

COURSE DESCRIPTION FOR THE TRAIL ANIMAL "DONT RUN BOSTON" 50K TRAIL RUN

contact: Howie Breinan, run director (RD) 37 Basket Shop Rd, Hebron, CT 06248
breinan@alumni.stanford.org (860) 228-3131 updated 4/09

The course starts and finishes at Houghton's Pond. Follow the highlighted sections on your map in this order: pink - blue - yellow - green - orange. **STAY ON THE TRAIL!** "Shortcut corners" on the map are only to make it more readable. It is tricky to follow the trail due to the many turns, but most intersections are clearly marked on the map by four-digit numbers. On the actual trail these numbers correspond to signs nailed high up on trees, either white or brown wood rectangles or blue plastic diamonds. Use these numbers! Careful- trees or markers sometimes fall down or fade and may not be there on race day. Note- you will not always be facing the signs when you enter an intersection. Much of the course is easily followed by these intersections, and thus these portions will not be described in detail. Tricky sections are described below. Make sure you follow the small loops in the correct direction.

The race begins (and ends) with a 1.1 mile loop around Houghton's Pond. This portion is quite flat and follows a trail of yellow dots, mostly on trees. Start with a clockwise loop. On the north side of the pond (where the swimming areas are) please stay on the carriage road.

After this loop, you will follow a winding trail to bring you to route 28. Check the markers at the intersections to make sure you are on course. Initially the trails are fairly wide, until a very tricky single-track section from 2140 over the top of Buck Hill. The left turn onto single track just past 2140 is closer than the map suggests, about 50 yards. It should be marked 2148 (but the marker is gone), just past a dirt mound (on the right) and goes straight up a rock slope. After 2154 you will climb another rock wall. Follow along the top to the left (there are some faded white dots on rocks) before the trail goes back into the woods. At 2162, the trail jogs to the left then right (to the top the rock hill), then left again at the balanced boulder on top. A bit further, at the next rock slope, head straight up. Some faded white dots/arrows may help. As you crest to the open area on the top of Buck Hill, there are several false trails. Angle a bit to the right, passing to the right of a 5 ft. tall boulder and 12 ft. tall tree. Now head toward the highest point of the hill, trying to meet the Skyline Trail, marked with blue blazes on rocks, that runs along the very top ridge. Turn right and join the Skyline Trail for the flat portion on top, only 50 yds. The trail off the top is unmarked, on your left, and comes just before you start down off the top of Buck Hill at its east end. There are a bunch of open rocks to the left where the race course goes. You will not feel like you are on the trail until you enter the brush on the way down. Previewing the course is key over the top. There are nice views on this section. Normal markers and wider trail resume when you reach 2182. Be careful crossing rte 28. Be sure to bear a little **TO THE RIGHT** of the telephone pole as you cross (avoid the skyline trail, which is straight across).

After crossing Rte. 28 (staying toward the right) make sure you are at 3013 when you get to the pipeline. Follow two short dirt/grass wide trails, then look **VERY CAREFULLY** for the Hawk Hill trail on the left. It is just over the top of the grade, at a cluster of 7 birch trees. You cannot see the marker, #3015, until you go past. This trail is narrow, unmarked, rugged, seldom used, and overgrown. Once you are on the Hawk Hill trail, it is difficult to follow. At the first big slope, very steep and all rock, start straight up. Near the top it goes off to the right. It then winds a lot and is tough to follow. There may be cairns in a few spots. Preview this section if you can. If not, plan to stumble around for a while. There is always trail- you just have to find it. Once you reach 3030, the trail is easier to follow. Don't miss the first right turn at 3041 (marker may be down). The trickiest spot is at the first rock slope past 3041. Start straight up, then, about halfway, bear to the right to the top where you follow along the ridge. There are various faced red, orange, yellow, and white dots along this trail. This is a nice single track section, until you get to 3122 above the swamp where you turn to wider trail.

Cross the swamp along the fence at the south border of the reservation (mile 7). To avoid getting wet, look on your right for a hole in the fence as you follow parallel to the highway (otherwise the last 25 yards will probably at least ankle deep.) Continue on mostly flat trail until you reach the red dot trail at 3135. Follow up to Sassaman notch, then, at a slightly tricky intersection where skyline trail crosses, continue on the **RIGHT** branch of the main trail (sign points to yellow trail, overlook parking). Continue straight past the first 3 yellow dots, and head toward the road, staying to the **right** toward a small parking lot. Follow the wide jeep trail through the single bar gate. At about 0.2 mile, bear right at a tricky intersection (just past a 90° right which you ignore). Continue about 0.3 mile, looking for the Skyline Trail at 3144, found **IMMEDIATELY** through the second of two chain link gates/fences.

