

Freedom Challenge Race Rules (June 2022)

*Latest revisions highlighted in blue

The Freedom Challenge races are non-stop, unsupported mountain bike races along the entire Freedom Trail or sections thereof.

Race Across South Africa (RASA) Pietermaritzburg to Diemersfontein Wine Estate, Wellington

Race to Rhodes (RTR) Pietermaritzburg to Rhodes

Race to Cradock (RTC) Rhodes to Cradock

Race to Willowmore (RTW) Cradock to Willowmore

Race to Paarl (RTP) Willowmore to Paarl

The rules set out below apply at all times to all riders in all events, unless otherwise stated.

The Race Goal

The object of the Freedom Challenge events is for participants to complete the prescribed route in the shortest possible time under their own power and without the aid of others.

THE 'GOLDEN RULES'

The Golden Rules are a distillation of the General Race Rules which are set out in more detail below.

Golden Rule 1 - No motorized transport

After the commencement of the race, challengers may not be transported at any time by motorized means whether forward, backward or off the trail with a vehicle or they will be disqualified.

Golden Rule 2 - Close Gates

Always close any gate that you open yourself, even if there are riders immediately behind you. Failure to close gates properly will lead to severe time penalties or disqualification.

Golden Rule 3 - No outside support

Challengers may not receive personal support or outside assistance at any stage during the race. This includes but is not limited to visits by family, friends or supporters anywhere along the route or receiving any sort of gear, equipment, food or spares.

Golden Rule 4 - No GPS for Navigation

The Freedom Challenge is a traditional navigation style event. ie Map and compass. This is a massive and important part of the challenge. GPS devices capable of following a track or assisting navigation more than speed and distance are strictly prohibited. Competitors may use simple GPS odometers or running watches that show speed and distance only. Riders must have their distance measuring devices visible at race start. Any rider caught with a navigation enabled GPS device during the event will be disqualified. All competitors must carry a cell phone and smart phones are allowed and encouraged (for photo sharing and social media reach purposes) but challengers must deactivate location services (GPS functionality) on their smartphone for duration of event.

Golden Rule 5 - Impeccable behaviour

All Challengers are expected to act in a sportsmanlike manner and conduct themselves in a civil manner throughout the race. Abusive behaviour toward fellow riders, support station hosts or any

other people encountered along the route will not be tolerated and will result in time penalties. Any complaints received from support station hosts will be investigated and could result in disqualification.

Golden Rule 6 - No Fires

Challengers accept that during any Freedom Challenge event, the making of open fires is prohibited anywhere along the route – doing so will likely result in disqualification and Challengers will be held liable for any damages that may occur from the spread of such a fire.

FREEDOM CHALLENGE GENERAL RULES

The following general rules set out in detail the requirements necessary for participating in the Freedom Challenge events.

1. Unless prior arrangement is made with the Race Director, all Challengers must attend the pre-race briefing to be held on the evening prior to commencement of their start batch.
2. All Freedom Challenge Races start at 6am on the morning your batch departs.
3. The person to reach the finish line in the least amount of time is the winner. All time penalties must be served before the finish line. The racing batch generally starts on the last day but the overall race winner does not have to start in the racing batch.
4. Cut-offs
 - RASA Challengers must complete the race distance in 26 days or less
 - RTR riders are to reach Rhodes in 7 days or less.
 - RTC riders are to reach Cradock in 6 days or less
 - RTW riders are to reach Willowmore in 6 days or less
 - RTP riders are to reach Diemersfontein in 6 days or less
5. The following interim cut-offs will be strictly applied:
 - RASA Challengers must reach Rhodes in 8 days or less
 - RASA Challengers must reach Hofmeyr in 13 days or lessChallengers who fail to make the relevant cut-off are required to leave the trail immediately.
6. The Race Organizer will provide transportation for scratched riders to the nearest public transport hub, including his or her equipment, bicycle and accompanying gear. Due to the remoteness of the trail, Challengers should not expect immediate transportation, however it will be arranged at the earliest convenience for race management and support station hosts.
7. Support stations will offer meals, bathing facilities and a bed, with bedding. Some may offer a laundry service or laundry facilities. Challengers will pay the prescribed laundry fee to the host in advance if laundry is to be done. (Laundry fee is R80 per rider unless otherwise stated). Challengers should note that although some accommodation at support stations is very comfortable, other accommodation may be very rudimentary being located in areas without running water or electricity.
8. Challengers shall not make demands for extra services.

