

BLACK BEAR GRAN FONDO 2021 – OUR 20th YEAR!!!

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BBGF Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is this a race or a tour?

Neither, it's a Gran Fondo. A gran fondo is a mass participation cycling event that got its start in Italy in the early 1900's. Loosely translated, it means everything from "great foundation", "great distance" or "great endurance." Some cyclists ride for the satisfaction and pride of just making it to the finish line. Others want to improve upon their previous times and to challenge themselves, their friends, their teammates. Some ride to win.

So, the Black Bear Gran Fondo is a race, a ride, a celebration at the finish line and it's an event for cyclists of all abilities!

It's a mass start where riders are required to stage according to their ability. Mass start where riders are required to stage according to their ability to ride in a large group. All riders depart the start line at one time, requiring less experienced riders to position themselves toward the back of the mass start group. All route timing is relative to when the riders cross the line, so no time penalty will be incurred by starting further back in the group.

This doesn't mean all riders need to ride in a large group; the fastest riders start at the front and they will, most likely, end up riding in a large, fast group. All other riders can progress at the speed in which they are most comfortable; some will ride alone, some will ride with others progressing at a similar speed.

2. What is a peloton?

In a road bicycle race, the peloton (from French, originally meaning 'platoon') is the main group or pack of riders. Riders in a group save energy by riding close (drafting or slipstreaming) near (particularly behind) other riders.

3. When is the Black Bear Gran Fondo scheduled for 2021?

The Black Bear Gran Fondo takes place on the second Saturday of the month and in 2021 that will be July 11, 2021.

4. Where does the Black Bear Gran Fondo start and finish?

The start and finish lines are at Hanson Hills Recreation Area (HHRA) 7601 Old Lake Road, Grayling, MI 49738.

5. When does the Black Bear Gran Fondo start?

We have three different and unique starting times based on the distance of your selected route as follows:

100 Mile Loop = 8:00 AM

62 Mile Loop = 8:30 AM

45 Mile Loop = 9:00 AM

6. How are the riders started?

The Black Bear will be a **gran fondo** start, that is, a mass start where riders are required to stage according to their ability to ride in a large group. All riders depart the starting line at one time, requiring less experienced riders to position themselves toward the back of the mass start group. If any rider is in doubt of their ability to securely hold an even line at high speed with riders in close proximity, it is vital that you line up toward the back of the starting line group in the appropriate corral. *All route timing is relative to when the riders cross the line, so no time penalty will be incurred by starting further back in the group for overall results.* **NEW IN 2021:** *Based on feedback from our fastest cyclists, we will be tracking both chip time and gun time.*

Starting lineup: We are asking cyclists to self-select your starting position based on your speed and training program. Please look at the guidelines below, then make an honest assessment of your abilities/objectives for the event and choose the appropriate starting position during the line-up process:

Front of lineup: Speed: 22-25MPH/35-40KMH Training: At least 10 hours per week

Middle of lineup: Speed: 18-21MPH/29-34KMH Training: 8-10 hours per week

Back of lineup: 14-17MPH/23-28KMH Training: 3-6 hours per week

7. How do I pre-register for the Black Bear?

Pre-registration is easy and can be done on-line at RunSignUp.com (search on Black Bear Gran Fondo 2021)

- The RunSignUp site will turn off for on-line registrations on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 11:59PM.

8. When and where is packet pick-up? (Packet pickup AND on-site registration occur on the **same dates and times**)

Friday, July 9, 2021 between 5:00PM and 7:00PM

Northbound Outfitters
6041 W M-72
Grayling, MI 49738

Saturday, July 10, 2021 between 6:30AM and 8:30AM

Main Lodge of Hanson Hills Recreation Area
7601 Old Lake Road
Grayling, MI 49738

9. Can I have someone pick-up my packet for me?

Yes.

10. Is on-site registration available event weekend?

Yes, packet pick up for those who are pre-registered for all routes and on-site registration for those who prefer to register on event take place at the same times and places as above: on-site at Northbound Outfitters on Friday, July 9 between 5:00PM and 7:00PM or at the Main Lodge of Hanson Hills Recreation Area on Saturday, July 10 between 6:30AM and 8:30AM. *Black Bear registration fees are \$60 during on-site registration of event weekend.*

11. What are the registration fees?*

On-line fee increase dates:	Fee
March 1 – May 31	\$45
June 1 – July 8	\$50
On-site registration event weekend on July 9-10	\$60
Student (under age 18)	\$25
*Event T-shirt Pre-order due by June 17, 2021	

*Event T-shirts are optional purchases separate from the registration fee and can be purchased in the pre-registration process. Limited number of T-shirts will be available for purchase on event weekend.

