

How to organise your own Rogaine.

(Peter Squires, March 2002)

1. Find some suitable country near you. (At least 4 months in advance, and more for bigger events). As a guideline, a 24-hour event can be made to fit on an A4 area of 1:50,000 map, and a 12-hour on half that size, provided there are plenty of hills. Of course, the bigger the area, the better, as it forces people to make more strategic decisions with their route choices.
2. Approach landowners for permission. You can find landowners either by going there and asking, or often from regional council websites. A good way is to write to the landowners first (a **sample letter** is available on the NZRA website) and then phone them a few days later. MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH LANDOWNERS IS ESSENTIAL. Our experience is that the large majority of farmers are extremely supportive if you explain what you are doing, listen to their concerns, and keep them informed. Refer them to this Website.
3. Find a hash-house site. This is where the event will start and finish, and will probably provide basic food like soup and bread during the event. You need carparking space and toilets. (Dig a couple beforehand or get Portaloos.) Ideally, the Hash-house site will be near the middle of the course, and could be a woolshed. It is great if the after-event feast can be at the same place, but this is not always possible. You can instead get everyone to move to a local hall or school immediately after the event, where catering, warmth, and light may all be better. Approach the owners of these facilities and arrange to use them. You may want to offer a bit of rent.
4. Arrange caterers. Easiest and best is to ask a local school or church group to organise the supper. This gets the community involved, and they welcome the chance to raise funds from outside the district. For example, you could pay them \$12 per head for a meal that they might be able to provide for \$7. This all helps the public relations effort.
5. Work out your budget, and set an entry fee based on a conservative guess at numbers of competitors. An **example budget** is available on the NZRA website.
6. Now you can advertise for entries. Send us the details and we can circulate them. Your entry form must obtain names and signatures, and should include a liability waiver statement. It must state the date and times of the event, the general location, and the cost. For coverage by the NZ Rogaining Association insurance and network, you must also require competitors to be members of NZRA, tell them how to join (by visiting this website) and stating that by entering, they have certified that they have become members. (It's free, after all.) An **example entry form** is available on the NZRA website. Entries should close several days before the event to finalise catering numbers.
7. Planning the checkpoints. On a small but hilly map, you may want these about 1 km apart. The locations of checkpoints should be a feature shown on the map, such as a gully, spur, saddle, building etc; or a feature not shown but which can be located from information which is on the map. Convention states that features which ARE on the map are referred to as "THE saddle, THE spur" etc. whereas features not on the map are referred to as "A spur, A gully, A watercourse junction" etc. You should try to locate the checkpoints so that there is no obvious best-route to visit them or travel between them. You want the competitors to make different decisions about their courses. This idea can be enhanced by the point-values you place on each checkpoint. Normally these range from 10 to 100 points each. Be aware that

Draft – in preparation

high-value checkpoints act like a magnet, and you don't want everyone to go the same way. Ideally a fit team should get roughly the same number of points per hour over most of the course.

As a guideline, on hilly country a top team may cover 50 kms in 12 hours, and 80 kms in 24 hours. On flat, open country this could increase to 75 kms and 120 kms respectively.

Checkpoints should be in interesting places if possible. They should be clearly visible from all angles at about 20 metres away. Remember, it's a lot harder at night-time.

8. Handling the entries, and advising of the start area and time, and the finish time. Advising of H-H site (and prizegiving/food site if different). Expect last-minute rushes of entries just before the deadline. You need final numbers a few days before the event, for catering needs. More to come here.
9. Checking the checkpoints, and getting them set up beforehand. It's necessary to get at least two people to visit each checkpoint before the event, to make sure the location is correct and also fair. Don't rely on GPS except as a second check. Remember, the competitors won't have GPS and they must be able to find the location from the information on the map. Mark each checkpoint with some plastic tape or wool, so that someone else can verify they are there when putting out the checkpoints. Electrician's tape, with writing on it, is useful. The actual checkpoint would normally consist of a punch, an intentions sheet, and a marking flag. These flags are normally 3 or 4 sided, with each side about 30 cm square, coloured white in one diagonal and orange in the other. Flags and punches can be borrowed from us. A convenient arrangement for checkpoints on lower-key events is to use local features instead of flags and punches. Ask such questions as "when was the shed built" or "what colour is the gate", or tie a couple of ribbons to a tree and ask "what colour are the ribbons". This system is very convenient because there are no checkpoints to retrieve after the event has finished. However the lack of intention sheets can raise a safety issue if a team is not back in time.
10. Making the maps and check cards.
11. The week before.
12. Starting the event. Briefing.
13. Finish and result handling. Times, teams, point calculation, point checking, punch card checking, allocation of places, announcing results.
14. Safety.

Finally, if you have any doubts over any issue then be sure to talk with someone who has experience in organising Rogaines.