9. Sleeping facilities at support stations and interim stops will be allocated to Challengers strictly on a first-come-first-serve basis.
10. A Challenger may not make demands for food and/or shelter along the route.
11. In addition to using the official race accommodation, Challengers may use commercially available accommodation on the route. You must notify Race Office of your intention to do so and you must pay their prescribed amount before leaving. Race office will not be involved in any arrangements for unofficial accommodation.
12. Challengers are required to sign in and out of each support station and to inform the Race Office of their intended riding plans on a daily basis by SMS / Whatsapp.
13. Baviaanskloof entrance gate is ONLY open at 06h00 and 13h00 – all cyclists must stick together and with the mandatory vehicle escort from gate to gate. If rider misses the escort they must wait for next gate opening time.
14. Stettynskloof “gate” – only opens 9 days after racing batch departs PMB. Riders arriving before the gate opens will be required to wait at the last support station until it opens, unless they are given permission by the race director to proceed.
15. Challenger may send one re-supply tub to each support station as detailed in the official Race Information Pack. Contents must be contained in a sealed container which shall not exceed 2 litres in volume. Each container must be clearly marked (at both ends and on top) with the Challenger’s name and the name of the support station to which it must be delivered. Race Organizer accepts no responsibility for any loss of or damage to them.
16. If a challenger scratches from the race, he/she may not retrieve any remaining resupply tubs from the route. Riders still in the race are permitted to open tubs of officially withdrawn riders.
17. The Freedom Challenge events will be held as scheduled regardless of weather conditions. Challengers should anticipate bad weather. Snow and early morning temperatures of –10 degrees Celsius have been experienced during most previous winter races. Should the Race Director deem it necessary he may prevent a Challenger from progressing past any point on the route; or direct a Challenger to take an alternative route.
18. Should the Race Director instruct a Challenger to take an alternative route, the Race Director may add such additional time penalty as he deems appropriate to ensure fairness between Challengers.
19. No e-bikes are permitted.
20. Unless otherwise authorized by the Race Director, only one bicycle may be used by a Challenger during the Freedom Challenge.
21. Each challenger shall carry an emergency tracking device. It is the responsibility of the Challenger to ensure that the device is switched on at all times when they are moving. Failure to comply will result in a warning, a time penalty or disqualification.

22. Mandatory Equipment - All riders will at all times carry at least the following items:
- Helmet, to be worn at all times while riding
 - Official number board as supplied by the Race Organizer, attached to the front of the bike and visible at all times
 - Light, front, white
 - Light, rear, red
 - Waterproof layer, top
 - Emergency bivvy or Space blanket or similar approved by race director
 - Phone
 - Tracker as supplied by the Race Organizer
 - First Aid Kit
- The following items are compulsory for winter events only (RASA | RTR)
- Base layer head (buff allowed)
 - Base layer top
 - Base layer legs
- Random kit inspections may take place at any point during the event or at the finish. Missing items will result in a warning, a time penalty or disqualification.
23. If a Challenger loses an item of mandatory gear then it must be replaced via consent and arrangement with race office and a time penalty will be applied.
24. Time Penalties
- Challengers are required to serve time penalties during consecutive daylight hours (6am-6pm)
 - Tracker must record no movement for duration of penalty (Rider to ensure tracker is outside and skyward facing)
 - If a challenger's penalty period is not completed before 6pm then they may not move until it continues at 6am the following day
 - All penalties must be served in full within 24 hours of penalty being served (and received)
 - Challenger must inform race office (via whatsapp) before commencing penalty period
 - If a rider chooses to serve penalty in a support station or interim stop then a non-negotiable one hour is added to penalty to compensate ordinary stoppage time
25. All spares must be acquired via race office or with prior consent of race office.
26. Receiving any spares carries a minimum 3 hour time penalty. Complete new bike carries minimum 6 hour penalty.
27. Extra-ordinary medications sent into the trail do not carry a penalty but medications on the recommended list that riders are expected to carry may result in time penalty if sent into the trail.
28. A Challenger is expected to stay on the intended route as per the latest maps issued in the race information pack. If a challenger intentionally leaves the route, she/he must re-enter where she/he left the route in order to continue.
29. If a Challenger unintentionally leaves the route due to navigational error, he/she must return to route at the point where they went wrong to ensure no time penalty will be enforced or they may return to route via most direct route (without unlawful trespassing) BUT if race organiser determines that they have gained unfair advantage from deviation

then they will be given a time penalty (which will generally be at least twice the time saved). This rule and imposing of penalties will be at the discretion of the race organiser.

