

FRA Rules for Competition 2026

Introduction

The management of fell races in England and the Isle of Man is delegated from UK Athletics (UKA) to the FRA. Official UKA-authorized fell races can only be registered and granted a licence by the FRA.

The 'FRA Rules for Competition' apply in conjunction with the UKA/IAAF Rules for Competition. Where an FRA rule differs from the equivalent UKA/IAAF rule, the FRA wording takes precedence. The UKA/IAAF Rules for Competition are obtainable at britishathletics.org.uk.

The 'FRA Rules for Competition' apply to English Championship races. They also apply to all other FRA races unless otherwise stated; however, Race Organisers of non-Championship races may override certain aspects of these rules (see section 2 below).

For clarification concerning any rule, please contact the FRA Secretary.

1. General Rules

a) Age categories and distance limits

A veteran is a woman or man aged 40 or over on the day of the race.

Junior and Under-23 age categories are defined by age at end of year (31st of December). These are defined as follows, with maximum distances as applied to standard fell races:

| Age Categories (Boys and Girls) All based on age at 31 st December | Year of birth | Age of competitors | Maximum race distance |
|--|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Under 10's | 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 | 6 (from date of 6th birthday), 7, 8, 9 | 1.5 Km |
| Under 12's | 2015, 2016 | 9, 10, 11 | 3 Km |
| Under 14's | 2013, 2014 | 11, 12, 13 | 5 Km |
| Under 16's | 2011, 2012 | 13, 14, 15 | 6 Km |
| Under 18's | 2009, 2010 | 15, 16, 17 | 8 Km |
| Under 20's | 2007, 2008 | 17, 18, 19 | 10 Km |

Paired mountain marathons

For paired mountain marathon-style (MM) or mountain orienteering (MO) events, over one day or longer, where one of the two runners is under 18 years of age, the other runner (the "accompanying adult") must be at least 21. Where the accompanying adult is not the parent or legal guardian of the younger runner, the RO must ensure that the junior's parent/guardian has

given proper and informed consent. The minimum age for the younger runner is 14 years on the day of the race and the following straight line distance limits apply for each day of the event:

| Age 14 or 15 years | Age 16 or 17 years |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 20 kilometres | 25 kilometres |

Note: For “score”-type (time-limited) events, it is the responsibility of the “accompanying adult” to ensure that the distance limits are adhered to. Race Organisers may, at their discretion:

- refuse Junior's entry to certain categories with higher time limits. They may also require previous relevant experience from either the accompanying adult or Junior or both.
- agree Juniors U14's entry to certain categories with lower time limits. They must require relevant experience from the “accompanying adult” and junior.

b) Entry process and licensing requirements

No runner may take part in any race without having entered the race in accordance with the Race Organiser's procedures and requirements.

Race entry fees for FRA-registered events shall be the same for all entrants in each category of event (Senior, Vet over 40, Junior under 8, Junior under 12 etc), with the following exceptions:

- i. Pre-entry and entry on the day may be charged at different rates. A small variation to allow for the different costs of online or credit card administration is permissible; however, the price listed in the Handbook and on the FRA website must be the minimum actual cost. For example, if pre-entry is only available online and an administration fee is applied, this must be included in the published cost.
- ii. For Senior races only, Race Organisers may charge a higher entry fee for non-members of the FRA than for members. The maximum permitted differences are £2 for Short (S) races, £3 for Medium (M) races and £4 for Long (L), orienteering (O) or mountain marathon-style (MM) races. See also Note 1 below.
- iii. Events registered as mountain orienteering (MO) or mountain marathon (MM) events may charge an adjusted “late entry” fee to reflect special requirements such as the production of maps.

Note 1: Individual membership of England Athletics does not constitute membership of the FRA, nor does membership of other national bodies, nor membership of a running or athletics club. If differential pricing is applied as per (ii) above, such entrants will need to pay the higher (non-member's) price unless they are also FRA members. Conversely, FRA members who happen to be “unattached” (i.e. are not members of a club) should be charged the lower price.

Race Organisers of Senior events (except British Championship races) may choose to open entries earlier for FRA members. For English Championship races only, 20% of entries must remain publicly available. Additionally, the English and British guaranteed entry lists apply to races in the respective championships.

c) Principle of self-navigation

A core principle of fell racing is that of self-navigation. All FRA races strictly prohibit the use of electronic devices with aids such as GPS (including GLONASS, GALILEO etc) for the purposes of navigation. This includes watches, handheld devices and mobile phones, as well as future technologies such as visors or earpieces. Runners may not use such devices to delineate or follow a route (including the use of arrows or audio signals to warn of being “off track”), to display current position on a map, to display or follow a compass bearing or to reposition or otherwise navigate in any way. Unless prohibited by the Race Organiser, the use of such a device to display distance travelled, time, speed or altitude is allowed, as is recording of an actual route for post-race analysis. A runner may also carry such a device for use in an emergency situation, but if used – even momentarily for repositioning – the runner must retire from the race and declare himself/herself non-competitive to the Race Organiser.

