

Giants Head 2023 Race Instructions

We are returning to the beautiful village of Sydling St Nicholas for a weekend of racing and dancing! Way back in 2013, Giants Head was the first race we created and it set the wheels in motion for all the other events we have put on since. This one will see spinning willy medals, giant ice creams, camping and some gurt hills. Plus there's the barn dance in the Village Hall, along with some amazing home-cooked food.

Here are the beautifully crafted and overly long race instructions for you to read.

Village timetable

Friday

Noon	Bar opens for the day in Marquee	Village Hall
From 3:00 pm	Camping	Village Campsite
From 5:00pm	Registration	Village Green
6:30pm	Pasta Supper (Pre-ordered online)	Village Hall
8.00pm	Pasta Supper (Pre-ordered online)	Village Hall

Saturday

6.30am	Breakfast: Bacon Rolls, Porridge, Tea & Coffee	Village Hall
8.30am	MARATHON START	Village Green
10.00am	HILL RACE START	Village Green
10.30am – 4.30pm	Tea, Coffee & Cake	Village Hall
11.00am	Bar opens in Marquee for the day	Village Hall Grounds
Noon	BBQ with Pork Rolls and Beef, Vegetarian & Vegan Burger	Village Hall Grounds
6.30pm	Chilli Supper (Pre-ordered online)	Village Hall
7.30pm	Barn Dance – Black Sheep Band	Village Hall

Sunday

7.30am	Breakfast: Bacon Rolls, Porridge, Tea & Coffee	Village Hall
10.30-11.30 am	Tea & Coffee	Village Hall
9.00am	BELL RACE START	Village Green
11-00 am	Bar opens in Marquee for the day.	Village Hall Grounds
10.30am	HALF MARATHON START	Village Hall
12.30pm	Sunday Lunch (Pre-ordered online)	Village Hall

NEW KIT ALERT!

What do you think of these new Giants Head themed hoodies? We have three colours available now to pre-order, in either zip-up or over-the-head styles, each featuring our cow logo on the front and our bespoke 'Find me at Sydling St Nichols' map on the back.

You will need to pre-order asap! The deadline for pre-ordering is: **Thursday 8th June 2023**

[Pre-Order 2023 Giants Head Hoodie – White Star Clothing](#)

Pre-event

Covid is here to stay for the long term, and we're all learning to adapt to new ways of living. We introduced some different ways of operating last year and are planning to keep some of those key adaptations to continue to operate safe events.

We wanted to provide reassurance that we recognise it's still a consideration when you sign up to events. If the deadline passes and you're unable to attend the race because you test positive for Covid or have to isolate, or if you're ill or injured, we will let you complete the race virtually and send you your medals and goodies: [Post-deadline illness and injury policy 2023 - White Star Running](#)

Travel

We are in the middle of nowhere, but thankfully nowhere is easy to get to. Sydling St. Nicholas is a small village on the outskirts of Dorchester in the beautiful county of Dorset.

By car: Sydling is 15 minutes from Dorchester and about 30 minutes from Yeovil on the A37. We are 40 minutes from Bournemouth, and two and a half hours from London.

For sat navs use postcode DT2 9NU

Follow the signs; they will be on the A37 from Friday lunchtime.

By train: There are direct trains from London Waterloo to Maiden Newton, a small village 4 miles away. At time of writing there are no trains early enough to travel from London or any of the stops en route to Maiden Newton on the day of the race. However, trains to Dorchester may be more suitable. A quick Google will get you the names of local taxi firms. Book taxis sooner rather than later.

By bus: Please check <http://www.morebus.co.uk/> for bus details.

Day parking: Free parking is available in the fields adjacent to the Village Hall and near to the start/finish area. **Please follow the Race Parking signs on the A37.** If you're heading in from the A352, just follow the signs to Sydling. We can't say it enough: follow the signs! Don't drive into the village, follow the signs from the **A37. Don't take the Grimstone turn off; follow the signs to Dollens Farm postcode DT2 9PD.**

There is more than enough parking for everyone. Stop and talk to the handsome marshal at the gate and they will tell you how to get to the shortcut to the village. Once you have parked, **DO NOT walk out the way you have driven in;** follow the arrows to the bottom of the field and there's a shortcut to the the Start and Race Admin, it's quicker honest.

Don't park near the start/finish or in the village

We'd love it if you could car share. This not only helps with the environment and carbon footprint etc, it also helps with having less cars to pull out of the muddy car park with a tractor. Here's a great website <https://liftshare.com/uk>; please make sure you feel safe and happy before offering/accepting lifts. Or you can ask in the [Facebook Group](#).

On Site

Food: Will be available from the Village Hall all weekend; see the above timetable for times.