30. The Race Director shall have the authority to withdraw a Challenger whose conduct, in the Race Director's sole and exclusive judgement shows a disregard for the intended race route, or when continuous deviation from the race route is made without reason.
31. Challengers may not receive personal support or personally arranged outside assistance at any stage during the race. Support will only be as officially provided for by the Race Organizer, fellow riders, support station or from a "good samaritan" with whom you have no prior connection.
32. After the commencement of the race, Challengers may not be transported at any time by motorized means. Any rider taking a lift forward, backward or off the trail with a vehicle will be automatically disqualified. Any rider automatically disqualified for taking a lift with a vehicle during the race may launch an appeal. Appeals relating to automatic disqualification as a result of taking a lift must be made to the Race Director at the next support station and will be dealt with within twenty-four hours of filing the appeal.
33. After the commencement of the race, personal gear, equipment and supplies of a Challenger may not be transported along the trail by mechanized means without the consent of the Race Organizer. All equipment left behind at support stations will be forfeited by Challengers. If a Challenger does not want to forfeit the equipment or personal gear, they must carry it with them to the finish.
34. RASA rider have one opportunity to drop unwanted kit at Allendale Support Station and it will be transported to the finish by race organisers. Any kit dropped at any other support station or anywhere along the trail is not recoverable.
35. Challengers must use civil conduct and act in a sportsmanlike manner throughout the race. Abusive behaviour toward fellow riders, support station hosts or any other people encountered along the route will not be tolerated and could result in disqualification.
36. A Challenger may not tamper with another Challenger, their food or gear or interfere in any manner with the progress of another Challenger.
37. Do not hand out sweets, goodies or supplements to children along the trail.
38. Do not hand out goods, clothing or donations to people along the trail – if you want to do something for the people direct it through the Race Organizer.
39. All challengers are expected to behave in an exemplary manner at support stations. Challengers to be courteous and willing to greet people and to talk to them. Challengers must respect the support station facilities as if it were their own.
40. A Challenger will not be penalized for aiding another Challenger in an emergency.
41. Drafting is permitted during the Freedom Challenge.
42. No litter of any kind may be left on the trail, in support stations, or in checkpoints. In support stations rubbish must be placed in a bin.

43. Toilet paper must where-ever possible either be buried or removed.
44. Use of illegal drugs as defined by law or excessive use of alcohol by Challengers during the race is prohibited. The use of any banned performance enhancing substances is prohibited.
45. The Race Organiser has the right to conduct random drug testing. A Challenger is subject to collection of urine samples at any point from the start until one (1) hour after the finish. For more information, see the latest WADA Banned substances list.
46. Rule infractions may result in the issuing of warnings, time penalties, disqualification and/or censure.
47. Warnings may be issued by any race official. Written warnings may be issued by digital text (email/WhatsApp/SMS) for first time or minor violations.
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49. Disqualified Challengers must leave the route immediately.
50. The Organisers, following completion of the race, may censure a Challenger. A censure may include a warning, either public or private and may eliminate the Challenger from future races.
51. Challengers may appeal race official decisions within 10 days of race finishing. Appeals are heard at an informal hearing before an appeals board appointed by the Race Director which will be held within forty-five (45) days of filing the appeal.
52. Review by the appeals board is the exclusive, final and binding.
53. Indemnity
 - Challengers understand the severity of the Freedom Challenge and the necessity for survival skills, endurance running and mountain biking.
 - Challengers therefore do not hold the Freedom Challenge, the Race Organizer, Race Director, or any of its agents responsible for any damage or injury sustained to the Challenger or his or her property during the event.
 - It is accepted that Challengers have read the Rules and conditions and agree to abide by them.
54. The intent of these rules is to ensure fair competition during the Freedom Challenge events. Officials appointed by the Race Director are responsible for interpreting the rules in keeping with that intent.
55. A Challenger may protest any action of a Challenger that they feel is contrary to the intent of these rules. To be recognized as a legitimate protest, any infraction observed by a Challenger must be presented in writing at the next support station and in no case more than twenty-four (24) hours after a Challenger finishes the race.