The skyline trail includes the most rugged terrain on the course. This trail is very rocky, often climbing rock steps or steep rock faces which require scrambling instead of running. Please be careful. The skyline trail is well marked with blue blazes (rectangles), usually on trees OR rocks. This corresponds to the blue highlight on your map. If you go more than 75 yards without seeing a blaze, you have missed one or made a wrong turn. There are a couple tricky spots, usually at low points where other trails cross. You will make a lollipop loop on this course. From the point you hit the skyline, you will run about 1.9 mi. to Rte. 28, cross, then another 1.6 mi. to Hillside Street (mile 13.1). Across Hillside St. up the hill on the driveway (to the right of the gate) is park HQ and the water fountain. Start the 2.7 mi. counter-clockwise loop on the skyline trail, going through the gate on the wide road and bearing right up the steep hill on Skyline North. After traversing several hills, you will reach the high point on the skyline, a flat section on the rim of Great Blue Hill. As a bonus, climb the tower directly in front of you for great views. Otherwise, turn left over the stone bridge for about 50 yds, looking for Skyline South on the left to bring you back to HQ (1060, marked with a 3 ft. tall stone column marker). When you reach Hillside St. again, you can go to your car by crossing the street and going to the right to the Houghton's Pond parking lot (in view- about 300 yds). Otherwise, do NOT cross. Run along the road back to HQ.

The next section is a big, winding loop (yellow and green highlights) back to HQ. Start up the road past the gate, past Skyline, to the next intersection (1160) and take a **hard** right. This begins a long "S" where the course pinches back on itself twice in the next 3 mi. At these two intersections (1160 and 1175), four or more trails come together. You will enter and exit such that you never actually re-cross your previous path OF THE SAME COLOR (you will cross the skyline), only running alongside for a couple steps at the corner. 1175 is somewhat tricky, as the first time through you have to make a **very** sharp left about 20 yards **before** the marker, **before** crossing a small brook. On this loop, there is a tricky, possibly unmarked intersection at 1182 where you should bear left. After looping around to the brook near 1175, cross the brook (now on your left), then make a left at 1175, and follow the trail on the map along the north edge of the reservation to the Trailside Museum parking lot. Last part follows green dots.

Run across the handicap parking spaces in the corner of the lot, then to the left of the building. Cross the narrow bridge toward the museum grounds. Follow the fence around the museum grounds (keep fence on your right) and look for the second of two red dot trails heading uphill via railroad tie steps. The second of the two is just before the ski slope. Also, pay close attention to the dots- especially near the top there are some worn paths that could lead you off course. As you start up, you should see the ski slope on the right. The trail turns to rock and continues up, eventually crossing the paved mountain road and continuing up to the rim trail where there is a sign in front of you (1055) and a the tower (same one as the top of the skyline) to your left.

Follow the rim trail back across the paved road, then take a right down the powerline trail. At the bottom of this short (50 yd) stretch, turn right again, then left down the ski slope before you get to the road a third time. Follow the ski slope ALL the way down, staying on the FARTHEST RIGHT hand slope. At the bottom of the ski slope, stay on the open trail, forcing you around to the left. Run across the bottom of the slope, keeping the lifts to your left and the road to your right. When you pass the big lodge, and reach the last slope, you need to look for the trail going back into the woods. Head up about 50 yards and you should see the trail cutting off to the right just above lift chair tower #1. The course follows this trail about halfway around the base of Great Blue Hill, mostly close to roads (sorry).

Careful around the hill- there are 2 false trails before you get to 1062. At this hard to spot marker, head uphill as the course starts to wind up and down again. From here, the green highlight is easily followed by the intersection numbers or x's. Avoid false trails- all of the real trails should be clearly recognized, but there are mini-trails to nowhere in spots. The course again pinches back on itself (without crossing green again), three times in this section (1110, 1126, and 1120). Marker 1110 is missing. Follow the course carefully. On the last section, you will be running down the wide road in reverse direction back to HQ.

Cross Hillside St. for the last road crossing. You will make a 3.7 mi. loop back to the pond. After following Bugbee Path to the end of the dirt, you will turn left up a hill on a brief paved section. Follow the course on mostly wide trails (don't miss the left at 2095, this turns onto a narrower path near the bottom of a short steep hill) back to the Skyline/Orange Trail next to Rte. 28. From here you will follow what was the old orange trail back to the pond. These markers have been painted over. Finish with a reverse (clockwise) loop around the pond on the yellow dot trail.

<u>section</u>	<u>start/end</u>	<u>color</u>	<u>mileage</u> <u>section/total</u>	<u>section</u>	<u>start/end</u>	<u>color</u>	<u>mileage</u> <u>section/total</u>
1a	HP-HP	pink	1.1/1.1	3	HQ-museum	yellow	4.3/20.1
1b	HP-Rte 28	pink	4.1/5.2	4a	museum-HQ	green	6.2/26.3
1c	Rte 28-Lot X	pink	3.9/9.1	4b	HQ-Rte 28	green	2.0/28.3
2a	Lot X-Rte 28	blue	2.4/11.5	5a	Rte 28-HP	orange	1.7/30.0
2b	Rte 28-HQ	blue	1.6/13.1	5b	HP-HP	orange	1.1/31.1
2c	HQ-HQ	blue	2.7/15.8	HP=start/finish at Houghton's Pond, lot X= parking lot off Chickatawbut Rd, HQ=MDC park headquarters on Hillside St., museum=trailside parking lot off Rte 138			