



POLAR BEAR RUN • GIMLI • GRAND BEACH • POLAR BEAR RUN • GIMLI • GRAND BEACH • POLAR BEAR RUN • GIMLI • GRAND BEACH



20th Annual Polar Bear

The 20th annual Polar Bear Run is scheduled for Sunday, March 11, 2012. The run is approximately 18 – 19 miles, starting at Siglivik Subdivision (approx 3 miles south of Gimli) and ending at Grand Marias. The start time is scheduled for 9.00 am (daylight saving time).

The run takes place on the Snowman Trail that crosses the lake, groomed and comes complete with a warm up shack in the middle of the lake. The trail has markers every 1/10 th of a mile so you can keep your direction should the weather reduce the visibility. The footing varies, some years there has been large sheets of ice which makes it difficult to run or there has been some loose snow which again creates problems. Generally the footing is crusty and you don't sink into the packed snow too much. Running spikes are recommended especially this year with the low snow pack.

The weather has varied greatly over the last 19 years, from rain to blizzards, and from plus freezing to minus 30 degrees. We run from west to east as the winds are generally prevailing from the west. Conditions are checked the night before and the run organizer will make the final decision if the race has to be

postponed. Generally speaking, the race would only be cancelled if there were strong easterly winds, open water or surface water on the ice. The race has been cancelled twice and postponed twice due to weather over the history of the run.

The ground support sled will carry water to replace runner's water bottles during the race. It is important that as much as possible, runners carry their own water bottles and keep it in an insulated container. During previous runs, the ground support water supply has frozen up within the first hour and or the supply has been extremely cold which will add to your chances of hypothermia if it is a cold day. Also, the ground support may only meet up with you every half hour and towards the end, this half hour without water could be a problem if you are on the verge of dehydration / hypothermia.

Dress warm. The best gear is a layer that is breathable but yet wind proof. The air temperature will generally be 3 – 5 degrees colder than the land temperature and if sunny, the sun will create the opposite effect and cook you. The worst is starting with a bright sun and at the end the sky clouds over and we start getting a slight head wind off the opposite side. The temperature in this scenario can swing 10 – 15 degrees. Most people run on regular runners, wind pants with one layer underneath and maybe 3 layers on their upper bodies. It would be prudent to bring a balaclava just incase the wind changes and you need something to protect your exposed face. Sunglasses are important and without them you will probably go home half blind and a splitting headache. Most runners come home with true sunburn from the run. One last trick, if you are running in summer shoes, duct tape the toes of your shoes to keep dry. As you run, the snow will melt on your shoes and eventually wet your feet.

Additional gear; it would be advisable to bring a compass just in case the weather really changes and the visibility drops. One year you would hit the incline of the opposite shore without seeing it. Another year, the horizon disappeared due to the low cloud cover. Insulated water bottles and some nutrients for energy are also recommended.

The cost of the run is \$25.00 per person payable in advance of the race day. The money is used to reimburse volunteers for their gas and a free lunch at the other side. Any extra funds will be donated to the Habitat Cycle of Hope. Last year, approximately \$350.00 was donated. Payment for the run can be dropped off or mailed to Jeff Badger, 1444 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba. I would really appreciate payment in advance to assist in qualifying the number of people who will be attending as well, to avoid delays at the start of the run.

Remember, this run is organized to be a recreational run and not a speed test. I don't mind the faster guys racing, but with the slippery footing, you may pull a muscle. Notwithstanding I stress that it is a recreational run and there will be support, you should treat it as a unsupported run. The running group will eventually be spread out over 5 – 8 miles so it could take up to an hour for someone to assist you should you experience difficulty. The trick is to dress and bring water and supplements to sustain the run. Keep moving and don't stop until you hit the other side.

Trail Map below, please note that the starting point may vary depending on the conditions.

