

# 2017 Ultra Gobi Race Regulations

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## I . Race background

The Chinese name of the race, “八百流沙(Eight Hundred Li of Sand)” refers to the expanse of desert stretching from Guazhou in Gansu Province to the Hami region in Xinjiang. Also known in China as the World of Desert and Moraines and has great historical significance – it is part of the pilgrimage route of Master Xuanzang, one of China’s greatest Buddhist scholars, translators and travelers. This is how this area is described by Xuanzang: “All is sand and moraines, for more than eight hundred li, there is nothing but barren sand and dry river beds; there is not enough water to nourish even a single blade of grass, one looks for beasts on land and birds in the sky but finds none…at night stars are plentiful, shining like fires lit by devils, while during the day fierce winds rain sand upon you.”

Ultra Gobi, organized by Xingzhi, is China’s longest non-stop ultra-long race. The participants are required to complete the 400km course in the arid desert wilderness within 149 hours. From 2017 the cut off time shall be reduced by one hour each year. There are no compulsory rest periods, but the race is self-navigating, self-supported and self-supplied. The first edition of Ultra Gobi was successfully held from between September 28th to October 4th, 2015. Thirty runners, including several international elite athletes, took part, with 18 finishing the race. The winning time was 92 hours 52 minutes and 58 seconds. And the 2016 edition of Ultra Gobi was successfully held at the same time with last year. Thirty runners, including 15 international elite athletes, took part, with 22 finishers. The winning time was 92 hours 26 minutes and 15 seconds.

The location of the race route is known in China for the ferocity of its winds, so much so, that it was nicknamed “Wind Storage Room” . Eighty percent of the course runs through uninhabited areas. During the Han and Tang Dynasties military garrisons protecting Chinese borders were located in this strategically important region. The race route goes through sixty historical ancient ruins, including two World Cultural Heritage sites – Suoyang City ruins and Xuanquan Zhi(courier station), as well as six national-level cultural protection sites, including the famous Yulin Grottoes and Stone City Ruins. The runners will

cross a great variety of landscapes and geological formations, having to negotiate hills, salt flats, yardangs (hoodoos) canyons, glaciers, dry riverbeds, cross rivers and high mountain pastures. The weather conditions here are very harsh - in 2015, the lowest temperature on the race course was recorded at  $-13^{\circ}\text{C}$ , while the highest was  $30.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Such climatic conditions make the race one of the world's toughest and most challenging ultra-races. The rich historical background of the race also makes it unique.

The number of the participants in this race is limited to 50. After all the runners' applications have been reviewed by the organizing committee, the successful ones are selected at random using the lottery system.

## **II. Race organization**

Organizer: Beijing Xingzhi Culture Co., Ltd,

Contractor: Beijing Xingzhi Race Management Co., Ltd,

Gansu Journey of Xuan Zang Culture Development Co., Ltd.

Technical support: Neusoft Corporation, Race Events Division

## **III. Race requirements**

### **Race participation conditions**

Age requirements: the participants must be between 18 and 60 years old.

Health requirements: Every competitor must present a medical certificate of being in good health acquired within three months before the race date. The following medical conditions will prevent the competitor from taking part in the race: heart disease (including congenital heart disease, rheumatic heart disease and so on), myocarditis, coronary artery disease, severe arrhythmia, hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes with excessively high blood sugar levels as well as any other medical condition deemed unsuitable for taking part in this extreme race. Every competitor must fully fill out the Participation Statement, and have it re-signed during the race check-in.

Race Experience:

- In order to be eligible for the race the runner must have the minimum of 20 ITRA points, obtained in no more than 4 races attended during the two-year period before the race registration date. These races must include at least one 100km race completed within 22 hours, or a successful completion of a 100-mile race.
- The organizing committee shall also consider applications from outdoor and endurance athletes who have, for example, having successfully summited an 8000m peak, or completed very long distance running expeditions (such as transcontinental runs); each such application requires a submission of an outdoor CV and shall be considered on its individual merit.
- Successful completion of Ultra Gobi allows the competitor to be exempt from ITRA point requirements for the following year's edition of the race.

### **Self navigation**

The race course has no markings apart from rest stations and timing stations. Competitors navigate by following a pre-loaded race course track on a hand-held GPS device.

