

Grit Happens: The Good, the Bad, and the Blackstrap

July 9, 2023 – Blackstrap Provincial Park, Saskatchewan

Tech Guide v1

1. The Basics

This “gravel race” is an opportunity to challenge yourself (and others – if that’s your thing) on some scenic back country terrain in and around Blackstrap Provincial Park.

Riders can select between 50KM or 100KM races. All riders begin together in a “grand depart” format (more on that below) and complete the same 50KM of terrain southeast of the park. At the end of the first 50KM, riders doing an additional 50KM pass on through the start/finish area, where they can resupply, before heading out onto a second route northeast of the park (also more on that below).

Both routes feature a mix of double-track farm roads and grid gravel roads. There is virtually no pavement on the route.

2. Registration, Sign-On, and Start Time

- Riders can pre-register through CCN here: [Grit Happens: The Good, the Bad, and the Blackstrap | CCN \(ccnbikes.com\)](https://ccnbikes.com)
- There will be NO day-of registrations... unless you convince us there should be.
- An SCA club membership is required, but a race license is not.
- Sign-on is from **8am-9am** at the start/finish area.
- The race will begin at **9:30am** for ALL riders (50KM and 100KM distances)

3. Parking

Blackstrap is a busy provincial park in the summer, so we will avoid the main paved road into and out of the park. The start/finish area and participant parking is located at the park gates circled on the map below.

You can access this area by going through the main park entrance and following the paved road, or you can turn left onto the gravel road just before the main park entrance. Follow the gravel road, turn right at the “NO EXIT” sign and you can’t miss it.



4. The Routes

The 50KM and 100KM courses can be found on RideWithGPS here:

[Grit Happens: The Good, The Bad and The Blackstrap \(ridewithgps.com\)](https://www.ridewithgps.com)

The routes are primarily farm double-track roads and grid gravel roads. They are everything from smooth and fast to rough and bumpy. But the “rowdy” sections are all very short.

5. The “Grand Depart”

The race begins with a neutral “grand-depart.” All riders roll out together and ride the initial ~3KM of pavement through the park together. **The race is not on at this point.**

At the 3KM mark, the riders tackle a 1.3km section of easy singletrack MTB trails. These are easily rideable on a gravel bike, but ride within your limits. A race organizer who is not racing will lead through the singletrack to ensure no one gets lost. Riders will then exit the singletrack onto a wide-open grid road. **At this point, the race is on.**

Heading into the finish of the first 50KM, riders will briefly re-enter the single track on their way back towards the start/finish area. Go right, the opposite direction you came from at the start.

Racers completing 50KM find their way across the finish line and racers completing 100KM can resupply in the start/finish area. At the end of their 100KM, racers will return to the same start/finish area.

6. Start/Finish and Re-Supply Area

PLEASE BE COURTEOUS IN THE START/FINISH AREA!

50KM riders take precedence when they are finishing their race. If you're resupplying for the 100KM, make room for 50KM riders to finish their race. If you're a 100KM rider in a pack of 50KM riders coming to the finish, drop off the back and let them duke it out.

If you are a 100KM rider and will be leaving food, water, and/or mechanical supplies in the start/finish area, please bring your own bin or something to keep your stuff. There is no neutral support, so bring what you need and keep it separate from others' supplies.

7. What do you need?

- **A “gravel bike” with 40-50mm wide tires.** Narrower is fine but could get bumpy. Wider is fine too but could feel slow.
- **Road bike shoes/pedals are not recommended.** You might have to put a foot down or walk around a fallen tree.
- **~1L of water and a snack for each hour you'll be on course.** 50KM or 100KM is deceptively difficult, and you'll want to fuel accordingly.
- **Handlebar mounted GPS navigation is strongly recommended.** Whether it's an app on your phone, or a GPS cycling computer, you'll want a way to consult the course route while riding. Turns will be marked but consider navigation part of the event.
- **Basic mechanical supplies.** A spare tube, something to inflate it with, and a multi-tool at minimum. A chain-breaker and/or a quick link to fix a broken chain is also recommended.

If you see someone on course in need of food, water, mechanical, or navigational assistance and you are able to help, please do!

8. Post Race

We will provide a cold beverage and food at the end of the race.

There will also be a brief podium and awards ceremony following completion of the 50KM and 100KM races for both men's and women's categories.

If you choose to imbibe post-race, please do so responsibly.

9. Organizer Contacts

The easiest way to contact us is through a Facebook message to the Bike Doctor Detours club page. Conscientious Facebook-objectors may contact Stephen Cooley by email at cooley.stephen@gmail.com or phone at 416-710-0556.