

POCAR 2026 Race Rules

January 16th-19th, 2026

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Logistics

Race Registration and Start

Racers are responsible for transportation for themselves to and from the race location at Yellowwood State Forest. Purdue Outing Club is not responsible for racer travel to and from the event and will not be organizing group travel for racers. Race registration will begin at 8:00 AM and end at 9:30 AM on Saturday, January 17, 2026. Racers are to check in at the WPA Picnic Shelter House in Yellowwood State Forest. Racers must park their car in their campsite or a different appropriate location, as this is where the vehicle will remain for the remainder of the race. All racers are required to attend a pre-race meeting at 9:30 AM outside the Picnic Shelter House. Any team that is not present at 10:00 AM/ 10:30 AM for the start of the race will be disqualified.

Saturday

8:00 AM		Race check in opens
9:30 AM		Race check-in closes & mandatory pre-race meeting
10:00 AM		Race begins (Open Division)
10:30 AM		Race begins (Collegiate Division)

Monday

10:00 AM		Race ends (Open Division)
10:30 AM		Race ends (Collegiate Division)

Onsite Camping

Racers are responsible for arranging their own sleeping arrangements before, during, and after the race. The headquarters (HQ) used by race officials will be the WPA Picnic Shelter House. When your team arrives you are welcome to confirm with the coordinators before setting up camp there. The campground is large enough to accommodate all volunteers and racers. If a short nap is needed, racers are permitted to stop and rest for under 2 hours anywhere in the race boundaries.

Finishing the Race

A team is considered to have finished POCAR if, in addition to following all of the rules outlined here, at least 4 teammates traveled to all required points on foot within the physical and temporal boundaries of the race. The final destination for the team is HQ. Every team must return to HQ once they have successfully found the points in order to check out, have their time recorded, and

collect any prizes they receive. You are not allowed to check out at any Fire Water station or patrol car. You'll also probably want to come back to HQ because that's where you parked.

Race End

At 10:30 AM Monday, January 18, 2026, the race is officially over. All teams still on course must immediately proceed to the nearest patrolled road to be picked up by volunteers.

Race Checkout

Race Checkout occurs at the same location as pre-race registration. This year's race checkout will take place at the WPA Picnic Shelter House in Yellowwood State Forest. When teams are finished racing, all teams must check out with all remaining racers present at the shelter. During checkout, teams must complete a roll call of remaining racers and turn in any incomplete punch cards for tabulation in race results. Individual racers dropping out early will check out individually at the shelter. IMPORTANT: Any team or racer announcing dropout at a remote Fire/Water station or to a POCAR shuttle driver DOES NOT constitute race check-out. All checkouts must be completed at HQ (WPA Picnic Shelter House) with the Registration Coordinator prior to leaving Yellowwood State Forest. Proper checkout of all teams ensures that we do not initiate an unnecessary search and rescue in the race area. Failure to complete a proper check-out may result in race disqualification.

Race Area

Entering private property within Yellowwood State Forest and/or leaving the designated race area is strictly forbidden and grounds for disqualification. Bounds of private property are marked on all maps; we expect all racers to respect these bounds.

Race Aids

Teams-Helping-Teams

Teams may not assist or hinder each other in any way. Teams altering, obscuring, moving or purposefully damaging control points in any way will be disqualified. Teams giving or receiving assistance (providing navigational support, exchange of supplies, pacing or otherwise) will be disqualified. This rule is to prevent scout or supply teams from unfairly helping someone win the race. Good sportsmanship is always encouraged. In the event of a legitimate medical emergency, other teams are REQUIRED to find help or provide aid if possible as soon as possible. If another team needs assistance that is non-life threatening, teams are required to notify race officials at

their convenience, and then continue with the race. The Purdue Outing Club and its complement of volunteers will handle all emergency situations.

