



RACE THE SUN
SOUTH DOWNS



EVENT GUIDE 2026



PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY
GARMIN®

WELCOME

WELCOME TO TEAM ACTION!

Thank you so much for supporting Action Medical Research by taking part in Race the Sun. This guide has all the information you need to prepare for your event, plus we'll be here to support you all the way.

Your support really will make a difference to little lives. We are the leading UK-wide charity dedicated to funding vital research to help sick and disabled babies and children. We have been funding medical breakthroughs since we began more than 70 years ago and have helped to beat polio, fight meningitis, prevent stillbirths and develop ultrasound scanning in pregnancy.

But although there's been lots of progress in medicine there are still hundreds of thousands of sick and disabled babies and children in the UK who need our help. Like Freya, born extremely prematurely weighing just 2lb 4oz and Emmy, who has Vici syndrome, a very rare and life-limiting condition with no cure or effective treatment.

TAKING SMALL STEPS, MAKING BIG BREAKTHROUGHS

We're on a mission to save and change the lives of children like these through medical research, developing treatments, vaccinations and cures.



By taking part in events like Race the Sun, your fundraising really will make a difference to little lives, you can set up your JustGiving page at:

www.justgiving.com/campaign/racethesunsouthdowns2026

Children depend on Action Medical Research. We depend on you. Thank you for helping us fund more research taking small steps, making big breakthroughs.

We are looking forward to meeting you and your team on the big day!

Action Events Team

A WORD FROM OUR DELIVERY PARTNER:

“Your Race the Sun challenge is fast approaching! We're thrilled to be the event's delivery partner and want to thank you for taking part in what promises to be an incredible day.

Our role is to ensure the event runs safely and smoothly. Please read this document carefully to ensure you're fully prepared before arriving at Event Registration.”

Chris Forecast, Event Director



EVENT OVERVIEW

EVENT DATE:

Saturday 25th April 2026

EVENT REGISTRATION / EQUIPMENT DROP:

Friday 24th April 2026 from 18:00 - 21:00

OVERVIEW

Race the Sun is an 'Adventure Triathlon' where participants complete three activity phases as either a team of two or four. Participants will complete the cycle, hike and paddle phases between dawn and dusk raising vital funds for Action Medical Research.

The event takes place in the picturesque coastal town of Seaford, nestled beneath the striking chalk cliffs of Seaford Head. The cycle and hike routes pass some of the South Downs most iconic viewpoints, including the Seven Sisters and the Litlington White Horse. The paddle phase winds through the tranquil waters of the Cuckmere Meanders Nature Reserve, providing a serene and scenic experience.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Supplementary information to this Event Guide will be sent out via email from Action Medical Research between now and the event. This will contain videos detailing important safety information about the event as well as guidance on kit and training. Please ensure these emails don't go to junk and that you don't 'unsubscribe' from Action Medical Research's emails.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Please make sure your details are up to date. You can check them via the event registration platform and if you need to make any amends please email events@action.org.uk

Team captains, please make sure all of your team mates have completed the online registration form as soon as possible.