Hand-held GPS is a compulsory piece of equipment, competitors cannot use mobile phones with GPS functions instead of a hand held GPS device, a competitor without a hand held GPS shall not be allowed to take part in the race. Competitors are reminded that acquiring a hand held GPS without learning how to use it is very likely to lead to navigational errors during the race, resulting in compromised personal safety and the competitor losing time. We urge all the competitors to invest time before the race to learn how to use the GPS unit they acquired for the race.

### **Self-support**

The competitors must prepare their own materiel for the use during all the race,

including food, personal medicine and all the personal compulsory equipment. The Organizing Committee only provide tents, sleeping mats and drinking water (hot and cold) and the rest stations.

### **Drop-off bags**

Drop off bags containing the equipment, clothing and food are deposited at rests stations. It is up to the competitor to decide what to store at each rest station, but we urge all competitors to study the course map and the information provided about the course, to become aware of the conditions (such as terrain type and /or presence of water crossings) at each section of the course, and prepare their drop-off bags accordingly.

The drop off bags are transported to rest stations along a very rough dirt track in a jeep, and for this reason fragile and easily breakable items should not be stored. The weight of drop of bags shall not exceed the weight limits set by the organizers. Only the drop off bags provided by the organizers can be used; only one drop of bag per rest station is allowed, and all the items stored must fit inside the bag. Race organizers reserve the right to reject drop off bags which they consider as not answering these requirements.

Only items for the runner' s individual use can be stored in drop off bags, it is strictly forbidden to store items for and on behalf of other runners, including those runners that have pulled out of the race.

### **Mandatory equipment**

All competitors must carry mandatory equipment at all times while on the race course (outside the rest stations). Mandatory equipment check shall be conducted before the race and may also be done at designated stations along the race course during the race, and also randomly during the race, at the discretion of the Organizing Committee.

Competitor lacking a piece of compulsory equipment must inform the Organizing Committee immediately, and only after the missing equipment is acquired and

inspected by the Organizing Committee shall the competitor be allowed to take part in / continue with the race. The time spend acquiring / replacing such piece of equipment shall be added to the competitor' s time.

If a competitor is discovered to be lacking any item of the compulsory equipment during the race, time penalties and/or warnings shall be administered, which may even lead to the disqualification of a competitor.

It is strictly forbidden to carry the compulsory equipment for other runners (known as *muling*). Such actions shall be penalized, with the type and severity of the punishment decided by the Organizing Committee.

### **Rest stations**

Competitors are only allowed to rest at rest stations, deciding themselves on the duration of the rest period.

Competitors are allowed to rest for no longer than 2 hours at check points and no longer 1 hour along the race course (excluding rest stations). If a competitor stops for longer than an hour, either along the course or at a checkpoint, this shall be considered an indication of a health problem and a health check shall be carried out to assess if the competitor is fit to continue or not.

If a competitor rests at a checkpoint for longer than two hours or along the course for longer than one hour, a penalty of 10 minutes shall be added to his / her race time for every 30 minutes of rest over the one-hour limit. Excess rest time of less than 30 minutes shall be counted as 30 minutes and penalized accordingly.

Total excess rest time for the race must not exceed 9 hours and the penalty time for excessive rest must not exceed 3 hours, in which case the competitor shall be disqualified from the race.

### **Quitting the race**

A competitor can quit the race at any time. However, the first notification of quitting the race has a 30-minute grace period during which a competitor can

withdraw his or her request to quit the race.

A request to return to the race can only be granted after the Organizing Committee has considered all the information necessary (such as the advice of the race medical staff) and a 3-hour time penalty may be applied. The competitor shall then be allowed to continue from the exact location where he or she quit the race.

### **Receiving help / assistance**

A competitor who had to rely on external assistance in order to continue the race (for example being unable to carry his or her own equipment due to exhaustion, receiving help crossing rivers and /or going over high passes) shall be deemed incapable of continuing on his / her own, and be disqualified from the race. This rule does not apply if the competitor has already requested to withdraw from the race before receiving the aforementioned types of assistance.

### **Registration fee refund**

Competitors who withdraw their registration before June 15th, 2017 shall receive full refund.