2. Eligibility Rules

The following age and eligibility requirements will apply for Junior and Senior English Fell Championships. They will also apply to all other FRA-licensed races unless otherwise stated. Race Organisers of non-Championship races are free to introduce local race categories based on age or other eligibility provided the requirements for runners are observed.

a) Age categories

For Junior and Senior Championship races the age categories in section 1 above apply. The Under-23 definition will also apply to British Championship events.

For non-Championship races, definitions of age categories are at the Race Organiser’s discretion, provided that any changes to the above are made clear in the race information and at registration.

b) Individual eligibility

Individuals are eligible to compete in the English Fell Championship if they meet one of the following criteria:

1. They are a member of an English club affiliated to England Athletics and currently registered (paid up for the year) with England Athletics.
2. They are a member of a club affiliated to another National Association, are currently registered with the National Association, and meet England eligibility criteria (either born in England or resident in England for a minimum of 12 months before the first Championship race).
3. They are members of the FRA and meet England eligibility criteria (either born in England or resident in England for a minimum of 12 months before the first Championship race).

These requirements apply to the Championship as a whole, not individual races which are open to anyone meeting the appropriate criteria and any requirements for prior experience.

c) Team eligibility

Runners may count for a team for their first claim (or ‘first claim other’) fell running Club only. This Club must be affiliated to England Athletics or other National Association. For runners who are simultaneously members of two clubs, in the event of ambiguity over which club has ‘first claim’

status an appeal should be made to the FRA Chairman or Membership Secretary at the start of the season.

Runners may change clubs during the season and will become eligible to count for their new club when the UKA/IAAF 'Transfer from one club to another' has been completed. This applies both to individuals registered with a National Association and to FRA members.

Club vests must be worn for runners to score team points.

3. Protests and Disciplinary Matters

These Protest and Disciplinary rules apply to all FRA-licensed races.

- i. The FRA may take such action as the FRA deems to be necessary following a breach of the Rules of Competition or other misconduct by competitors, organisers and other officials at any event coming within the jurisdiction of the FRA.
- ii. Any person who makes a false entry for a race may be dealt with by the FRA for misconduct.
- iii. Any competitor who indulges in unfair practices or misbehaviour, including the use of offensive or abusive language, or who fails to comply with any requirement contained within the current FRA Requirements for Runners (including failure to carry the kit specified by the Rules and/or by the Race Organiser or using prohibited kit, including GPS devices), may be disqualified from a race, at the discretion of the Race Organiser. The Race Organiser must report any such disqualification to the Secretary of the FRA.
- iv. Competitors or Race Organisers who breach the Rules of Competition or who breach any FRA Requirements for Runners or who conduct themselves in a manner which may bring discredit to the sport of fell running may be reported to the Secretary of the FRA. In the case of a breach of the Rules of Competition or of the FRA Requirements for Runners or other misconduct by a competitor in the course of a fell race, the Race Organiser must report the matter to the Secretary of the FRA.
- v. Where a Junior (under the age of 18) commits an infringement covered by paras (i) to (iv) above, the FRA may additionally take action against the supervising adult(s), parent(s) or guardian(s), as the FRA deems appropriate.
- vi. Any protest or objection against qualification to compete in a race must be made to the Race Organiser, who may refer the matter to the Secretary of the FRA.
- vii. Any protest or objection by a competitor or club against the placing of that or another competitor or a club's team or against the conduct of another competitor must be made to the Race Organiser within one week of the publication of the results.
- viii. Any report or complaint under paragraphs (iii) or (iv) must be made in writing to the Secretary of the FRA within 21 days of the incident (or of the incident coming to light).
- ix. In the event of a report of misconduct or complaint having been made to the Secretary of the FRA, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the FRA shall review the matter and determine what, if any, penalties are to be imposed. This process will be conducted according to the FRA's Disciplinary, Review and Appeals Sub-Committee: Terms of

Reference (v2.7 at time of publication). The review and determination must be completed within 21 days of the referral of the matter to the Secretary. However, in the case of investigations involving abuse or safeguarding where another party is involved e.g. the Police or Social Services, then the review and determination must be completed within one month of the Secretary of the FRA being notified of the final outcome of the investigations of the other party.

- x. The Terms of Reference can be found on the FRA website:
<https://files.fellrunner.org.uk/documents/2025/fra-disciplinary-tor-2-7.pdf>