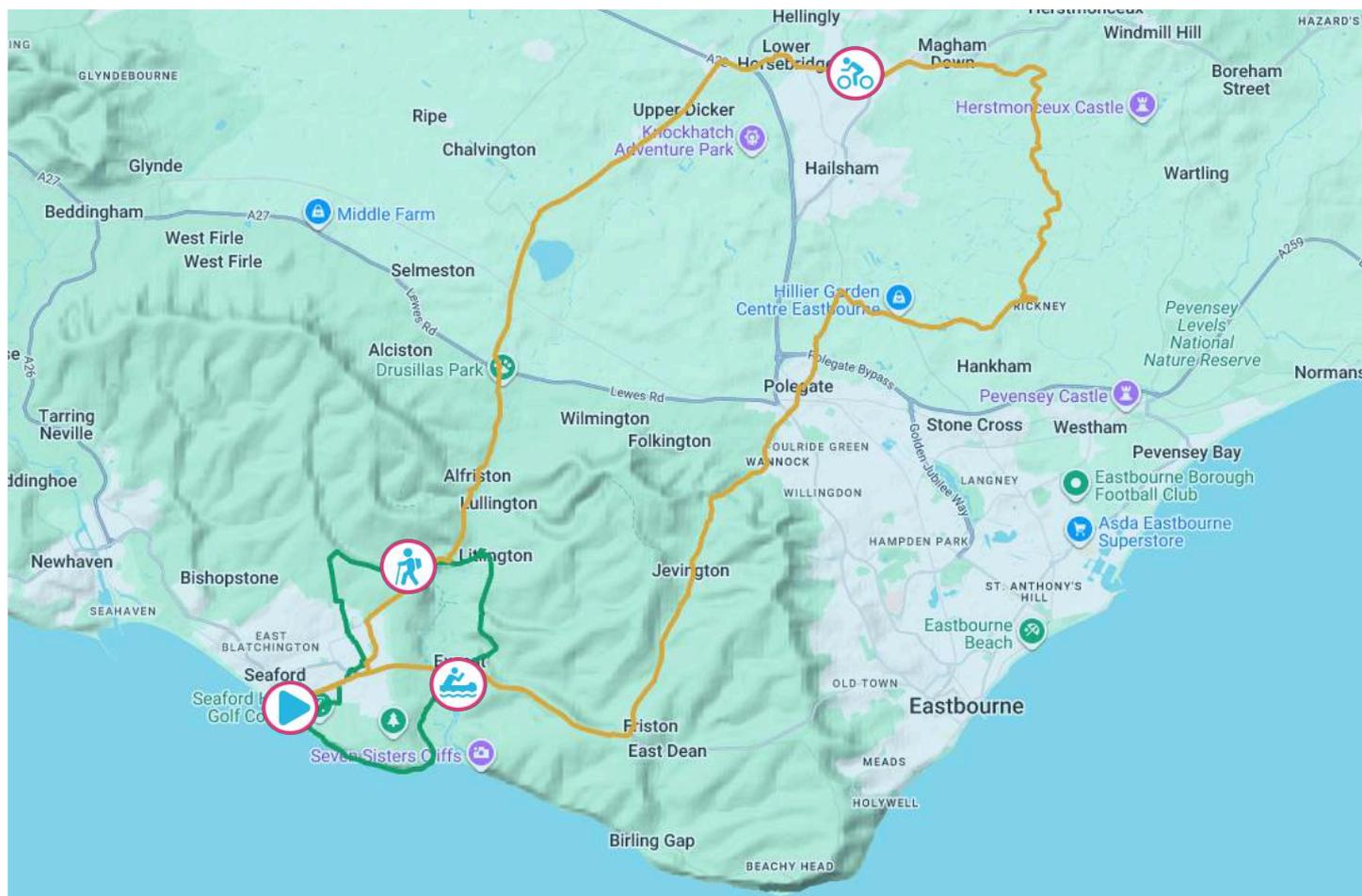


EVENT OVERVIEW

 53KM/33MILES

 16KM/10MILES

 3KM/2MILES



CYCLE PHASE

The road route starts with a climb out of Seaford over Cradle Hill, then crosses the Cuckmere River at Exceat Bridge before the day's biggest ascent up to Friston. A long descent brings you to the Pevensey Levels and on towards Hailsham, the halfway point. The return follows quiet lanes along the Cuckmere, through charming East Sussex villages, back to Seaford—offering a perfect mix of challenge, scenery, and momentum.

HIKE PHASE

The hike begins with a climb up Seaford Head and its iconic chalk cliffs, offering your first views of the Seven Sisters. Descend to the Cuckmere River and follow it inland to Exceat Bridge for the paddle phase. After paddling, continue through Friston Forest, recross the Cuckmere, and ascend Cradle Hill with views of the Friston Chalk Horse. A final descent brings you back to Seaford to complete the coastal loop.

PADDLE PHASE

The paddle takes place on the Cuckmere Meanders, a calm stretch of water separated from the main river and unaffected by tides. You'll access this phase midway through the hike, with your change of clothes delivered by event staff for a seamless transition.



CLICK OR SCAN FOR



Google Maps

EVENT DETAILS

REGISTRATION

Registration is held at the Event Hub.

[<<Martello Fields>>](#) Esplanade, Seaford, BN25 1JH. ///

[typical.dynasties.nods](#)

At registration, teams will receive their event packs, including event numbers, safety pins, cable ties, a parking permit, and a waterproof transition bag for your paddle clothes.

Bikes can be safety-checked by event mechanics and left at the Event Hub overnight. Teams may also leave their clothing and equipment in their transition area.

The event organisers accept no responsibility for items left in transition.

PARKING

Each team will receive a parking permit for one vehicle, allowing free parking at the designated Event Hub car park, where vehicles may be left overnight. Additional vehicles must use pay-and-display car parks in Seaford.

