of seeing your name at the top of the results, supplemented with hearty congratulations from your race directors.

## **DROPPING OUT OF THE RACE**

Before dropping out, consider taking a nap. It is very possible to make a poor and lasting decision when your fatigue and sore feet may be fixable and you can get back out there. When in doubt, sit out for awhile, get something to eat, and get your wheels back underneath you. You may be pleasantly surprised when you head back out.

If, however, you've decided enough is enough, please let a race official know you're calling it a day (night). Bear in mind that once you've dropped you will be asked to surrender your chip and you will not be eligible to re-enter the race. Please be sure you *really* want to drop before committing to do so.

## **HEAD PHONES**

Ever since USATF decided to stop enforcing a headphone ban earlier in 2009, the lively debate over the propriety of wearing them has all but vanished. Got headphones and want to wear them? Please do.

Having said that, if you are one of those who must listen to music while running, please consider leaving one earpiece out so you can remain alert to what is happening around you. Just as a tree really does make a noise if it falls and there is no one there to hear it, another runner is going to get really mad if you clear your nose and you didn't hear them coming up from behind you.

## **PETS**

Freedom Park does allow pets, as long as they're on a leash. There is at least one pet waste station with plastic bags and a receptacle near the entrance to the park. By all means, please bring your pet(s) along if you like; there will be plenty of space for them. Please be careful when crossing the course.

## **SHARING THE COURSE WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Please be aware that the course will not be closed to the general public while we're using it. Having said that, Freedom Park is typically not busy on New Year's Eve, nor is it very busy on New Year's Day, except for the handful of folks who will be out to start on that New Year's Resolution. There will be plenty of signs around to let the public know there is a race in progress and that they should use caution, especially on or near the track.