

## 2020 Southern Cross Racer Update

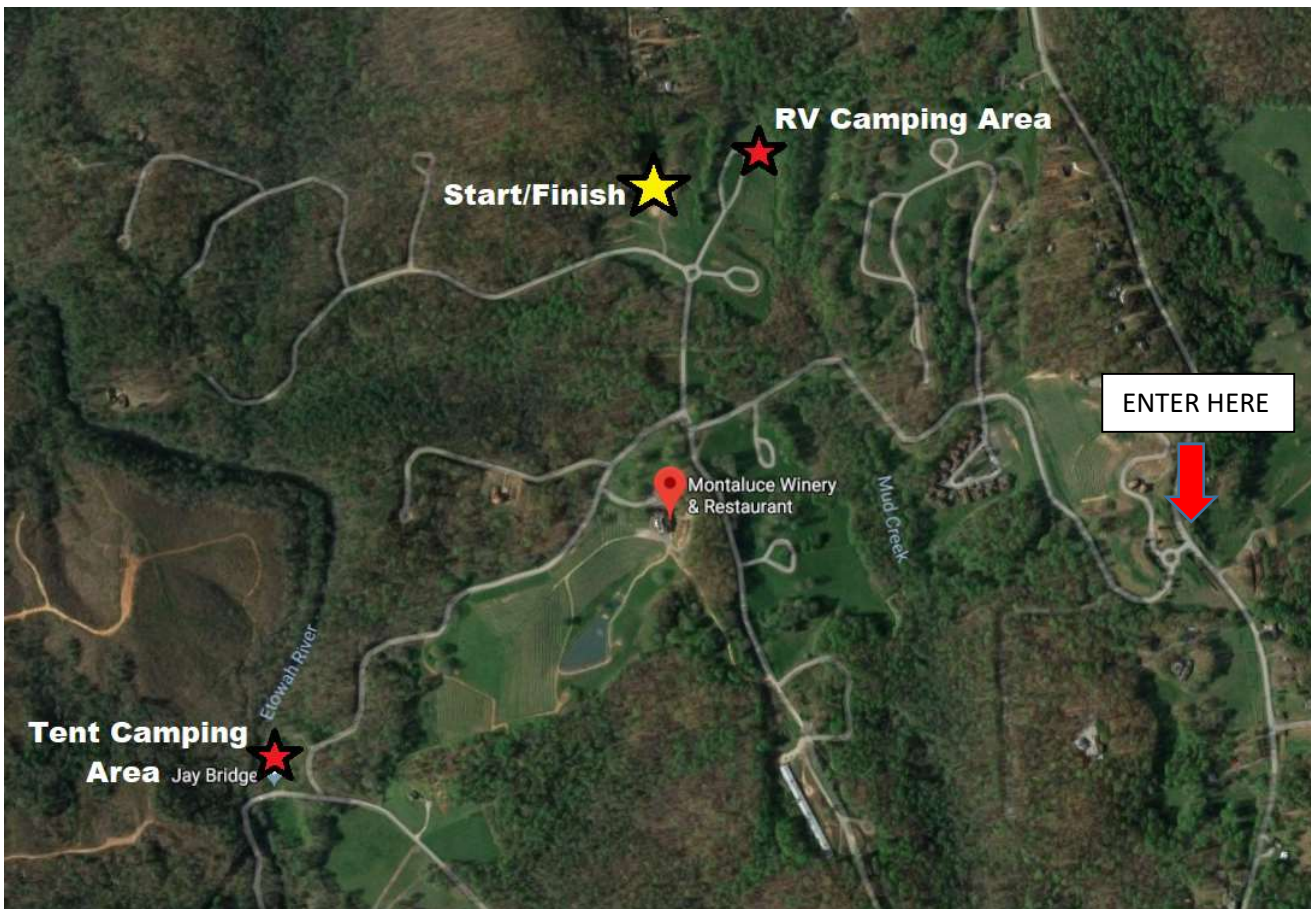
Thanks for signing up for the 2020 edition of the Maxxis Tires Southern Cross Ultra Gravel Grind. Its looking like another good year and we are excited to have you join us!

**Directions:** This event is based out of Montaluce Winery, 946 Via Montaluce, Dahlonega, GA 30533. Once on the Montaluce property, please follow arrow signs to start/finish, which will be near the pool. Volunteers will direct you where to park on Saturday morning. If you arrive Friday night for early check-in, please park in the large grass field across from the port-o-lets.

**Race Check-In:** You will have two options for this – Either Friday night or Saturday morning: Friday, March 6th– 4 pm to 8 pm at the big white tent or Saturday, March 7th – 7:30 am to 9:30 am at the big white tent. You will need to fill out a waiver at check-in or bring one with you (see link in email). **You may pick up a number for another rider ONLY IF YOU BRING A WAIVER SIGNED BY THEM.**

Nimblewheels Bicycles of Dahlonega and Cartecay Bikes of Ellijay will be at the aid station at Winding Stair Gap to provide minor mechanical assistance should you need it on course.

**Camping:** If you are camping in a tent, car, or van you can camp down by the Etowah River, in a nice flat area, however it is ¼ mile from the start and down a large hill. RV's, trailers and larger vehicles can camp in the far cul-de-sac near the start/finish. Tenters and cars can also camp in the RV area for this event if they prefer, however be advised generators will likely be used in this area. A map is below or we can help direct you – just stop by the big white tent and check in first before setting up camp if unsure of where to go.