**12. What about 2021 Black Bear Gran Fondo T- shirt availability?
(below is our 2021 T-shirt graphic—it's our 20th year in 2021!)**



2021 Event shirts are not included with your registration and can be purchased as part of the pre-registration process through RunSignUp as an optional add-on to your registration. The best way to assure you will get your 2021 event shirt is to order one in **pre-registration by June 17, 2021**. This year we will have two options with unisex sizing:

- the Gildan Softstyle Cotton (100% cotton) \$15 (additional \$2 for XXL and XXXL)
- the A4 Performance T-shirt (100% wicking polyester). \$20 (additional \$2 for XXL and XXXL)

*We will have very few shirts with limited sizes available for purchase during packet pickup/on-site registration and those will be available on a first come, first served basis.

13. Will there be a meal available after the ride?

Unfortunately for this year's event we are not planning the "Celebration Meal"(Buffet and Beer). However, riders will be provided with a "Dine Downtown Menu" in their race packet and will be encouraged to visit local restaurant sponsors for great post-race meal/drink discounts.

14. Is there a rider limit?

Nope. Our goal is to grow the Black Bear Gran Fondo as our event is a well kept secret in many cycling circles and we are going to try a few things this year to incent people to sign up in pre-registration. In the meantime, we ask our cyclist

participants and friends to spread the word about the Black Bear Gran Fondo, share our Facebook posts with your friends and bring a friend on July 10 to another G-R-R-R-E-A-T ride!

15. Are helmets required?

How can we say this so there is no confusion: *Absolutely, positively, without any doubt.* **YES!!! Helmets are definitely required** for all three loops for rider safety. If you don't have a helmet, you will not be allowed to start your ride.

16. How good are the riding surfaces?

All roads are paved and, overall, most are very good; there will be very few areas that require you to mind your wheels and there will be variation in the shoulder width, some nice and wide and others that are skinnier. We've done our very best to provide you with the best roads possible in combination with features that make the routes interesting and fun. We have some awe-inspiring elevations to challenge all riders too!

17. What kind of bikes are allowed?

Road, tandem and recumbent bicycles are best suited for these routes. Having said that, we have had fast mountain cyclers register for and complete the Black Bear.

18. Will there will be some type of breakfast food available on Saturday morning?

Yes, we'll have a self serve pre-packaged continental breakfast set up in the Main Lodge of Hanson Hills for registered cyclists between 6:30 and 8:30 AM. Riders will also be provided with a "Dine Downtown Menu" in their race packet and will be encouraged to visit local restaurant sponsors for great pre-race meal discount.

19. What is offered at the rest stations?

There are food and water stations with both hydration and nutrition: PBJs, sweet and salty nut mix, fruit, water and sports drinks.

20. What goes on at the finish line for 2021?

This year's finish line celebration will look a little different. We will have music, and participants may enjoy their favorite post-race beverage from their cooler if desired. Riders will be provided with a "Dine Downtown Menu" in their race packet and will be encouraged to visit local restaurant sponsors for great post-race meal/drink discounts.

Hanson Hills Recreation Area is a beautiful park-like setting and a hidden gem in Grayling, Michigan with lots to offer including a playground for the little ones, mountain bike/hiking trails, and disc golf!

21. How important is rider safety?

Safety is our highest priority and we ask all cyclers to abide by the known *Rules of the Road* for bicyclists. If you are not familiar with them, the League of Michigan Bicyclists has great information that will help you out.

22. Rules of the Road

Please, obey the rules of the road at all times:

- Riders must obey the stop signs and traffic light signals along the route
- **Helmets must be worn for all Black Bear Gran Fondo routes**
- All Black Bear Gran Fondo routes are open to traffic
- Ride in single file and as far to the right as possible at all times.
- Do not cross the yellow or center line.
- When passing another rider, please make sure the rider you are passing knows you are there and call out "on your left!". Never pass on the right
- No headphones or ear buds

Course workers will be at all of the corners and the course workers will work with you to get you quickly and safely on your way.