Logistic Support

Teams may keep a supply of personal items/race gear at the race start, which they can access during the race. The Purdue Outing Club will not be responsible for the loss or damage of these items. Aside from the supply at the race start, teams are expected to carry all gear and supplies they will use during the race. Teams are forbidden from stashing gear, food, supplies or otherwise in the forest to be used during the race, and are forbidden from discarding gear, supplies or otherwise into the forest. Teams are encouraged to resupply themselves with potable water whenever available, but may not stash supplies of potable water in the race area. This includes stashing gear at a fire/water station on their way to obtaining a point.

Mechanical Navigation Aids

Simple mechanical aids such as rulers, slide rules and protractors are allowed. Compasses are required. Although not prohibited, you can leave your sextant at home.

Signaling

Racers may not engage in long-distance communications within or between teams, except in emergency situations. Long distance communications include, but are not limited to: loud sounds (whistle, bull horn or otherwise), visual displays (smoke signals, signal lights, flares, or otherwise), and electronic transmissions (receiving of radio signals or otherwise). Transmission of radio signals is limited to remote GPS recorders, whose records can only be accessed after the race. If you are using such a device, (or something similar) please inform race officials so unnecessary confusion can be avoided on race day.

Locomotion

Racers must complete the entire race under their own physical power. All vehicles are prohibited, including those with a source of stored energy (gasoline/battery powered ATVs, dirt bikes or otherwise) and those without a source of stored energy (solar powered vehicle, mountain bike, skis, or otherwise). During the race, cars may be used as a shelter, but the power system cannot be engaged (i.e. use of the car radio, heaters, headlights, etc. is prohibited). The only electronic systems of a car which may be used are electronic door locks or passive cabin lights. Devices which mechanically store energy for the purpose of locomotion are also prohibited (power striders or otherwise). However, pogo sticks are allowed. In fact, any racer who completes the entire course propelled only by a pogo stick will race for free, forever.

Beasts of Burden

A beast of burden is any animal that accompanies the teams for the duration of the race. Beasts of burden physically capable, legally possessed, and permitted by park regulations may race. However, the Purdue Outing Club must be able to provide the beast of burden the same level of safety as every other racer. For example, the POC does not possess the materials or resources to safely move and administer first aid to an injured horse. Therefore, horses cannot race. Similarly, the Purdue Outing Club does not possess the wherewithal to supervise lone beasts of burden. Therefore, should a beast of burden be unable to complete the race, a simian teammate must resign from the race to care for the beast of burden. (Please do not register a chimpanzee and make me regret the use of the word 'simian'). Also note that beasts of burden must be registered as team members (open division only) and many of the challenge events require that all team members have opposable thumbs. Also, despite what your teammates say, you are not a beast of burden. Even if you train like an animal.

A bird of prey is not considered a beast of burden, however if properly trained, the bird may compete as well. The rules that apply to the beasts also apply to the birds. In addition, the owner must show proof of a license from the Division of Wildlife Resources. Fish are forbidden under all circumstances from accompanying a team during the race.

Keep the weather in mind. Temperatures are known to frequently dip below 0°F during January and can be harmful to your dog/beast of burden. Animals that are not registered support animals may not be allowed this year due to forest regulations. This year we are at Yellowwood State Forest, and in most cases animals may not be allowed. It is your responsibility to check the regulations before coming to POCAR.

Permitted Locomotion Aids

First aid material (non-prescription braces, mole skin, and otherwise) and medical devices (braces, prosthetics, and otherwise) are permitted. Walking sticks with or without shock absorbers are also permitted.

Safety

Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol is strictly prohibited for all participants. Over the counter medicine and prescription medication dispensed by a licensed doctor is permitted to the extent that it does not compromise the safety of the racers or volunteers. Please carefully consider the side effects of any medication you currently take, or plan to take, during the race.

Leave No Trace

All teams are required to follow the Leave No Trace principles while in the forest. Most importantly, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, camp in appropriate spaces, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors.

Crossing Rivers, Lakes or Other Significant Bodies of Water

Crossing frozen rivers, lakes, or any other significant body of water is strictly forbidden. A body of water is significant if it is more than two feet deep at any given crossing point. If the ice does not hold you, there is no possibility for a rescue; only a recovery. Failure to comply with these rules may result in disqualification, and may also jeopardize eligibility for future entry in POCAR.

