

Essex Way Rules Updated 2024

Essex Way Rules/Guidelines

This is my understanding of the rules of the Essex Way. I do not claim to be a guru and would definitely defer to Bob Teer and other long standing organisers!

General

The Essex Way is a free trail race organised by and for the Essex Running Community. It is traditionally run in a competitive spirit but with supportive cooperation. This is set in stone!

Each leg is organised by a different club or combination of clubs.

There are four overseeing roles:-

Website – Graeme Knott (Harwich),

Scorer/Referee Martin Clarke (Ilford/Harwich)

Administrator - Spreadsheet Entries and Logistics Sally Gillam (Harwich)

Trail Running Permit - Howard Jardine (GFDR).

All Clubs should be encouraged to share the organisation of legs and be willing to swap from time to time.

Race Rules

1. The Essex Way Relay is always run on the first Sunday in September.
2. There three categories/prizes:-
 - Open (Mixed men and women in any combination)
 - Ladies
 - Vet 45
3. Runners must be members of the club they represent. This is not necessarily the first claim.
4. Runners must not run for their second claim club against their first claim club without the agreement of the first claim club.
5. Each team must be made up of 10 different runners.
6. A runner can compete in more than one team for their club. As an example if a club is short a runner in their B team, a runner from the A team could run.
7. The spirit of the race is friendly and cooperative so runners are expected to help each other. As an example if a runner sees another runner go off course, the expectation is that the runner will be called back.
8. Clubs are responsible for their own runners. If a runner gets lost/has an accident obviously anyone local to the incident would be expected to assist. However, ultimately the club is responsible.
9. Runners are expected to reccie their route. It is not an acceptable practice to leave markers to remind or guide. The Poppy Markers and trail directions are sufficient. However there is no restriction on using GPS.
10. A team without a runner on a leg will receive a score of 100 points. If a runner starts a leg but does not finish, the team will be scored the points of the last finisher plus one.

11. Age limits – my view is if a club is confident a runner can navigate the route adequately and can run the distance that's ok. If there's a problem it will be the club's responsibility and there can be a massive difference between two 15 year olds. Obviously anyone running under 17 should have their parents' consent.
12. Deadline for entries will be emailed by the Administrator – it is usually Wednesday at midnight before the race - we all know the logistical nightmare of organising an Essex Way team.
13. Clubs winning a trophy must arrange to have their name engraved on the trophy at their own expense. They must return the trophy for the following year.
14. Running with a dog is not allowed and will result in leg disqualification and the maximum score of 200 points will be awarded for that leg. The topic was discussed a few years ago and the consensus was that running with a dog can give an unfair advantage, can be cruel to the dog and there are runners who are not comfortable around dogs which should be respected.

Enforcing the rules

Obviously if we have rules, we have to have a system to enforce them. The spirit of the Essex Way is cooperative and supportive so it is based on trust. However if there is an alleged breach of the rules

- The person making the allegation of rule discretion explains the situation to the referee.
- The referee will ask the team accused of the rule breach to share their side of the story.
- If there is continued dispute, the team accused could be asked to declare the team in retrospect.
- The referee's decision will be binding.
- If a breach has occurred a penalty of 200 points will be applied (disincentive to cheat)

Leg Organisers

1. Clubs responsible for a leg will check the leg in advance of the race to ensure the directions are still correct. Any amendments are made by emailing Graeme Knott. He will send a master Word document for changes to be added to and returned to him. Graeme cannot make the changes! This should be done by the beginning/middle of July so the routes are checked before runners are recceing in earnest. A note should be made on the Leg Organisers Whatsapp group.
2. The Organisers/Leg Whatsapp group should act as a central point of information. Members checking the routes should be encouraged to post any obstacles or issues on the groups.
3. If possible clubs should try to garden any particularly overgrown parts of the course. Example: Leg 9 – path down from the Windmill to The Street in Ramsey.
4. Clubs should let Howard know any relevant information when requested for the Trail Running Permit.
5. On the day, clubs tick off teams at the start of the leg on the spread sheet previously emailed by the scorer and ensure they are aware of how many runners there are. A note should be made of those teams not having a runner on the leg.
6. At the end of the leg, the finishing order of runners is recorded on the results sheet.

7. The results sheet should be passed to the Scorer as soon as possible. This can either be via email, whatsapp image, or by phone message. Often the scorer will liaise with the club recorder in person at the start of the leg as to the preferred method.
8. It is at the discretion of clubs as to whether they provide a water station. This is dependent on the length of leg, time of day and weather. Generally it is good to have water at the end of a leg although this may simply be help yourself.
9. Again it is at the discretion of organising clubs as to how much they inform the locals on the route of their legs. It is often wise to inform key places e.g. Leg 9/10 – I always remind the Landlord of The Castle Inn in Ramsey to expect an increase in numbers. However this will be dependent on manageability.
10. Marshalling may be provided on road crossing points if a club considers it necessary and/or wishes to provide this extra. The Essex Way remains a trail race and is run by adults so crossing a road is well within the grasp of most adults!
11. A Leg Organiser can propose disqualification of a runner to the referee for dangerous behaviour or blatant cheating. The example of blatant cheating we had one year was when two runners (at the front end of the race) got lost, asked a car driver for directions back to the Essex Way (no problem so far) but then accepted a lift. An example of dangerous behaviour might be running across the railway line on leg 8 when asked by the Marshall to wait. A serious accident could put the future of the race at risk. In enforcing these rules I think that any breach of the rules must be witnessed by a Marshall or club person. Not be hearsay of another runner.
12. In recent years, car parking has become a growing issue. Runners should be encouraged to car share and park responsibly. If parking solutions can be found it is a bonus e.g. a field. If leg organisers can advise runners about car parking on the relevant Whatsapp leg group, it can help to avoid stress and minimise any confrontation with residents.

Sally Gillam