

IMRA Competition Rules



Updated August 2024

These competition rules are referred to in the IMRA constitution.

Members are invited to make proposals to the Executive Committee on the Rules; proposals will be reviewed and may or may not be implemented at the discretion of the Committee.

Rule	Description
1. Introduction	<p>These rules are not part of the IMRA constitution. They are a set of rules that primarily regulate the format and conduct of races. The rules cover a broad range of issues including the structures of different competitions (number of races, how results are calculated <i>etc.</i>), age classes, race safety, insurance issues and age restrictions.</p> <p>These rules are not meant to be a Race Director's manual. There are further documents available on the website that more fully describe the roles of volunteers at a race, safety procedures, and the logistical set-up at race registration & finish.</p>
2. Annual registration, registration at individual races & insurance cover	<p><u>Members must complete the annual registration process online.</u> No one can take part in an IMRA race until they have registered for the year.</p> <p>Entry to individual races is also through an online process on the IMRA website and includes the member ticking a box to accept IMRA's terms and conditions – this includes acceptance that they are fully aware of the risks of injury from mountain running.</p> <p>On race day, runners must check in at the race day check-in sheet as confirmation that they have arrived and will be racing (and as such need to be accounted for as having finished or retired from the race). There is no need for the runner to sign the check-in sheet.</p> <p>IMRA maintains a combined liability insurance policy which includes public liability. It does not include personal accident cover for members participating in IMRA events. Participants do so at their own risk. Members may wish to take out their own personal accident insurance.</p> <p>Participants in a race must comply with all safety requirements (see Rule 10 & refer to IMRA Safety Policy).</p>
3. Fixtures/events	<p>The fixtures calendar and Competition Rules are set by the IMRA Executive Committee. Members are at all times welcome to make proposals on events and competition formats both directly to the Committee and through debate on the forum.</p> <p>While Race Directors are given some discretion in relation to race routes and distances, significant changes to routes should be discussed with the Executive Committee (or relevant League Director) before being finalised.</p>

4. Age classes & race distances

Age classes

Open “M/F” categories

All adult runners who have not yet reached the year of their 35th birthday are regarded as “M” or “F” with no age category.

Masters categories

A Master is defined on the basis of the year of their birthday. A person who reaches his or her 35th birthday in the year of competition is regarded as a master and is in the age group 35-39.

The Masters’ age groups for IMRA races are 35-39; 40-44; 44-49; 50-54; 55-59; 60-65; 65-69; 70-74, 75-80 and over 80.

Junior categories

Note that all references to age in relation to junior runners refer to the age the runner is by December 31st of the current calendar year.

Year of birth	Age category in 2024	Max distance runner allowed to run:	Allowed run unmarked routes?
2015* – 2018**	M/FAJ (Accompanied)	5 km	No
2011 – 2014*	M/F14	5 km	No
2009 – 2010	M/F16	7 km	No
2007 – 2008	M/F18	10 km	No
Up to & incl 2006	Adult categories	Not limited	Yes

*Under 10 years **on day of race** must be accompanied on the race route by a guardian or parent

Must be minimum 6 years of age **on day of race to be allowed to take part

Results on website

Race results for will be displayed under relevant M/F and age category in the results posted on the website.

Prizes

Overall 1st, 2nd & 3rd

The first three F and the first three M finishers in the race (full/long course) will normally be awarded prizes, regardless of age category (i.e. open M/F, any Masters category, or junior eligible to run the full course).

Generally, all races will have prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd M & F as above. Some races will have age category prizes as above. Some will also have certain age category prizes as below. Individual Championship races don’t have age category prizes, but age category prizes are awarded for the overall championships.

Juniors

There will be a M/F Junior prize available to first Junior in the short course of any race. Juniors racing the full race distances of any IMRA race will not be eligible for a junior age category prize unless