23. Any additional tips for a safe ride?

Yes, an individual by the name of Gale Bernhardt who produces the website TrainingBible.com has developed a list of 10 tips to keep your ride safe and fun:

- ✓ ***If you are not accustomed to riding in a pace line*** (several cyclists following closely behind one another) **do not attempt to do it during your first organized tour.** If you want to learn the skill, seek the help of a local bicycling club or learn the skill with a small group of friends.
 - ✓ ***It is rude to "sit on" someone's wheel and draft if you don't know the person and haven't asked permission to be there.*** Not only is it rude, it could be dangerous or disgusting. The lead rider doesn't know you're there and will not point out road hazards. They may avoid a pot hole and you may end up hitting it. Along the disgusting line, if that lead rider doesn't know you're back there drafting, they may decide to clear their throat or nose into the wind. The wind deposits the goo on you.
 - ✓ ***Keep your head up and look ahead several feet.*** I see this problem with experienced and inexperienced riders alike. Often, I'll see riders looking down at the road, eyes focused on a spot about 10 feet ahead of their bicycle. If you are focused on a spot this close, you're in trouble. Experts estimate average human reaction time to be somewhere between 1.0 and 1.5 seconds.* If you are riding 15 mph, you are traveling 22 feet per second. By the time you see something 10 feet in front of you and react, it's too late, you've hit the hazard. Obviously, the faster you're traveling, the problem compounds itself. (20 mph = 29 ft/sec, 25 mph = 36.7 ft/sec)
 - ✓ ***Look ahead a good distance so you can anticipate trouble.*** You can detect a good number of problems if you keep watch about 20 to 25 yards (60 to 75 feet, or the length of a swimming pool) ahead of yourself. Although you are looking about 25 yards ahead, be aware of items in your peripheral vision: a car crossing the centerline a quarter of a mile away, a dog running toward you from a farm house 50 yards away, a truck that looks like it may not stop at the intersection ahead of you, etc.
 - ✓ ***If you are riding in a pace line, avoid tire-fixation.*** This problem occurs when you are focused on the tire of the person ahead of you. Instead, keep your head up and look ahead. Keep the rider(s) in front of you in your peripheral vision and watch for signals from the front of the group. (See tip #3.)
 - ✓ ***If you are in a working pace line, point out hazards in the road to riders behind you.*** There several different ways to signal something is on the road, beside the road, moving on the road (a human or animal), etc. You can work out a signal system with your group or at minimum, simply point to the hazard.
 - ✓ ***When riding in a pace line, do not cross wheels with the person ahead of you.*** This means do not let your front tire cross a line that is perpendicular to the back tire of the person ahead of you. If they make a sudden move and swerve to the side, you go down.
 - ✓ Whether riding alone or in a pace line, ***ride a steady, straight line.*** Weaving all over the road wastes your energy and is dangerous to others.
 - ✓ ***Be steady and predictable.*** Riders that make sudden, darty moves are dangerous. (To avoid darty moves, see tip #3 again.) When heading into aid stations, be aware of people in front, on the side and in back of you. Ignore the length of the port-a-potty line until you are safely off the bike. Exiting the aid station, be alert for other riders coming in and trying to get out.
 - ✓ Last, but not least, ***do not ride five abreast on an open road,*** blocking motorists. I know you paid good money to participate in the event, but this does not give you the right to hold traffic up for five miles. (*The Black Bear Team was scolded by the local State Police in 2017, so please don't get us in trouble ☺*) Be courteous to motorists and more than likely they will reciprocate.
- THANK YOU!!!**

24. What is a SAG vehicle?

SAG is short for Support and Gear. Our roving SAG vehicles are clearly marked and contain our very important and dedicated SAG mechanics who can make some quick repairs and get you back on the road. SAG mechanic cell phone numbers will be provided to all registered riders.

25. What about personal SAGs?

For those of you with personal SAGs, since safety of all of our riders is THE highest priority, we require the following:

- Personal SAG vehicles MUST pull off the road for your party (in a spot that is not in the way of others) and beyond rest stations to avoid congestion
- NO throwing of water bottles into the windows of moving vehicles – that endangers other riders if you miss the window
- Absolutely NO assisting riders from moving vehicles

26. What are “SWEEPS”?

“SWEEP” cars follow the last rider from each of the three routes making sure no one is left behind. All sweep vehicles will be labelled as such with vehicle paint and will be driven by volunteers equipped with basic bike maintenance and first aid kits. Sweep drivers will be able to provide or coordinate a ride for any riders that wish to drop out of the race. Any riders that choose to remain on the course after the sweep vehicle moves past them will be riding unsupported at their own risk. Sweep support will end when the last riders have been brought in, or when timing stops at 4:00 PM, whichever occurs first.

27. Are there directional signs along the route?

Yes, there are directional signs, and, we attempt to have corner marshals with flags at each corner where a turn is made. Some corners may have arrow signs only, and those turns are the obvious ones.