START

Teams will set off in waves every 20 minutes from 06:20. Departure waves will alternate between starting with the cycle or hike phase, with the paddle phase taking place midway through the hike. This staggered start helps reduce crowding and waiting times.

Teams will receive their start time and phase order closer to the event via email. At the start line, each team will be issued a tracker that shares their live location on an online map so friends and family can follow their progress.

TRANSITION

The Event Hub transition zone is outdoors, so we recommend storing clothing in plastic boxes or dry bags.

A second transition is located 5 km into the hike route for the paddle phase. During registration, teams can pack a change of clothes and footwear into a transition bag, which will be transported there. If a teammate can't attend registration, please load their kit for them.

Once teams have completed the paddle phase and changed back into their hiking gear, please load transition bags onto the event vehicles so they can be returned to the Event Hub. Bags not loaded by teams may be delayed. We aim to have bags back at the hub before you arrive, but this cannot be guaranteed.

All items left in transitions are at the owner's risk.

CATERING

A light breakfast of a cereal bar and fruit will be available at the Event Hub. Water refills and snacks are available throughout the day when transitioning, and a feed station is located midway through the cycle route.

A substantial packed lunch can be collected from the Event Hub, which most teams take on the hike phase. A post-event meal will also be provided at the Event Hub.

All dietary requirements will be catered for. If you've specified a food allergy or intolerance, a separate sandwich will be prepared, please ensure this is noted on your registration form.

FINISH

Once all three activity phases have been completed teams will receive a medal and a complimentary alcoholic or soft drink with the post event meal to celebrate their success.