**Drop Bags:** PLEASE NOTE 9:00 DROP BAG CUTOFF TIME! You get (1) one gallon Ziploc bag to use as a drop bag. We will have bags and sharpies at check-in or you may pre-pack your bag at home. Drop bags need to be in the aid station bins **NO LATER THAN 9:00 AM ON SATURDAY MORNING**. Yes, you may place a small hydration pack in the bin if you wish. If you arrive late and miss the drop, you will need to carry all your supplies with you. Do not worry, the aid station has plenty of food and fluids. Drop bags and any items left at the aid station will arrive back at Montaluce by 5:30 pm or sooner if possible. They need to be picked up by 7 pm Saturday evening or they will be considered abandoned and broken down with items donated or recycled.

**Pro-Tip:** If you want to leave immediately after the race, don't send anything you care about in your drop bag. If it were me, I wouldn't even send one because there are a ton of food options at the aid station and we have more than enough water. We will have a limited number of bottles with water available for a bottle exchange at the aid station that you are welcome to just grab and go. We do not mail left behind bottles, camelbaks, etc, so please plan to pick them up if you want them back.

**Race Start Procedure:** 9:30 am mandatory race meeting at start/finish and 10 am sharp mass START with a 3 mile neutral-ish rollout on paved roads. You will get a nice steady warmup on Hightower Church Road before you hit the climbing. **If you are late and arrive at Montaluce after 9:50 am, you will not be allowed to drive into Montaluce until AFTER the exiting peloton has come through..roughly 10:05** – so make sure you are on time. Also, please note some of the course signage is flipped and/or removed behind the last rider who starts with the peloton. If you start late, make sure you have a GPS file of where to go in case signage has been removed by the time you come through.

For this event, we do not have E-bike categories and you may not ride an E-bike in the event. Spectators are not allowed to follow a rider in a vehicle and may only wait for riders at the Winding Stair Gap Aid Station. Make sure any spectator vehicles are fully off the road and be aware of other vehicles, bicycles, horses and backpackers. This is a busy area.

**Aid Stations:** There will be one central aid station that you will pass through twice at Mile 12 and 32. It is always at the top of the big climbs. The aid station will have water, Hammer HEED, Endurolytes, Hammer Gels, Brownies, PB&J, Clif Cubes, Goldfish Crackers, Pickles, Pringles, Granola Bars, cookies, bananas, Skittles, M&M's, fig bars, and other snack foods. They will also have HOT, SALTY CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP! Cartecay Bicycles and Nimblewheels Bicycles will also be providing mechanical support...this means they will fix or help you fix any bike related issues, but you will need to carry your own tubes, CO2s, chain links and any other supplies you may need. We have a very limited number of tubes and CO2s in our "free" bin from last year should you get in a bind or find a hole in your spare tube. We will have Squirt lube at the aid station, so if you prefer a different type, carry it or put it in your drop bag. Drop bags will come back to Montaluce at approximately 5:30 pm, possibly sooner if possible. Bags need to be picked up by 7 pm or they will be broken down and any usable items left behind will go in the "free" bin for next year's race.

**Other Users:** We are sharing the National Forest with other users including other vehicles, hikers, backpackers, cyclists and horses. Trail rules apply, bikes should yield to those on foot and horses. The Appalachian Trail crosses our course in four locations so be aware of slow-moving backpackers...bikes move much faster than cars on the descents and backpackers may not see you before they step out into the road. The most congested areas are Springer Mountain on FS 42 and Three Forks on FS 58, which typically have a lot of cars parked in those areas. Use caution in these two congested areas.

**Cut-offs:** You need to arrive at the aid station the first time by 2 pm to stay on course. If you arrive after 2 pm, you will be directed onto a short course and your number plate will be marked by the aid station staff. You will not receive a finish time if you are directed onto the short course. Last year everyone was in by 5:30

pm and no one missed the cutoff. If get to the aid station the first time and find you aren't up for the full course, you can get your number marked as a DNF, turn right and follow the course signs back to Montaluce, saving yourself 20 miles of riding. Don't worry, you can still have food and beer when you get there : )

**Post Race Food and Beer:** We'll have Moe's Fajita bar for you with your choice of steak, chicken or tofu and all the veggies and fixin's. Terrapin Beer Company is providing cold beverages for those over 21 and we'll also have water, Gatorade and soda. You may leave cold, wet, and/or tired but you won't leave hungry.

Montaluce will also have wine and beer sales post-race if you'd like to take home a sampling of some local wine or have a glass while you relax in the sun.

**Course and Weather:** The course is tough....50 miles with 5600' of elevation gain. **Due to the upcoming rain in the forecast for this week, we will not be using the Jones Creek Singletrack in this year's race to preserve the new trail and your equipment.** The course is mostly gravel roads, some pasture/trails around Montaluce, and some pavement. The weather may be beautiful at Montaluce, but might be foggy or windy at higher elevations. Carry a jacket, garbage bag or space bag so you don't freeze on the descents if the weather turns bad. It is typically 15-20 degrees colder on the ridgeline where you will be spending a good bit of time. Come prepared! The course is open to vehicle traffic so keep your head up and stay on the right side of the road at all times. Be prepared for some non-UCI approved CX obstacles before the finish after you arrive back at Montaluce.

**Payout/Awards:** Guaranteed payout for Top 5 Overall Open Men and Open Women will be \$250/\$200/\$150/\$100/\$100. First place finishers in each age group category also receive \$100 cash. All other podium finishers will receive prizes from the race sponsors. The larger the category, the deeper we will go with prizing.

Have a question I didn't answer??? Email [lisa@mountaingoatadventures.com](mailto:lisa@mountaingoatadventures.com) by Wednesday 3/4 so I can help you out.

See you this weekend!