Every year at Giants Head the village opens up and welcomes all the runners as temporary villagers for the weekend. Several of the community groups serve the food to raise funds for their good causes and as a way to chat and meet all of you.

The programme on the 1st page details the times for food over the weekend.

Food is now open for booking here: <https://whitestarrunning.clubtrac.co.uk/shops/giants-head-food-2023-199>

All options come in an adult or child size portion, recommended for under 12 years.

Friday night has two time sittings, but on Saturday and Sunday the food is served from a certain time and you can go along when you're ready, all served in the Village Hall.

Friday night: Pasta Supper – 6.30pm or 8pm

Meat Lasagne or Vegetarian Pasta Bake (not Vegan friendly), both served with salad and a bread roll. Ice cream dessert.

Saturday night: Chilli Supper – from 6.30pm

Meat Beef Chilli or Vegetarian/Vegan Chilli, both served with green salad and tzatziki. Fruit crumble and ice cream dessert.

Sunday: Roast lunch – served 12.30pm - 1pm

Roast Beef or Vegetarian/Vegan Roast Loaf (no nuts), both served with potatoes, vegetables and Yorkshire pudding. Sydling Mess for pudding.

If you book a roast and are arriving after 1.30pm, the team will keep your lunch warm for when you arrive at the Village Hall.

NB: Unfortunately none of the above are necessarily gluten free

Bookings will close at midnight on Tuesday 13th June

Breakfast: Tea, coffee and toast at reasonable prices in the Village Hall from 6.30am. There will be bacon sandwiches and porridge available, and there will be a microwave and hot water available for porridge, etc.

Saturday Hog Roast: Hog Roast and BBQ (veg & vegan available) from late morning until last runner is in; there will be enough for everyone this year. Refreshments and cakes in the Village Hall from mid-morning.

Sunday: Breakfast, porridge, bacon rolls, and tea and coffees will be available from 7am.

Barn dance: We have the return of the barn dance with a live band and caller. Black Sheep are back! You will dance... Yes, we know you have just run a long way! Yes, your feet ache. Yes, you need to rest. But you are going to dance! You'll love it. Band starts at 7.30pm sharp, interval about 9pm, and bar open all night.



Medals and T-shirts: All runners will receive their medal. For those of you who have opted to donate your goodies to the [Wild Woodbury project](#), thank you! We're pleased to offer this option for those looking to gift the goodies portion of your entry fee to this local environmental project. Orders will go in on Friday 2nd June based on the style and size you have selected on your entry, or we will order a Unisex Medium for you.

Those entering **after 1st June will have their goodies portion** of the race fee to the Wild Woodbury project and will not get a T-shirt.

Massage: [Vyeking Fitness](#) will be on site all weekend to offer post-race massages and advice on any issues you may be having. Make sure you say hello to the team and welcome them to the White Star family. They will operate on a first-come, first-serve basis for 15-minute massages at £10.

White Star Running shop: We will be on site selling our own branded t-shirts, hoodies and lots of other goodies. You can also **click and collect** any items from our online shop until **Wednesday 14th June** for us to pack and bring with us for you to collect. Just use the code **GiantsHead23** at checkout: www.whitestarclothing.co.uk

Campsite

Camping: Book camping [here](#) before midday on **Wednesday 14th June**. The campsite and start/finish are all in the same area and there is plenty of space. Please spread out across the field, it is massive, as you can see in the picture below! **BRING TOILET ROLL we will no longer be providing any.**

If you bring your dog, **THEY MUST BE ON A LEAD**. This is the request of the landowner. Please keep your dogs under control at all times. There are plenty of walks nearby where they can run off lead.

White Star staff will be onsite all weekend; please rock up from Friday afternoon as we have permission for camping all weekend. We cannot guarantee the security of valuables, so please lock them in your car out of sight.

Water is available from an outside tap at the top of the field. Look out for our water flag to locate the tap easily. Keep an eye on the cows at the top of the field. If they are drinking the water pressure drops... it's really true! Countryside, innit. Let them finish.

Off-the-ground firepits and BBQs are allowed at this event; we just ask there not to be a visual sign you have had one after the event and you take sensible safety precautions when using and disposing of them.

Basically, be an adult and no raging infernos!

It is a rural village and can get dark, **so we suggest you bring a head torch or some torches** to walk between the camping field and village centre.

SITE LAYOUT



RACE INSTRUCTIONS

Yes, it is a race.

Race Numbers

Admin area will be on the Village Green so you can collect your race number.

Friday 3-8pm

Saturday 7am

Sunday 8am

Chip instructions: Built into the number is your timing chip; put it on and go. Don't go near the finish line again once you've crossed at the finish, or you will get a false reading and this will make us unhappy. Please make sure you **wear your race number correctly** so it can be picked up.