CYCLE PHASE



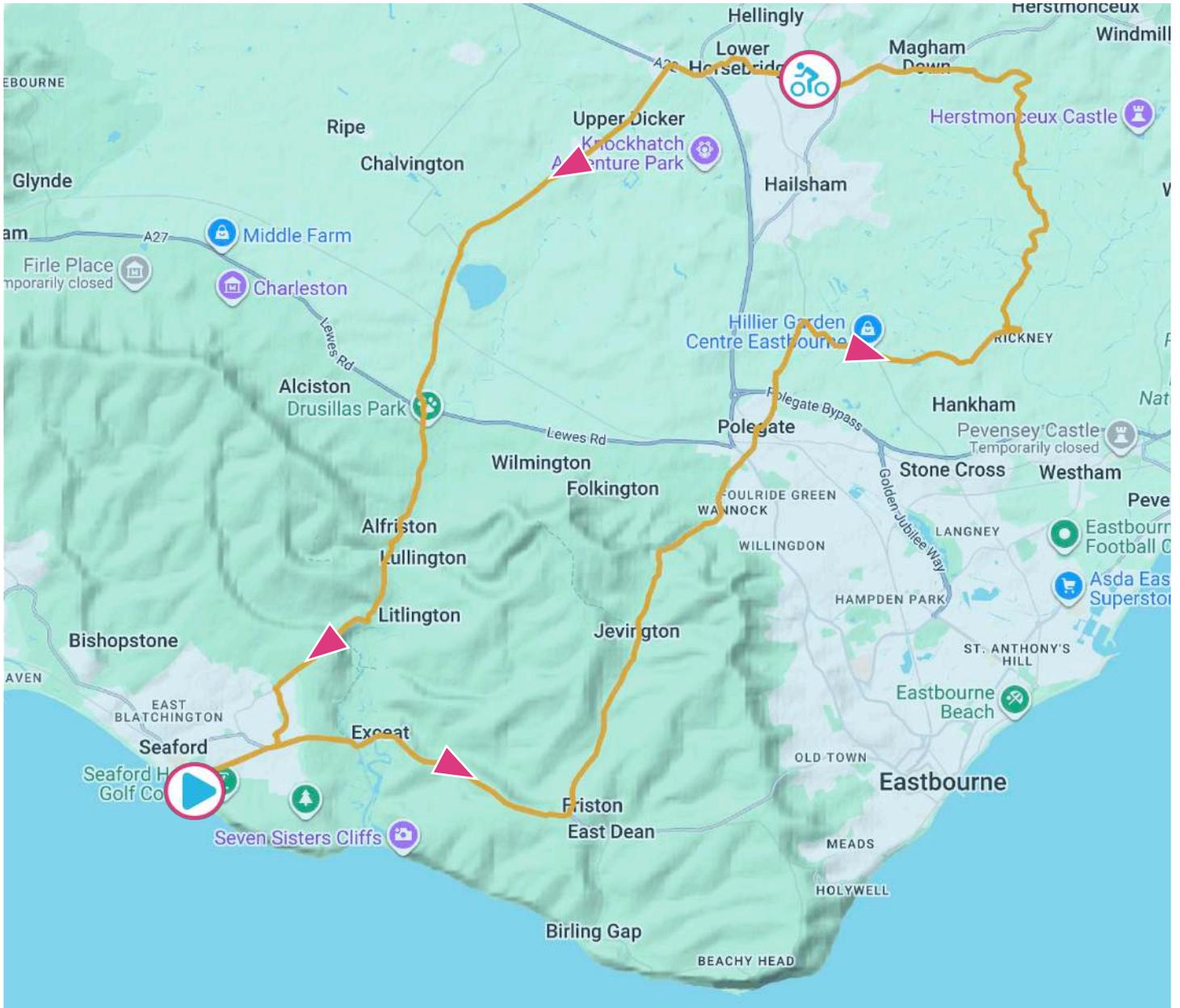
53KM/33MILES



507M/1,663FT



2:00- 4:30 HRS



CLICK FOR
STRAVA



HIKE PHASE



16KM/10MILES



340M/1,115FT



3:00 - 5:00 HRS



CLICK FOR
STRAVA



PADDLE PHASE



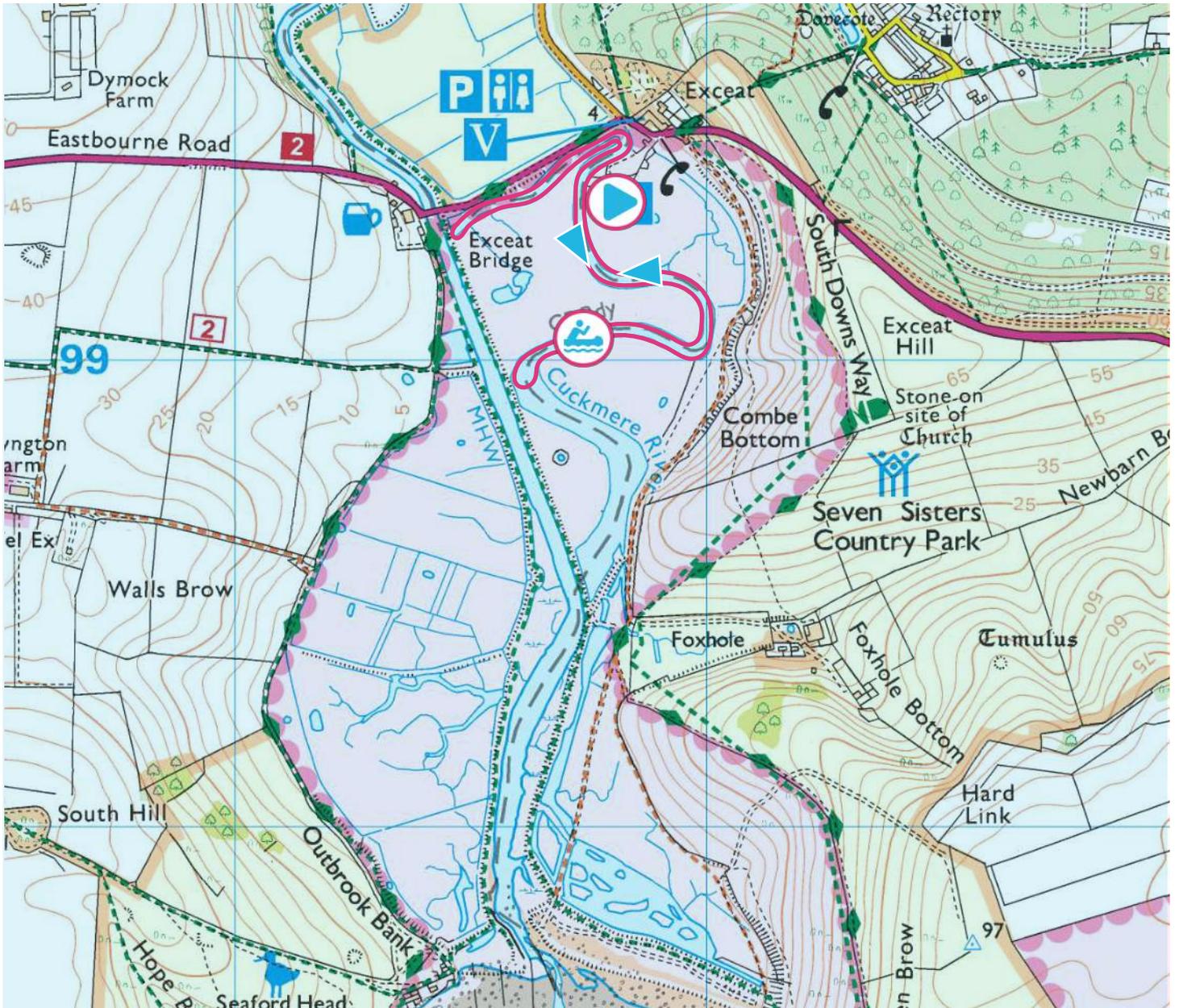
3KM/2MILES



0M/0FT



0:45- 1:00 HRS



NAVIGATION

DIRECTIONAL ARROWS

Race the Sun is fully route-marked. Each of the three phases uses colour-coded correx signs, showing which phase you're on. Signs will be placed at every junction, with additional markers along long straight sections for reassurance.



EVENT MARSHALS

In addition to the route marking, event marshals will be situated on all three activity phases, they are first aid trained and will assist in an emergency. Race the Sun is not a closed road event and it is your responsibility to adhere to road signage and keep yourself safe.

GPX FILES

Both the cycle and hike are fully route-marked, but you can still load the route onto your watch, phone, or GPS device. Use the instructions below to access the route files.

UPLOADING THE FILE TO YOUR DEVICE

Scan or tap the QR code to download the GPX file. It will save to your phone's Files app or your computer's Downloads folder. Then share or upload the file to the app you use to sync your device.

CONVERTING THE GPX FILE

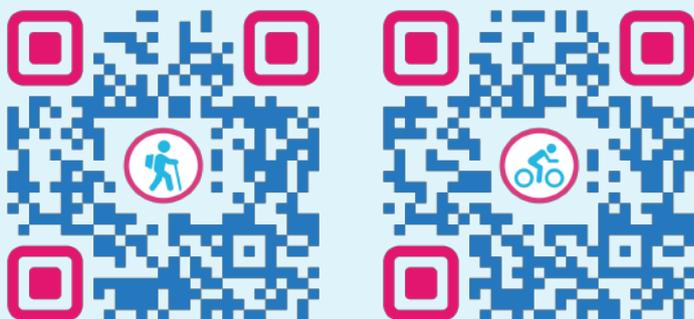
To convert the GPX file into other formats such as TCX visit the following website: www.alltrails.com/en-gb/converter

VIEWING THE ROUTE

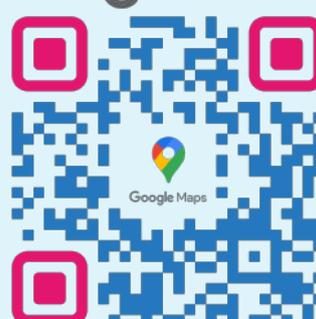
To view the routes in more detail scan or tap the QR codes:



STRAVA



Google Maps



REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION

Participant registration takes place at the Event Hub between 18:00 - 21:00 on Friday 24th April.

REGISTRATION PACKS

At registration, each team receives a event pack with your race numbers for your bike and your hike bag, along with safety pins and cable ties to attach them.

CONTACTING EVENT CONTROL

On the front of both the cycle number and hike number is a QR code. Scanning the QR code brings up a vCard which contains the contact details for event control. Whilst this can be done during the event, we recommend doing this at registration and saving the details to your phone.



TRANSITION BAG

Each team gets a 40L roll-top dry bag labelled with your team number, this is your transition bag.

At registration, pack your paddle phase change of clothes into it (this is the only chance to send kit to transition, so pack for any teammate who can't attend). The bag will be taken to the paddle transition, mid way through the hike phase.

After the paddle phase, put any wet kit back in the bag and load it onto the event vehicle. If you don't, its return to the hub will be delayed. We aim to have it back before your team, but can't guarantee it.

TRACKING AND TIMING

TRACKERS

At the start line each team will be given a tracking device. This will enable the event management team to monitor the teams progress. It will also be used to locate a team should they run into any difficulty whilst on route, so remember to stay together as a team!