Competitors who withdraw their registration during the period between June 15th and August 20th 2017 shall be refunded 70% of the registration fee.

No refund shall be made after August 20th, 2017.

### **Code of conduct**

The participants must, at all time, treat all the organizers, referees, workers, medical staff and volunteers with respect and courtesy. Any competitor found in violation of this rule shall be penalized or even disqualified.

The participants must follow China' s laws and regulations and respect the local customs and religious beliefs.

If a participant encounters a safety issue which would endanger him or her, or

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other personnel (including other competitors, organizers, staff, medical personnel and volunteers etc.), the competitor is required to report the issue to the Organizing Committee as soon as possible, and describe the issue in detail to the organizers upon arriving at the nearest checkpoint.

### **Visas and entry into China**

Participants from foreign countries or from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan are solely responsible for their passport and visa procedures and requirements such as Chinese visa, Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents, Mainland travel permit for Taiwan Residents.

The Organizing Committee is not responsible for a competitor failing to obtain a Chinese visa or being denied entry into China due to irregularities in his or her passport / travel permit, or failing to comply with the requirements relating to these (for example having insufficient validity period in the passport when entering China / applying for a Chinese visa). No refund of registration fees shall be made in this case.

### **Right of Final Interpretation**

The Organizing Committee reserves the right of final interpretation of all documents relevant to the race.

The Organizing Committee reserves the right to suspend and stop, or even cancel the race at any time due to weather conditions and other safety issues.

## **IV. Prizes and awards**

- The titles of Champion, runner - up and third place finisher are awarded for male and female categories with corresponding prizes.
- All finishers are awarded finisher medal known as the Tiger Tally, a calligraphy scroll (a copy of an ancient Chinese edict which confers a title of a General), and finisher clothes.

## **Race completion**

In order for a participant to complete the race he or she must have gone through all the timing stations within the cut off times (to be announced before the race), swiping the timing card at each and maintaining the timing chip intact; arriving at the finishing line within the cut off time; not having used any transport to complete the race; not having received any external help to complete the race; not have accumulated time penalties in excess of 4.5 hours.

From 2017 the cut off time shall be reduced by one hour each year. The cut off time for 2017 stands at 149 hours.

Race finishers who have completed the actual race within 149 hours, but have incurred time penalties which render their final time in excess of 149 hours, shall receive the Tiger Tally finisher medal and finisher clothes, but their time shall not be recorded in the final race finisher standings.

## **V. Race results**

### **Valid result and timing**

Failure to swipe the timing chip at any of the timing stations will render the results invalid and lead to the time of the runner not being recorded in the final race results.

If a participant failed to swipe their card or missed a checkpoint, he or she must return to the check point to swipe the card in order for the results to be valid.

Participants must carry and swipe their own timing cards only, doing this on another competitor's behalf will lead to both being disqualified from the race. If a runner loses the timing card, he or she may still continue with the race, but the results will not be recorded in the final standings.

Competitors must adhere to the principles of fair play. Interfering with other runners' equipment, deliberately obstructing their progress, or trying to influence or sabotage their race performance in any way shall lead to penalty and

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possible disqualification. Competitors are required to treat their fellow race participants with courtesy and respect at all times.

## **VI. Medical care during the race**

The competitors must be aware of the nature of the race and of the physical and health risks involved when taking part in the race. Training and preparation for the race is the responsibility of the competitor. When applying to join the race the competitors must guarantee that their physical condition allows them to take part in arduous outdoor competitions.

The competitors acknowledge and agree that the race takes part in a remote location, that the evacuation of an injured party to the nearest hospital may thus take several hours, and that there might be further delays due to local topographic conditions, weather, natural disasters and public accidents. Emergency medical attention only can be administered by the race medical personal at the race location.

### **Medical Health Statement**

All the participants must fill in the Ultra Gobi Health Declaration and send it to the organizer by email before the race. Ultra Gobi Health Declaration is then resigned by the competitor before the race during the check in.

### **Personal medication**

The participants, when filling in race registration documents, have to provide their true and accurate medical history. The participants must make adequate medical preparation for the race as dictated by his or her medical history and health conditions. During the race, if a participant fails to carry the personal medication he or she needs, for the reasons of safety, the medical team of the Organizing Committee shall not take the responsibility to provide the competitor with person medication for his or her use.