28. What is the refund policy?

This is a Rotary Club of Grayling event and all proceeds from the event are dedicated to supporting resource gaps in the community. If you are unable to make it, your registration fee goes to some very good causes in our community. It is possible for you to transfer your entry to another rider through RIdesignUp or by contacting us through blackbeargranfondo@gmail.com. If you do happen to order a shirt, we send those out to you post race if you miss the event.

29. Can I switch routes after I have registered?

Yes, please let the registrar know via email or during packet pick-up/on-site registration times during event weekend. If you end up changing your mind while experiencing the route, please let the timers know that you have switched routes.

30. Where can I park?

Parking areas will be designated for the Black Bear at Hanson Hills Recreation Area and there is plenty of parking space available.

31. Where can I park my bike?

There is no designated area to park your bicycle, many lay them on the grassy area near the Rotary Pavilion until ready to leave for the day. We encourage you to load your bikes on your car carrier once you have completed the Black Bear.

32. Where are the bathrooms located?

Bathroom facilities are available at the Main Lodge of HHRA (Hanson Hills Recreation Area) and, additional porta-potties will be available near the ball field of HHRA. In addition, we will have porta potties at all of our rest stations along all routes.

33. Is camping available on the HHRA (Hanson Hills Recreation Area) grounds?

Yes, free *rustic* camping will be available on the Hanson Hills Recreation Area (HHRA) grounds behind the Main Lodge on *Friday night, July 10, 2021*; we only ask that you break camp no later than 5PM on Saturday after your ride. Just a note, rustic camping means: no water and no electricity; porta-potties will be available for Friday night campers. Main Lodge bathrooms will be available through Friday afternoon and early Saturday morning until the end of the day.

For those who want to make a weekend of it, we suggest you make reservations at one of the nearby state parks (Hartwick Pines, North Higgins Lake, South Higgins Lake) or any of the private campgrounds in the area.

34. What are the cut-off times?

Rest stations, SAG mechanics, timers and rest stop volunteers all have cut-off times on for their availability to our riders (see grid and information below) and we will adhere to these limits so please make a plan if you are still on the course after these times and you require any type of support. If you finish your loop after 4:00 PM, and you would like your time included in the official results, you may self-report to: hello@enduranceevolution.com, or click the "contact" link that will appear on the results page of our chip timers, Endurance Evolution.

Rest Station Cut-Off Times

REST STATION #	COUNTY	LOCATION	CUT-OFF TIME	100 MILE LOOP	62 MILE LOOP	45 MILE LOOP
1	Crawford	Lovells (E County Rd 612 and Lovells Rd)	10:30 AM	Mile 23		
1A	Crawford	M-72 E & Chase Bridge Road	10:00 AM		Mile 15.5	
2	Roscommon	M72E just south of M-18 on Hickey Creek Road	12:30 PM	Mile 41		
3	Roscommon	COOR ISD – County Road 100 and North Cut Road on top of Pioneer Hill	2:00 PM	Mile 63	Mile 32	Mile 17.5
4	Roscommon	St. Hubert's Catholic Church, W. Higgins Lake Drive	3:30 PM	Mile 85.5	Mile 47	Mile 30.5

Other cut-off times:

- SAG (Support and Gear) = 3:30 PM
- Endurance Evolution race timers at finish line = 4:00 PM

35. Should I bring my family?

You sure should! They can cheer you on to victory at various locations along the route and at the finish line. Or, they can check out all that Grayling has to offer and then meet their champion back at the finish line!

36. Are there things for my family to do?

You bet there are!

- The towns of Grayling and Roscommon are great fun to explore:
 - Northern Michigan Escape Rooms are fun for groups of 6-8 and are located on 1239 McClellan St, Grayling, MI 49738. Call or text 231-534-5306 to make your reservation, check out <http://www.northernmichiganescaperooms.com/> for additional information.
- On the grounds of Hanson Hills Recreation Area (start/finish of the Black Bear Gran Fondo):
 - Disc Golf

- Hiking and Mountain Bike Trails
 - A playground for the youngest visitors
- 11 miles of family-friendly recreational bicycle pathway from the intersection of W North Down River Road and the I-75 Business Loop (Old US27) all the way to Hartwick Pines State Park.
- Click the “Visitor Information” tab on our website or paste this link in your browser for more information about things to do in Grayling:
 - <https://grayling-mi.com/>

37. What if the weather is bad?

The show must go on, it's a “rain or shine” event.

38. Can I volunteer my time to help in the Black Bear Gran Fondo?

You sure can, please send an e-mail to blackbeargranfondo@gmail.com