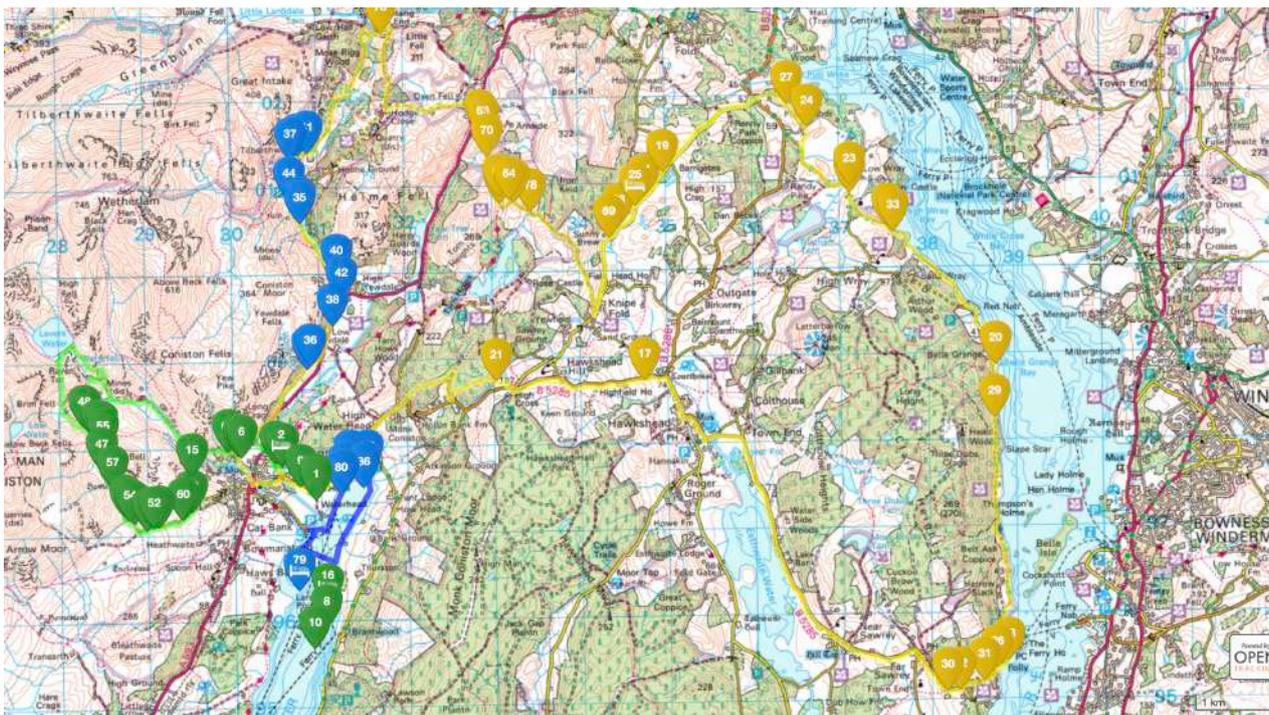
Please ensure you hand your tracker in at the finish line or you will have to return the tracker at your own expense.



TRACKING LINK

The event will be live streamed at both the Event Hub and online. Friends and family can track your team's progress by clicking the link below. It has been proven that embedding this link on your JustGiving page can increase donations.

[<<www.live.opentracking.co.uk/rtssouthdowns26/>>](http://www.live.opentracking.co.uk/rtssouthdowns26/)



TIMING

The event will be timed using a 'dibbing' system. Each team will be given a 'dibber' at the start line which they will use to signal the start and end of each of the different activity phases. This will give each team a total time for the event as well as a time for each of the activity phases. The teams 'total time' includes all the activity phases plus the time for transitions.



KIT LIST

EQUIPMENT

It's really important to ensure you are ready for the conditions the South Downs can throw at you. This kit list provides you with the essential equipment and clothing you'll need in order to stay warm and safe throughout the event. The following kit list is not a comprehensive list of all you are required to wear but a list of the essential items or items to consider.

Each team has a designated area in the transition zone with a bike rack and space to leave kit. The area is outside and open to the weather, we recommend teams store their clothing in a storage box or dry bag. Whilst the transition area will be monitored throughout the day we advise bringing a bike lock.

All items left in transition are at the owners risk, the event staff accept no responsibility.

NOTE: Items in pink boxes are essential and will be checked by an event marshal before starting an activity phase in adverse weather conditions. This is to ensure all participants have appropriate or adequate clothing/equipment for the prevailing conditions. Failure to show these items may mean you are not allowed to start the event or phase.