	<p>a) there were no juniors racing the short course of that race event, or b) if there wasn't a short course.</p> <p>For this purpose, "Junior" means any M/F 18, 16, 15 or AJ; there are NOT separate prize categories for each. The website displays results for M/F14 (incl AJ) as a separate group, but there is no separate prize category.</p> <p>As noted above, if an eligible junior racing the full race distance of any IMRA race comes in the top 3 of either M/F results they will be eligible for a podium prize.</p> <p><u>Masters</u></p> <p>Results are recorded on the website for each 5 year category, <i>i.e.</i> M/F35, 40, 45 etc. up to</p> <p>Masters age category prizes for individual races will normally be awarded for 10 year age groupings, rather than 5 year groupings***. For example, the F40 prize will be awarded to the fastest female in either the F40 or F45 category; F50 prize for fastest in F50 or F55, etc. In certain races, such as Irish and provincial championship races, age category prizes are not awarded, only prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd M & F finishers (see Rule 9).</p> <p>***League prizes for the 5 year age groupings will be awarded unless otherwise advised, but the individual races will only have prizes for the 10 year category groupings.</p>
<p>5. Scoring systems – general principles</p>	<p>The winner of a championship or league event is awarded one point. The person finishing second is awarded two points and so on.</p> <p>In the event of a tie on points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The runner with the most wins will be given the higher placing ii. If the tie is still not resolved, the runner with the best head-to-head result will be given a higher placing (<i>e.g.</i> if two runners are tied on points then if Person A beat Person B more times than Person B beat Person A then person A gets the higher placing) iii. If the tie is still not resolved, the best non-counting race will be used. <p>For team races the first man and woman are both awarded one point. The team with the lowest points wins. Tied points are resolved in favour of the first team to have all their scorers to finish.</p>
<p>6. Championship prizes</p>	<p>In the Irish and provincial championship series of races, individual prizes will be awarded to the first three overall men and women. Annual awards will be given to the winners of the various Championships and Leagues in all age categories.</p>
<p>7. Race safety</p>	<p>The IMRA Race Safety Guidelines give the definitive position on Safety.</p> <p>All runners in a race must have fully completed the online race entry process and checked in at the check-in sheet at Registration. Note it is not necessary to sign the sheet; confirming who you are to the sign-in official is sufficient. All must have an official IMRA race number.</p> <p>Junior runners must adhere to IMRA guidelines on appropriate distances for young (u-18) athletes; refer to Rule 4.</p> <p>All runners must report to the finish and report their race numbers as proof of their safe return.</p> <p>The onus is on the individual runner to check race details before entering a race; a runner should NOT enter a race for which they do not have the appropriate fitness, ability (for</p>

	<p>example, some races require the ability to navigate) or kit. No refunds will be entertained in such situations.</p> <p>The Race Director may, in advance or on race day, deny participation in the race to anyone they feel would be unable to do so safely. In particular, any person who is visibly intoxicated and/or taken any drugs shall not be permitted to participate.</p> <p>For full details, refer to the IMRA Safety Policy.</p>
8. Course marking	<p>This is generally done using flags (red & yellow) and tape (red & yellow with black IMRA logo). Other markings such as signs with arrows may be used as appropriate. On fully marked courses, the course route at all junctions should be clearly marked. Where appropriate, marshals may be used as well as or instead of the usual markings.</p> <p>Refer to IMRA Race Marking Guidelines document for full details.</p>
9. Headphones & speakers	<p>Headphones, earbuds, "AirPods" or similar are not allowed while competing in any IMRA race. This is on safety grounds - runners may, at any time, need to hear other runners, marshals, traffic <i>etc.</i> "Hear through" mode and bone-conduction type headphones are not acceptable excuses or ways around the rule.</p> <p>Similarly, runners must not use loudspeakers to play music <i>etc.</i> during races - these are distracting and a nuisance to others.</p> <p>Penalty for breach of above = disqualification</p>
10. Trekking poles	<p>Trekking poles are not allowed in races under 50 km.</p> <p>Even in races > 50 km, poles must be folded away in crowded situations such as the race start, or on narrow sections where other runners are trying to pass. The onus is on the user of the poles to use them safely and avoid injury to others.</p>
11. Pacing	<p>Pacing or pacesetting is not permitted in IMRA races and can result in disqualification from the race.</p>
12. Early race starts	<p>Races with cut-off times and under 8 km do not have an early start option. Many races will have an early start option, at the discretion of the Race Director. If an early start is permitted, it is for runners expecting to finish 160+% of the winning time. Early starters are excluded from winning prizes unless all runners in their age category were early starters. All participants who take the early start will be automatically recorded as having finished behind the main field regardless of their percentage of the winning time.</p>
13. Volunteering	<p>While volunteering is a core part of the ethos of IMRA, it does not form part of the Competition Rules, other than the Race Director and First Aid Officer are not allowed to run in the race.</p>
14. Carpooling	<p>Those attending a race are requested to make every reasonable effort to carpool where possible, but in general carpooling does not form part of the Competition Rules. Where warranted, race organisers reserve the right to deny entry to a parking area or the race itself if carpooling requests are not respected.</p>
15. Land access; leaving race venue clean	<p>Permission from landowners for access should be obtained well in advance of any event.</p> <p>Any damage to fences <i>etc.</i> caused by IMRA runners or race volunteers must be reported as soon as possible to the Race Director. IMRA members must not leave any litter behind after a race and the race route should be demarked immediately after the race.</p>

