
Thunder Dash Continuity Guide

Helpful Tips, Lessons Learned, and What Worked Well

Overview

Thunder Dash is one of the most high-energy and financially successful events of the semester — we've raised around \$3,000 consistently from it. It's also a great morale boost and bonding experience, especially because volunteers usually get to run the mud course afterward, which is a major motivator.

With some smart planning and communication, this event tends to run smoothly. This guide is meant to help you take what's worked in the past and make it even better.

Planning Recommendations

1. Start Early (If You Can)

- Starting 4–6 weeks out gives you the most breathing room. But honestly? If you're handed the event last-minute, that's okay — just begin as soon as you're given the go.
 - Having a timeline in mind helps you manage sign-ups, waivers, and carpooling without scrambling the week of.
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2. Promotion & Volunteer Recruitment

- Promoting the mud run portion of the event seems to get the best response. Volunteers love knowing they get rewarded with a messy, fun challenge at the end.
- Mentioning that snacks are provided doesn't hurt either — people appreciate the little things.

- If possible, try messaging people individually (especially those you know will work hard) instead of relying entirely on mass group chats.
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3. Using the Google Sheet (Sign-Ups + Everything Else)

- A lot of time was saved by using a condensed, all-in-one Google Sheet, which tracked:
 - Volunteer info (name, AS level, shirt size, job preference)
 - Waiver status and under-18 status
 - Carpooling (separate tab)
 - Event details like time, date, uniform, and the external sign-up link
- You might consider making a copy of the previous year's sheet and adjusting for your dates and team.

Tip: It can help to treat the Google Sheet like a central command post. Live updates (like changes in timing or weather) can be dropped in there so people always know where to check.

4. Setup Day (The Day Before the Event)

- Setup tends to be physically exhausting — it involves long hours outside, lifting, walking, and general labor.
- You'll probably be in close contact with the Thunder Dash organizer by this point — texting seemed to work well after one initial intro email.
- It might help to make a group chat just for your setup team so you can keep things moving in real time.
- Selecting people who are motivated and willing to work outdoors makes a huge difference. Some folks might try to coast — try to avoid that if you can.

Packing Suggestions:

- Water, snacks, sunscreen
 - Hat/sunglasses
 - Gloves (optional but helpful)
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5. Event Day Logistics

- Waivers are really important — no one can help out unless theirs is submitted. It might help to collect them early and print a few extra for day-of.
- Parking can be tight, so organizing carpool groups in advance can save you a lot of stress. The Google Sheet carpool tab worked really well for this.
- Assigning roles the morning of worked just fine — nothing was overly complicated, and people seemed to adapt quickly with quick explanations.

Roles included:

Obstacle monitors, packet pickup, safety squad, fitness challenge helpers, photographers, etc.

6. Running the Mud Course

- This is the best part for most people — and it gets messy fast.
 - You might want to tell people ahead of time to bring a full change of clothes, a towel, and a trash bag for their muddy gear.
 - Wet wipes or baby wipes were super helpful for getting at least semi-clean before the ride home.
 - If anyone forgets a change of clothes, the car ride back becomes miserable — speaking from experience.
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Lessons Learned

- You might find it helpful to start planning earlier than you think.
 - Collecting waivers and organizing carpools early on really reduces last-minute chaos.
 - Having everything in one central Google Sheet saves a ton of back-and-forth.
 - Setup day is intense, but a solid team can make it go by smoothly.
 - People don't need intense prep for their jobs — just some brief direction the day of.
 - The mud run is gross, hilarious, and makes it all worth it.
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Optional Planning Timeline (4–6 Weeks Out)

6 Weeks Out

- Touch base with the Thunder Dash POC (email to start, then text)
- Pull up the previous year's spreadsheet and make a copy
- Start thinking about your setup crew

5 Weeks Out

- Open the sign-up sheet and start promoting (mud run = the hook)
- Share waiver form and basic details
- Mention carpooling casually — no need to finalize yet

4 Weeks Out

- Begin soft pushes for setup volunteers
- Keep waiver collection moving
- Add updates to the Google Sheet as needed

3 Weeks Out

- Lock in setup team and create a group chat for them
- Assign preliminary carpool leads
- Remind everyone about waivers

2 Weeks Out

- Waiver deadline (or close to it)
- Finalize carpool groups and share contact info
- Send checklists of what to bring (especially for post-run)

1 Week Out

- Reconfirm details with the event organizer
- Push out one final round of reminders
- Print extra waivers and finalize the sheet

Day Before

- Setup crew meets early and works all day
- Stay hydrated and keep things positive

Event Day

- Arrive early, check people in
 - Waiver collection/check
 - Assign roles briefly and get everyone moving
 - Once all jobs are done — enjoy the mud run and celebrate the success
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Helpful Links

- [Google Sheet Template – Volunteer Sign-Up & Carpool]
[📄 Thunder Dash Sign Up and Carpool Sheet](#)
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