HIKE EQUIPMENT

Item Needed	Got it	Packed it
Rucksack 20+ litres. Must have 2 x padded shoulder straps.		
Waterproof rucksack liner or heavy duty rubble bag.		
Head torch with batteries		
Sunglasses		
Walking Poles		
Water bottle or bladder (Min. 2 litres).		
Hiking boots/shoes with ankle support and good tread (you are not permitted to wear 'street trainers' or fashion boots for the hike)		

HIKE CLOTHING

Item Needed	Got it	Packed it
Fleece jacket or soft shell		
Gloves waterproof/windproof		
Lightweight fleece top		
Sun hat		
Trekking Trousers (you will not be allowed to wear jeans)		
Trekking socks		
Warm Hat		
Waterproof and breathable Jacket. (Gore-tex or similar) This could be the same as your cycle jacket.		
Waterproof trousers		

KIT LIST

CYCLING EQUIPMENT

Item Needed	Got it	Packed it
Bike (see note below)		
Helmet		
Spare inner tube and repair kit.		
Bike Pump		
Bike Computer and mount		
Bike lights front & rear (in case of inclement weather)		

NOTES ON BIKES

Below is some supplementary information to help you with the cycle phase of the event. More information will be sent out via email in the coming months.

HELMETS

All participants must wear a secured cycling helmet, which is an appropriate size and free from defects. It must have a chin strap which must be fastened while participating in the cycle phase of the event.

BIKE TYPE

We recommend using a road or a hybrid bike for this event. The route is entirely on-road, so using a bike designed specifically for road riding will make your experience far more comfortable and efficient. If you only have a hardtail mountain bike and do not have access to a road or hybrid bike, you will still be permitted to complete the ride. However, you are likely to be significantly slower than others using road bikes.

CONDITION

All participants must provide their own bike, which must be in a road worthy condition with two working brakes. Your bike should have had a recent service before the event.

CYCLE CLOTHING

Item Needed	Got it	Packed it
Cycling gloves		
Cycling shorts		
Cycling shoes or trainers		
Waterproof and breathable Jacket. (Gore-tex or Similar)		
This could be the same as your hike jacket.		

MECHANICS

On-site bike mechanics will be available at registration on Friday evening to give last minute advice or emergency repairs. It is important that your bike has had a service prior to arriving.

Cycle mechanics will be on route to fix any mechanical issues or punctures, they can be contacted via the QR code on your cycle number. It is still recommended to bring your own puncture repair kit as it will speed up getting you back on the road as the mechanic might already be busy. Any parts they issue, including inner tubes, will incur a cost.



KIT LIST

E-BIKES

Electric bikes are permitted on all Race the Sun events. Despite the name, the events are not races, they are events to enable fundraising from sponsored participation. As such we encourage participants who use electric bikes to use one especially for those participants to whom not using one would be a barrier to entry.

COMPLIANCE

All of the cycle phases in the series have a road element to them, as such e-bikes must meet the criteria of classification for an 'Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs)' by the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency. These are as follows:

- Cycle must be fitted with pedals that are capable of propelling it.
- Maximum continuous rated power of the electric motor must not exceed 250 Watts.
- Electrical assistance must cut-off when the vehicle reaches 15.5 mph
- EAPCs must not be ridden by anyone under the age of 14 years

SAFETY CHECKS

For the safety of both the rider and other participants all e-bikes must have a spot inspection at registration to ensure it reaches the above criteria.

CHARGING

There is usually limited access to electricity both at the hubs and transitions across our events. Please do not rely on having access to power to charge your e-bike. Please ensure if leaving your bike in transition that the motor is turned off and not depleting power.

PADDLE PHASE

You can bring a separate change of clothes for the paddle section if you wish (we would especially advise this in bad weather) however some choose to wear their hiking or cycling clothes with added waterproofs. Either way, you will need a separate set of shoes that you are happy to get wet.

PADDLE CLOTHING

Item Needed	Got it	Packed it
Footwear to get wet (Bare feet are not permitted)		

NOTE:

4 person teams will be using open canoes which will be rafted together to make a stable platform for your team of four. It is not envisaged that you will be getting too wet, but we can't guarantee it.

Two person teams will be using tandem 'sit on top' kayaks. You will get much wetter from drips coming off the paddles and will likely need a full change of clothes.

