

Free Spirit 50K - Runner's Manual – 2025 edition



Contents:

1. Registration info
2. Race Day schedule
3. Course
4. Aid station info
5. Bag drop info
6. Crew info
7. General rules
8. Awards
9. Course map and elevation

1. Registration info

Runners must be **18 and older** on race day.

Runners must register online through Runreg (see link on race website). The race has a capacity of 200 runners. The entry fee includes food and drink at the aid stations, food for finishers, and a goodie bag.

There is **no wait list**, **no race-day registration**, and **no bib transfers** are possible.

No refunds, except: refunds might be available for adverse weather cancellation (for example, excessive heat or lightning) subject to the restrictions of our insurance. We do not offer refunds for personal circumstances. We strongly encourage you to spend a few extra bucks and get the Race Protector registration insurance when you register.

There is a time limit of **9 hours** to complete the race and receive an official result.

2. Race Day Schedule Sunday 5/17/25

WHERE TO PARK: Parking is available around the Town Hall. Please do not block the double-garage doors of the fire station!

7 AM: bib pick-up and runner check-in at the Leyden Town Hall.

8:15 AM: Bag drop closes.

8:30 AM: Race starts at the Town Hall, 16 West Leyden Road, Leyden 01337 (note: not the town offices, which are situated on Brattleboro Road)
<https://goo.gl/maps/WLBjrzvqNy5o7zRd7>

Awards given on a rolling basis

5:30 PM Timing closes. Please note the timing cut-off of *9 hours*. If you don't anticipate finishing within that time frame, please do not enter the race.

3. Course

(for a map of the course + aid / crew stations, see section 9 'Maps')

The 50K loop has 4,281 feet of elevation gain, which means there are challenging uphill, and of course, downhills to contend with. The race is mostly on unpaved roads, but has a few short paved sections.

Turn-by-turn description:

(1 -5 miles)

The race starts in Leyden center, by the historic Town Hall on West Leyden Road. It runs immediately out of town north on unpaved Greenfield Road. After 1.25 miles of mostly downhill running, the route takes a left turn onto Alexander Road. Here begins a climb of about 1.2 miles to the intersection of North County Road, where runners will take a right (note: the following section (to the intersection of Packer's Corner) is one of two sections in the course that runners will cover twice). At the Packer's Corner intersection, runners turn right to enjoy an almost 2- mile downhill stretch down Packer Corners Road to Brattleboro Road and towards the five-mile mark.

(5-10 miles)

Turning left from Packers Corner Road onto Brattleboro road, runners will turn left again after 0.25 miles and head uphill on Sweet Pond Road. (note to crew and spectators: Weatherhead Hollow Pond offers parking and is a scenic spot to hang out). This is a continuous climb for 3.5 miles. Up at the top, runners will encounter aid station #1 (Guilford) at mile 7.6 and then will bear right to remain on Sweet Pond Road. After a few shorter uphills and longer downhills, they will reach the ten-mile mark just before they take a left turn onto Stage Road.

(10-15 miles)

Stage Road climbs for 1.6 miles, through woods and past lovely old farms, and then begins a mile-long descent into Green River Village. This is without a doubt one of the most scenic sections of this course, or of any course out there! The route leads runners through the 1870s covered bridge, with the crib dam to the right. (note to crew and spectators: Green River Village is **not** a good place to cheer on your runner, due to very limited parking). Once through the bridge, runners continue straight ahead up Stage Road for a long and steady climb, with the 15-mile mark right before reaching the top, where they will find Halifax aid station #2 and the bag drop.

(15-20 miles)

Near the top of the hill, runners will continue straight onto Amidon Road, and a long descent follows on Amidon and New County Roads. They are wooded dirt roads, with beautiful views of the hills, and one border crossing (VT to MA) and no significant turns. The 20-mile mark appears right before runners finish their descent of New County Road and arrive back into the Green River Valley on Green River Road.

(20 - 25 miles)

At the bottom of New County road, runners will take a right onto paved Green River Road. After a mile of continuing due south along the river, runners will take a left to remain on Green River Road and will find aid station #3 (Colrain). Runners then cross the bridge on West Leyden road and then run up West Leyden Road for 0.2 miles. There, a left turn takes them to River Road, which they will follow for 2.5 miles. The dirt road turns to an unmaintained dirt road and begins to resemble a trail before it comes out on Packer's Corner Road, where runners take a right. After less than a half mile, runners will turn left onto Abijah Prince Road, really just a double-track trail. Here, runners must pay close attention to the marshal and signage so as not to miss the left turn onto Abijah Prince Road, where they pass the 25-mile mark.