### **Compulsory medical treatment**

In case of any medical emergency, the participants are required to provide the necessary assistance to the injured runner, and notify the race staff immediately, and wait until the race staff to arrive at the scene of the emergency.

The race Medical Team have the right to pull a competitor from the race, permanently or temporarily, and examine the competitor medically when they feel his or her health conditions require such action. If the competitor refuses to comply with these demands, he is or she becomes solely responsible for any consequences that may arise thereof.

### **Prohibited substances**

The use of stimulants, narcotics and recreational drugs is strictly forbidden during the race. Violations of this rule lead to an immediate disqualification and a life-time ban from the race.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages and products is strictly forbidden during the race.

### **VII. Race insurance**

The participants must be aware of the risks involved in taking part in this race. Competitors must buy personal insurance and upload their insurance policy document as part of registration for the race.

Two types of insurance are required:

1. Personal travel insurance valid during the entire race period at the race location.
2. Personal accident insurance valid during the entire race period at the race location.

The competitors are solely responsible for any damage (including wear and tear)

or loss to their personal equipment and material sustained during the race. The Organizing Committee recommends that competitors take out insurance policy to cover their equipment and materiel.

## **VIII. Race identification**

### **The use of the race logo**

The proprietary rights to the race logo and its use belong to the Race Organizing Committee, no one else may use the logo without the permission by the Race Organizing Committee.

### **The display of the identification**

During the race the competitors must display the bib number, the race logo and the national flag of their country at all times. All these must be uncovered and clearly visible. Failure to do so will result in time penalty and even disqualification.

## **IX. Environmental protection**

The race Organizing Committee is committed to serving the society by protecting the environment, to holding an environmentally-friendly race, and to protecting the fragile ecosystem of the Gobi Desert.

If competitors are found in violation of these principles, the Organizing Committee, in accordance with the severity of the incident, shall issue a warning, time penalty, even disqualifying the participant. If the Organizing Committee is required to make a compensation for any damage caused by the violation to any third party, the competitor bear the responsibility for damages incurred to the Organizing Committee or the institution designated by the Organizing Committee.

## **Trash**

All the rest and timing stations on the race course are equipped with trash receptacles. The participants must not leave any trash on the race course, and all the trash must be carried out of the race course area and then discarded in a designated place.

## **Ruins and cultural relics protection**

The participants need to be aware of the great number of Han and Tang Dynasties ruins and cultural relics, of both national and provincial importance, along the race course. It is strictly forbidden to climb or walk on these ruins, to draw, write or graffiti on the walls of the ruins, and discard trash and urinate and defecate in the ruins. Any culture objects collected must first be submitted to the inspection by the Guazhou Cultural Relics Bureau in order to determine if these items can remain in the possession of the person who collected them.

## **Protection of vegetation**

Destroying the vegetation of the Gobi Desert accelerates the rate of desertification. For this reason, it is strictly forbidden to pick, collect and dig out any form of vegetation around race route.

## **X. Appeals**

All competitors have the right to monitor and report any violations of the rules and regulations of the race.

The appeals, in written form, must be made within the race cut-off period and, together with any supporting evidence (such as photographs or videos) must be presented to the Arbitration Commission. Appeals made after the race cut off time will not be accepted.

The cost of each appeal to the Arbitration Board is 100 US dollars, and is not

refunded if the appeal is not successful.

The Arbitration Commission shall mediate all such cases and reserves the right of final decision on the matter.

## **XI. Image and intellectual property rights**

The race organizers and the designated partners by organizer reserve the right to use the participants' names, portraits, personal feeling expression, voice recordings, and other personal photographs and images and video recordings, for the purposes of advertising and promoting this race and commercial activities related to this race.

For this reason, the participants are required to waive their copyright-related personal right to the use, copy, amendment, publishing and broadcast of their name, their images and their appearance and portraits.

The participants must clearly acknowledge their lack of objection to the organizer of the race and authorized partners using their images in the duration of the race.

**Note: all participants must read and understand Race Regulations. The Organizing Committee reserves the right of final interpretation. In case of amendments or additions made, please follow the latest edition of Race Regulations issued before the race.**