In a bid to be more environmentally conscious, **we do not supply safety pins** for attaching your race number. **Please remember to bring your own** or wear a number belt or use some **event clips**. A [WSR set are available](#) in the shop and you can collect them at the event.

How to correctly wear your race number

All runners must wear their race number on the front of their race shirt for the duration of the whole run, held on safely by safety pins or bib clips.

Wear your number and be seen. We need to make sure everyone running is part of our organised run, looked after at all times and covered by our insurance.

Please do not wear your number folded up, on shorts, on your back or sides and do not place pins through the chip. If you are wearing a jacket or jumper on over the top of your run number please remove before crossing the finish line to ensure the timing mats record your result.

If not worn correctly then your result from the timing chip may not be recorded. This is your responsibility.

For your safety please ensure that the back of your race number is filled in with all correct information. Help us to help you. We have had to use this in the past and to ensure you get the help required as quickly as possible please always fill it in.

The do not list...

- Do not wear folded up...
- ...on your back or bag
- ...on shorts or side
- ...place pins through chip
- ...cover your bib

WHITE STAR RUNNING

If the weather is inclement, you will need to unzip your jacket while crossing the finish line so the mats can read your timing chip.

Results: This event is being timed by [Timing Monkey](#) who will be on site all weekend and results will be available from their website.

Safety: On the back of your number, please write an ICE number and any medical details. This will help us and you. If you're kidnapped by locals or pass out at the sheer joy of being outside, we need to get you help as quickly as possible. We recommend that you carry a fully charged mobile phone for emergency use with race HQ emergency number stored. This number is:

07930335746

This will put you through to grumpy and harassed race controller who will assess your needs based on their caffeine intake for the day.

If you need to drop out of the race at any time we will try – try –and get you as quickly as possible. The good thing is the race is very centralised and you are never far from an access road or from the finish. We will have 4X4 vehicles and ambulances on standby to come and get you if need be.

Kit

Cups: ALL RACES are CUPLESS; this means there will be no cups at any aid station. Meaning you need to bring your own drinking vessels. It can be whatever you like... cup, bottle, mug, baby's bottle, punch bowl – literally whatever you're comfortable bringing to run round with.

If you don't yet have a re-useable cup, we sell several designs in the shop and you can order to collect: <https://whitestarclothing.co.uk/search?q=cup&type=product#>

Baggage: Please give us car keys and leave your gear in the car; it's easier. Presentation of your number will get your keys back; we will only give the person wearing the number their keys. There will **NOT** be a place to store your bags at the finish. Please note, you leave keys at your own risk. If we like the look of your car, we reserve the right to take it for a spin round the car park.

Showers: Available in the grounds of the Village Hall.

Toilets: There will be portalavs on the Village Green and in the campsite. There is never enough, we know; we ask you to be patient. **Please remember to bring your own toilet roll we will no longer be providing any.**

Race Routes

All the race routes are predominantly off-road. The area in the Sydling and Cerne valleys are typical Dorset chalk downs areas and drain very well. The course is designed to take in the smashing views and beautiful countryside. The course follows several paths and Rights of Way.

We are very grateful to the landowners and farmers in the area for their co-operation in bringing this event to life. All the farms are 7-day-a-week operations and the farmers have been very helpful in moving livestock, allowing us to open some gates and helping with logistics. We rely on the goodwill of the landowners, so please don't do anything to jeopardise our good working relationships.

The course will be well marked with signs and arrows; some trees, posts, etc, will have red and white marker tape around them just to reassure you that you're not lost.

Routes are available on the [event webpage](#), with links to OS pages to download GPX files or see a flythrough of the route.

Marathon

The marathon route is very challenging and hilly, but a beautiful course running through the Sydling and Cerne valleys, running around and under the famous Cerne Giant. It is certainly not for the faint hearted; it's a tough race, with some steep climbs, sharp descents and the most amazing views to reward yourself with. Coming in at about 27 miles, it's a toughie.

Cut-off time: 7 hours and 37 minutes

Hill Race

The Sydling Hill route is a very challenging hilly 11km course, running through the Sydling and Cerne valleys. It climbs up Shearplace Hill, then continuing on to Crete Hill and Ridge Hill, before retuning to the Village Green.

Cut-off time: 2.5 hours

Half Marathon

It will be hilly; there will be an epic medal with a willy on it; you will be running over lots of the terrain that the marathon runs on... except it's only half the way. Well, 13.5 miles!

Cut-off time: 4 hours

Terrain: Often dry and dusty on these routes; mostly tracks with some field paths and grass mixed in.

Shoes: Trail shoes are recommended – something with a grip. Wear what's comfortable.