(25 miles - finish)

A little past the 25-mile mark, and at the end of the long climb up Abijah Prince Road, runners will come back on Sweet Pond Road (thereby completing the big loop), and turn right down the hill. This section of 0.5 miles is the other section that runners will run twice (once uphill and once downhill). Here is where Aid station #1 (Guilford) doubles as aid station #4. At 26.3 miles, runners will take a right onto Belden Hill Road first up and then back down to the Packer's Corner intersection, where they will continue straight and past the Total Loss Farm up the trail onto North County Road. At 28 miles, they cross the VT-MA border one last time into Massachusetts, and they keep going straight south on North County Road, which will offer a few last challenging short hills, and also beautiful views of distant mountains (Mount Toby and Mount Norwottuck). At the end of North County Road, runners will encounter pavement and then turn left onto West Leyden Road. After just 0.2 miles they will turn left again to remain on West Leyden Road, downhill towards the town center of Leyden and the finish line.

4. Aid Station info

If you have specific dietary needs, you will need to pack your own snack food in a bag. There will be a bag drop and pick-up at the aid station at 15 miles.

Please remember that aid station open and close times are non-negotiable!

Aid station 1 (mile 7.6) located near the intersection of Sweet Pond Road and Abijah Prince Road.

Outbound runners should be through this aid station by 10:45 am.

Aid station 2 (mile 15) + bag drop : located at the top of Stage Road.

This aid station will close at 1:05 pm.

Aid station 3 (mile 20) + crew access : 10 mile bridge in West Leyden (intersection of West Leyden road and Green River Road).

This aid station will close at 2:35 pm.

Aid station 4 (mile 25.6) located near the intersection of Sweet Pond Road and Abijah Prince Road. Yes, you've seen this one before!

The aid station will close for inbound runners at 3:58 pm.

Fuel and hydration available at aid stations:

Runners are encouraged to use their own judgment about fueling, but carrying hydration, gels, etc. is highly encouraged.

The Free Spirit 50K is a **cup-free race**! In an attempt to reduce race waste, we are eliminating all disposable single use cups. Please come prepared. The goodie bag will have one foldable silicone cup.

Each aid station will be well stocked with standard 50K event fuel and hydration: Water and Gatorade, Untapped gels, Pretzels, potato chips, bananas, peanut butter, etc.

There will also be some basic first aid, sunscreen, antiseptic spray, bandaids and tampons available.

5. Bag Drop info

There is one bag drop halfway the race (15 miles). Bags will be returned to the town hall after 1 PM.

- Label bag(s) clearly with your name & bib number.
- All bags must be dropped in the Leyden Town Hall before 8:15 AM on race morning.
- Keep your bag to a reasonable size and weight, and easy to transport for our volunteers.
- What to put in drop bags: fresh shoes, socks, snacks, electrolytes, gels, skin lube, blister kit, extra layers if the forecast is for cold / rainy weather.
- Make sure it is closed and contains no valuable items, or things that can break. Do not put glass containers in your drop bag.
- We will not mail drop bags to you if you have not picked them up after the race.
- Drop Bags and items left at the aid stations will not be returned to the town hall until the aid station closes, so be mindful of that when leaving items at aid stations.

6. Crew Info

- Runners are allowed one crew vehicle per runner
- Crew vehicles may not meet runners at points other than the access point shown below. The crew access station is in a place along the course that is easily accessible by car, and about 3 miles from start/finish (runners take a different route to get there). Many sections of the course are **not drivable**, so avoid getting lost or obstructing narrow roads by only driving and parking at the designated crew access point.
- Are you picking up a runner from the course? Please let us know, so we don't go looking for them!
- Directions to Crew Access Station: warning: mobile signal is not guaranteed in this area, so make sure to print off maps or directions beforehand. **Aid station (mile 20):** 341 W Leyden Road, Colrain MA 01340. <https://goo.gl/maps/KjahjQMH57PrUoK7>

7. General Rules

Wear your bib where we can see it, especially at the finish line. Don't litter. Have fun. If you aren't having fun and need to DNF, help us help you by calling it quits at an aid station.

8. Awards

Awards will be given to the top-3 female and male finishers.

9. Course map and elevation profile

★ The start is in Leyden Center at the junction of Greenfield Road and West Leyden Road

★ Staffed aid station with portable toilet

★ Staffed aid station

2025

