

Tom's Run Frequently Asked Questions

(Have a question that is not here? Write admin@tomsrunrelay.org)

What is Tom's Run?

Tom's Run is an annual 200-mile team relay held the weekend after Memorial Day. Tom's Run is sponsored by the DC Chapter of the Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officer's Association, The Chief Petty Officer's Association, the Coast Guard Enlisted Association, the Coast Guard Officer's Association, and the Coast Guard Running Club in memory of CWO4 Tom Brooks. The event is organized to promote teamwork, planning, community, and fitness.

How is the race organized?

Teams can start any time after midnight on the day of the race. We try to alternate between starting on Friday, to finish on Saturday, one year and starting Saturday, to finish on Sunday, the next year. We do this because there is mixed opinion on the best days to run the race and we feel alternating start days each year is a good compromise. Teams must plan their start time based on the team makeup and projected pace to finish at 11:00 AM on the second day of the race. Some teams start just after midnight, while other teams

might start 12 hours later. The course comprises 31 legs of varying lengths with start and stop locations to swap bikers and runners. The start and stop locations and the driving directions to them are described in the course map. The goal in Tom's Run is for everyone on all the teams to finish together at 11:00 AM.

What are the rules for Tom's Run?

Tom's Run has very few rules. But the rules we have are for safety. At least one runner and one biker must be on the course together at all times. This means there could be any number of runners and bikers from a team on a leg at any time. The runners and bikers can also trade places along their leg and can complete multiple legs before swapping with team members. The runner(s) and biker(s) must stay together. Runners and bikers must also be provided with adequate safety equipment such as food, water, a cell phone, and lights for nighttime on the course. And, the object of the event is that everyone arrives at the finish together at 11:00AM on the second day of the race.

Must teams switch runners or bikers at each transition point?

No. The transition points are places that have been identified and standardized for the convenience of the teams. Teams are not required to switch runners or bikers at any transition point. Switching runners or bikers depends on each team's schedule. However, if runners or bikers are switched, the switch must occur at one of the standard transition points.

What support does Tom's Run provide for the teams?

Tom's Run organizers provide no support along the event course except for the course map, emergency information, and lunch at the finish. Teams are expected to be self-supporting. This means each team must be able to navigate the course and provide its own food, liquids, and rest. Lunch is provided at the finish for those participants who have asked for it in their application.

How many people are on a team?

Each team constructs itself depending on the team-members abilities and how the members want to challenge themselves. There is no limit to the number of people on a team. We have had teams with 30 people. The minimum number of team members is 2; one biker and one runner.

How is the course divided among team members?

Each team must determine its own schedule for who runs and who bikes and how much mileage each person is responsible to complete to arrive at the finish at 11:00 AM on the second day of the event. A spreadsheet to help plan the leg assignments is available in the Tool Box on the web site.

Must the team members always stay together?

No. Teams employ a number of strategies to complete the race. Some teams meet at the beginning and travel together throughout the race. Other teams start with a group and have other team members meet them along the course. Team members can come and go as the team decides.

What kind of equipment is needed?

The Tom's Run toolbox contains a list of recommended equipment. Some important items are spare bike parts, headlamps with spare batteries and bulbs, extra clothing, rain gear and a warm jacket, large quantities of liquids, and snacks and other food.

Does Tom's Run collect money for charities?

No. Tom's Run is held each year in memory of CWO4 Tom Brooks and to honor his values of teamwork, planning, and community. Registration fees and T-shirt costs are used to reserve the course, arrange insurance, cater lunch, and provide medals for the participants. Our goal is to keep the cost of Tom's Run to a minimum to encourage participation.

How long does the event last?

Tom's Run kicks off with an optional pre-race dinner on the night before the start: typically Thursday (when the race starts on Friday) or Friday (when the race starts on Saturday). Teams can begin running and biking any time after midnight on race day. One aspect of Tom's Run that makes it unique is that each team controls its own schedule by planning who runs or bikes when and for how long depending on each runner's skills and pace. So, after a little planning backwards from the 11:00 AM finish time, each team will know when it must start to reach that goal. The Tom's Run toolbox contains a spreadsheet that is formatted to calculate the needed start time to reach the finish at 11:00 AM.

Does Tom's Run have awards or prizes?

Yes....sort of. Some fun prizes are given out at the pre-race dinner, such as for the oldest or youngest team members, the participant with the most Tom's Runs, the participant from furthest away, or teams that win occasional games at dinner. Teams are asked to note their start and finish times. We might begin giving an award for the fastest time if the sponsors agree. In that regard, please note that a finish before 11:00 AM is rounded up to 11:00 AM.

What are some other things to remember about Tom's Run?

Tom's Run is an event to celebrate Tom Brooks' philosophy that people should connect and that one of the best ways to do that is through fitness. Tom's Run takes planning, commitment, and teamwork – these are also values the Coast Guard prizes.

Also – remember – Tom's Run takes place at the beginning of summer and the weather can be hot or cold, rainy or dry. Thunderstorms have been common in the past. Teams need to stay aware of conditions and have a strategy for adapting to bad weather, injuries, delays, lost drivers, and lost team members. Plan ahead!