Cut offs: All times are generous; you can walk them in less. The event is also a race, so some sort of running is involved.

There will be a sweeper in all races, and we reserve the right to pull you out of the event if you will not make the cut off. **SWEEPERS ARE GODS**; listen to them please.

Aid stations: Water stations will be evenly placed and will have plenty of water and squash; remember **you're running with your own cup**.

Aid	Marathon	Half	Hill Race
Water	3 miles		3 miles
Full Aid Station	6 miles	3 miles	6 miles
Water & Snacks	8.5 miles		
Full Aid Station	13 miles	5.8 miles	
Water	17.5 miles	9 miles	
Lovestation	20 miles	12 miles	
Water & Sweets	23.5 miles		

If you have a hydration vest or carry a bottle/cup, ask the nice marshal to fill it straight from the container. Please, please dispose of your litter responsibly at an aid station or carry to the finish.

Lovestation™: Oh yes, the Lovestation will be here! This is where you will be looked after by the team. Now these aid stations are designed for you to get some cake, a sports drink, a gel, jelly babies, etc, and there will be booze and a few savoury bits.

Bell Race

On Sunday morning, as if you haven't done enough running, we have a Chaos style race. Race is full, then you pay for entry in cash when you collect your number. £8 each. We don't time this race; it's just for fun. 3km to stretch your legs and introduce your family to the delights of the Dorset scenery.

All profits get split between the Sydling St.Nicholas Church bell repair funds and the new play park fund for the village.

You will run up the hill to where the team will be waiting to give you tasks. Once you've finished your task, you will receive a Swiss Cow Bell, then you can run down the hill with your bell clonking away.

Gates: Most of the gates will be open; if it's shut, it's shut for a reason so please shut it behind you and don't leave it open for someone behind you. The last thing we want is an animal escaping. In some places the gates are next to a stile, so please go over the stile. It's easier for you and we don't have to worry about gates being open.

Litter: We run in areas of outstanding natural beauty. We do not tolerate littering. We run our races with consent of the farmers and landowners of Dorset and Wiltshire. Please, please, don't throw your litter on the ground; pop it in a pocket or hang on to it and deposit at an aid station.

Weather: The race is in the countryside in June and, as we have seen in the past couple of years, the British summer time can vary from beautifully warm to belting down with rain. So please take into consideration the previous day's weather when considering what to wear on your feet. Trail shoes are recommended. Remember, you are a roughy tuffty trail runner... bad weather means nothing to you.

There can be horseflies on the route; they bite and they will bite you. Wear Jungle Formula or similar.

Roads: There are a few road crossings and there are some quiet sections of road in the race. The dangerous crossings will be manned; you are responsible for your own safety, as marshals cannot and will not stop traffic for you. If a marshal stops you at a road junction or crossing, it's for your benefit.

Marathon ONLY: You will have to cross the A352 twice, first at Cerne Abbas and then at Minterne Magna. Both road crossings will be marshalled, and they will help you across the road. The A352 is not a busy road at these points, but we don't want you splatted by a car so please listen to the marshals and STOP, don't just charge straight across. At miles 14ish, 20 and 22 miles, there are short sections of road. These areas too will be marshalled; let the marshals help, stay close to the side and look out for cars.

iPods and MP3 players: The perennial question about these devices is, are they allowed? Yes. We won't drag you out of the race for wearing one, but we advise against it. Safety is the only reason we don't encourage you to wear them. The roads, as we said, are quiet country lanes, but there are cars, trucks, tractors and even the odd milk tanker out there and you need to hear them and any instructions/warnings from marshals.

Race photos: Our friendly photographers will be on site over the weekend and will upload their pictures to our [Facebook Group](#).

FAQs

Based on feedback from our other races.

Q. White Star Races have a reputation for being the wrong distance...

A. It's a trail race, not the Olympics. We dare you, yes dare you, to create an off-road race and get the distance spot on. The Hill Race is 11km ish.

Q. Can I wear an iPod, MP3, etc?

A. If you like. We would prefer you didn't. We're not responsible for your safety on roads if you decide to wear one.

Q. Is there a cashpoint in the village?

A. No. The nearest cashpoint is on the A road at Long Ash Service Station. **Bring cash with you or use cashless payment touch points.**

Q. Is parking secure?

A. No. Lock cars and place valuables out of sight.

Q. Where is the nearest doctor, A&E, etc?

A. Odstock Hospital, Salisbury – a 30-minute drive.

Q. What is the weather going to be like?

A. We are just consulting our Weather Shaman now. It is usually dry and hot; please consider the weather forecast when planning your race kits and remember insect spray for the horseflies that are around!

www.whitestarrunning.co.uk