WELCOME

EVENT TIMELINE

05:45 onwards	Event hub open to participants. Teams are advised to arrive at least 30minutes prior to their departure time.
06:00	First departure wave issued trackers and timing dibber before being grouped into the start funnel.
06:20 onwards	First departure wave to leave. Departures will now be in 20minute intervals with teams grouping into the funnel as soon as the previous wave has departed.
08:40 onwards	First teams to arrive back at the hub. Teams will continue to return, transition and head onto the next phase.
12:30 onwards	First teams begin to finish the event.
14:00	Cut off for departure onto cycle phase.
14:00	Cut off for departure onto hike phase.
16:30	Average time for a team to complete the three phases.
16:30	Cut off for departure onto paddle phase.
19:00	All phases closed All teams will have returned to Event Hub.
16:30 - 20:00	Food to be available.

CUT OFF TIMES

For the safety of our participants and our event staff we have to have cut off times for departures onto the three phases of the event. These have been carefully considered and give a generous margin. They are based on the following timings which have been calculated from timing data from over the past few years.

PHASE SPEED AND TIME DATA

	Slowest Teams		Average Teams		Fastest Teams	
	Avg Speed	Time	Avg Speed	Time	Avg Speed	Time
Cycle (52km)	10kph	5hr 12min	13.8kph	3hr 46min	22.5kph	2hr 18min
Hike (16km)	2.9kph	5hr 31min	4kph	4hr 00min	6.9kph	2hr 19min
Paddle (3km)	3.6kph	0hr 50min	4.0kph	0hr 45min	5.1kph	0hr 35min
Total Transition	-	1hr 0min	-	0hr 45min	-	0hr 30min
Total Time		12hr 02min		9hr 16min		5hr 42min

ADVICE

The duration and average speeds listed above are from actual events, they therefore include stoppage time for feed stations and mechanicals. If you are at all concerned about the cycle or hike phases our advice is to go for a ride / walk of half the distance and see how long it takes you. You'll then be able to see how your average speed compares to the above.

These events are designed to be achievable with training for the majority of people, not just 'athletes', and whilst you might find it hard on the day, we typically have a 95 - 99% completion rate. If you are still concerned, please get in touch.

FAQ'S

DO I NEED TO TRAIN FOR THE EVENT?

The challenge is not to be underestimated and increasing your general level of fitness before the event through cycling, walking and aerobic exercises will help you with event preparation.

WILL I NEED TO CARRY MY CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR EACH CHALLENGE?

No, your changes of clothes for the cycle and hike should be left in the transition zone. Your paddle clothing will be transported to the paddle transition in your transition bag.

It is recommended that you bring plastic boxes to put your stuff in to keep it dry.

IS IT ESSENTIAL TO GET ALL THE ITEMS ON THE KIT LIST?

No, only items in pink on the kit list are mandatory and must be carried. In the event of bad weather, these items will need to be produced for inspection by the Event staff, failure to produce these items may result in you not being allowed to start the activity phase.

WILL THERE BE FOOD/REFRESHMENTS DURING THE EVENT?

Yes, between each phase you will be able to refuel with fruit/cereal bars and rehydrate with water. If you have your own preferences, please bring these along with you. You will be provided with a packed lunch which will be available from the Event Hub. An evening celebration meal will also be provided.

CAN I LEAVE MY BIKE OVERNIGHT AFTER THE EVENT REGISTRATION?

Yes, there will be bike racks available at the transition zone. Please bring a bike lock for extra security. There will be overnight security in the transition area, but we cannot take responsibility for your bike or any other items left in transition at any time.

WILL THERE BE TOILETS ALONG THE ROUTE?

Yes, there are toilet facilities at the Event Hub, as well as half way round the cycle and hike phases.

WHAT FIRST AID PROVISIONS WILL BE ON THE EVENT?

All The Adventure Element staff are first aid qualified and will be carrying first aid kits. In addition to the marshals there is a separate safety team comprising of paramedics and first responders should there be a serious incident.

WILL THERE BE ROUTE SIGNAGE?

Yes all three phases are route marked and there will be marshals out on route in case you need assistance. Please remember this is not a closed road event and you must adhere to all road signage at all times.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WEATHER IS REALLY BAD?

It is rare that we have to completely cancel an event due to bad weather. It is important that you come prepared for any type of weather.

We have already planned an alternative hike route we can use, and the paddle route can be adjusted to suit most conditions. Completing the challenge in harsh conditions just makes that fundraising money even more worth the effort!





RACE THE SUN
NEVER STOP PUSHING



action.org.uk/events
events@action.org.uk
01403 210406