16. Race Director discretion	<p>A Race Director has a limited level of discretion to waive some of these competition rules in exceptional circumstances. Any such action should be based on sound judgment if it is taken without prior recourse to the Executive committee.</p> <p>Race Directors will announce on the race page or forum the period of time assigned for race registration. Check-in will not be accepted after this time unless there is an unexpected delay with start time.</p>
17. Races & leagues	<p>The IMRA calendar contains over 100 races, ranging from the Irish Championship (run on the highest mountains) to trail leagues and navigational challenges. For practical purposes provincial and Irish championship races may be run in conjunction with each other to ensure the highest mountains are included in both leagues without creating an undue administrative workload.</p> <p>The following subsections briefly outline each of the IMRA Championships, Leagues and other notable IMRA events.</p>
17-a. Irish Championship	A series of five races with a runner's best three races to count. The races will typically not be marked but this is at the discretion of the race director; in some cases critical sections of the route may be marked. Up and down races generally on mountains such as Carrauntoohil, Galtymore, Mweelrea and Lugnacaille will comprise four of these races.
17-b. Leinster Championship	A series of five races with a runner's best three races to count. The race routes will generally not be marked.
17-c. Munster Championship	A series of six races with a runner's best four races to count. The race routes will generally not be marked.
17-d. Connacht Championship	A series of two races with both to count. The race routes will generally not be marked.
17-e. College Championship	A one-off race. Any number of persons can run on a team. The fastest three runners from each college score. This is not an open race and runners must meet the criteria set out in Rule 8.2 sections (ii) to (v) of the IUAA rules. Entrants must be registered as students at a third level Irish college (includes Northern Ireland). They do not have to be a member of their individual college's athletic team nor does the college athletic have to be affiliated to the IUAA. The race route will be fully marked.
17-f. Leinster League	A league comprising 13 races with a runner's best seven to count. The race routes are fully marked.
17-g. Munster Half-Marathon League	A league of seven races with four to count. The race routes will be partially marked and will be in the region of half-marathon distance.
17-h. Munster Trail League	A league of eleven races with seven to count. The race routes will be fully marked and generally will be on forest paths and mountain roads. Distances will be less than half-marathon.

17-i. Fog in the Bog League	A league of six races in the Cork/Kerry border region, with a runner's best four to count.
17-j. Wicklow Way Relay	<p>An eight stage relay race along the Wicklow Way. There are strict rules regarding teams being responsible for the safety of their members, runners must recce their leg in advance. Teams are expected to make every effort to maximise their car pooling.</p> <p>Teams may comprise between two and eight runners with age category and sex restrictions on teams of three or more runners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2: Open ● 3: to include a lady or master ● 4: to include a lady and master (may be the same person) ● 5: to include a lady and master (may not be the same person) ● 6: to include 2 ladies and 2 masters (may be the same persons) ● 7: to include 2 ladies and 2 masters (only one may be the same person) ● 8: to include 2 ladies and 2 masters (may not be the same persons) <p>Full rules for the race are displayed on the race page.</p>
17-k. Leinster Spring League	A league of seven races with a runner's best four to count. The race routes will be fully marked and generally will be on forest paths and mountain roads.
17-l. Leinster Trail League	A league of three races with all three to count. The race routes will be fully marked and generally will be on forest paths and mountain roads.
17-m. West League	A league of eleven races with a runner's best six to count. The races will be held in the west and northwest of Ireland. Terrain will vary from forest trails to open mountain.
17-n. Ulster Championship	A series of five races in the Ulster region, with a runner's best three to count. Organised in collaboration with NIMRA (Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association).
17-o. Navigational Challenge	A league of three races with all 3 to count. By definition the courses are not marked. Participants will be required to have basic navigational skills and are required to carry safety equipment with them.
17-p. Irish Ultra Championship	A league of five races with a runner's best three to count. Mandatory kit requirements appropriate for long duration races are in place.
17-q. Wicklow Glacier Lakes	A relay race comprising teams of 1-4 persons. There are four legs and solo runners are allowed to compete. Some runners are eligible for time bonuses allowing their team to start early.
17-r. Wicklow Round	An extreme challenge run over around 100 km and 6,000 metres of climb in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. A person attempting the round has to summit 26 peaks to complete the round. The round is not an IMRA event and hence it is not covered by IMRA insurance. See Wicklow Round page for further information.