Weather Restrictions

Weather will be monitored by the event organizers. At a 10 minute time to frostbite, as determined by the NWS frostbite chart, the race will be stopped and racers are to make their way to the nearest fire/water station or patrolled road. The race may be canceled due to weather conditions or acts of god at any time, should the organizers deem the conditions overly hazardous. That decision will be made by the race coordinator.

Fire/Water Stations, Patrol Roads, and Check-in logs

Teams are required to check in at the minimum every 5 hours of the race whether it be with a F/W station, patrol cars, and/or check-in logs. Teams must check in with volunteers at a fire/water station upon their first arrival at the station. Volunteers will have a binder with sheets to record the team name and time of arrival/departure. If a team stops at the fire/water station aside from the first time, they just need to check in with the volunteers. Patrol cars will be flashing their hazard lights while on the course and shall have other markings (such as flags) denoting they are affiliated with the race. There will also be check-in logs along the course in which people can write their team name and the time that they were there. These logs provide additional support for the teams to notify the coordinators where they are.

If you do not check in anywhere for more than 5 hours, you are required to check in at a F/W station or HQ rather than a patrol car or log book. You will be required by the volunteers at that station to stay there for the amount of time that you were late on your check in. For example, if you were supposed to check in at 2:30 and you check in at 2:35 then you must stay at the F/W stations until 2:40. This rule is in place to discourage teams from refusing to check in and therefore gain an unfair advantage over teams that do follow the rules. Additionally, checking in is how the race coordinators know where everyone is and make sure the race can continue safely

for all the other teams. If you do not check in for 8 or more hours then your team will be disqualified from the race.

Required Gear

Each **team** needs 1 of each of the following.

- 1 Sleeping bag rated for the temperatures and 1 survival blanket; or 2 sleeping bags
- First-aid kit (1 ACE bandage, 2 adhesive bandages, 2 3x3 gauze pads, 1 antiseptic tube, 10 tablets aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, or acetaminophen, as a minimum)
- Maps (will be provided)
- Compass
- Whistle (will be provided)
- 2 Orange Safety Vests (will be provided)
- Water filter, iodine tablets, or micropur tablets
- Shelter - tarp, tent or equivalent that all team members can fit under/in
Note: bivy sacks may count as a sleeping bag and shelter for a person, but do not count as the shelter for the whole team, as only one person can fit in it.
- Watch

Each **racer** must carry: water bottles (2-3 quarts per person), warm hat, gloves, rain jacket or poncho, headlamp or flashlight, spare batteries, and warm clothing.

We will check throughout the race to make sure you have the required gear at all times! Organizers may disqualify a team should they be determined as ill-equipped for the conditions or otherwise posing an undue danger upon themselves, other teams, volunteers, or other park visitors.

Standard Racing Procedures

The race begins at 10:00 AM on January 17th, 2026. Racers must be registered by 9:30 AM at the WPA Picnic Shelter House and must attend a pre-race meeting at 9:30 AM, also at the WPA Picnic Shelter House. Each team will be given a map, UTM, and an envelope containing the coordinates of the first leg prior to the start.

At the start of the race, teams may open the envelope and view the coordinates. They can then plot the coordinates on their map and develop a strategy. Each leg has a similar procedure.

The team leaves HQ to collect the points for the leg. During each leg, the team is required to check in at a specific fire/water station. Failure to do so results in disqualification. If the team sees a patrol car, they are also required to check in with the driver. Once the team finishes the leg (they get all of the required points for that leg), they will return to HQ, where they receive the coordinates for the next leg of the race.

Once the team finishes the last leg, they will return to HQ. A team is not considered to have finished until they return to HQ and check out.

Other notes

HQ is the home base, not only for the volunteers, but for racers as well. Racers are only required to carry what is listed above. In addition, racers will carry plenty of food, maybe an extra dry pair of socks, or other supplies they will need on the trail. Racers are allowed to store items in their cars and retrieve them throughout the course of the race.

Closing note

In any areas of confusion, the final ruling is made by the race coordinator. Their word is law.