

Minotaur SkyRace Course Description:

Distance: 33.5 km

Elevation Gain: 2900m (9500')

Time limit: 12 hours

The race starts downtown Blairmore at 1292m and in less than 1km you head up Bluff Mountain on Minotaur Ridge... a tiny, rugged switch-backing trail and open, steep, rocky sections leading to the summit of Bluff Mountain at 2145m. At the summit, the Mini-Taur 10km turns sharply left back down to Blairmore while the Minotaur SkyRace continues north along a forested ridge. After a couple of km, you steeply descend about 700m through dark forest on a soft, fast trail. Watch for the ghost town of Lille's cemetery at the bottom. From the Lille town site, you run up an old forest road to Aid Station #1 at the base of the next climb and just over 12km into the course.

From Aid Station #1, you head-up a relentless, steep, rocky climb to a false summit. This is true Canadian mountain running with nothing but wilderness in all directions and a spectacular view of the course that lies ahead and behind! A slight descent past "Razorback Ridge" leads to a couple of small climbs and false summits before reaching another highpoint. From here you descend a small cliff band and then up and down another couple of false summits. Watch for "Camp One" and "Camp Two" on this section. A very steep climb on loose rock brings you onto the Livingstone Range and the highpoint on the course at 2330m...this is Minotaur Peak. The Livingstone Range is a prominent feature in Crowsnest Pass area...it's where the prairies meet the Rocky Mountains. Heading south along the Livingstone Range is like dancing on a line between the prairies and the Rockies...true skyrunning on a narrow, technical ridge! Next comes "Shoe Shredder"...a steep, rough scree descent that drops 500m onto the "Himalayan Trail" which runs through a remote alpine valley called "Minotaur Bowl". From here you follow Morin Creek down to Aid Station #2 at 17.5km into the course.

Now comes the second half, and possibly the most challenging section of the course. It starts with a very steep climb straight up to a technical rock ridge which parallels the Livingstone Range. From here, you traverse east along a narrow, serrated rocky ridge toward South Peak. Watch for the giant purple stripe that you will run down. At South Peak, you are back on the Livingstone Range ridge at 2270m, and the second highest point on the course.

From South Peak, you follow the Livingstone Range ridge south along some pretty runnable rocky terrain and alpine meadows leading to a steep descent down into Minotaur Valley. At the valley bottom, a long trail takes you through "Holey Pass" to Aid Station #3 at approximately 29km into the course. Fuel up for the last few kilometres running along Gold Creek and into the town of Frank. Make sure you look up for a glimpse of the Frank Slide. The Frank Slide is massive and is Canada's deadliest landslide! You then join a paved community trail which takes you along the beautiful Crowsnest River back to Blairmore and to the finish line!