

Essex and Suffolk Road Relays Sunday 22 March 2026: Race Instructions

Location: Northern Gateway Sports Park, Cuckoo Farm Way. CO4 5YX

1. Race timetable:

- **U11 2k straight race – 9.15am**
- **Junior Girls (U13/U15/U17) – 9.45am**
- **Junior Boys (U13/15/U17) – 10.30am**
- **Senior Women and Vet Women – 11.15am**
- **Vet Men – 12.15pm**
- **Senior Men - 1.15pm**

2. Directions

The Northern Gateway is located just off Junction 28 of the A12 (the other side from the football stadium). If heading East on A12 take the exit and turn left, then first right into the venue.

If travelling West on A12 take the exit and turn right at the roundabout, crossing the A12 and straight across the next roundabout, taking the first right into the Sports Park.

3. Parking

There is a reasonable amount of parking at the venue but we have been asked not to park in the area allocated to the Rugby Club which will probably be marshalled. The car park will get full as it has in previous years so it would still make sense to share cars wherever possible. We no longer have allocated parking at Colchester United Football Ground as all their parking is now controlled by an app as is often the case these days. There is also additional parking at the newer car park which is nearer to the Northern Gateway, (it is off the first roundabout after you cross the A12 from the West and straight across the first roundabout as you exit the A12 from the East.) Both car parks are available for you to use but chargeable.

Please note it is approx. 7mins walk from the new car park and 12mins from the football ground car park to the venue. Please take care when crossing the roads as they can be quite busy.

At the venue, the parking time allowed is 4 hours and you will need to enter your reg no into the I-pads which are just inside reception on the right. If you are at the venue for more than 4 hours please re-enter your details as your 4 hours approaches.

In previous years, I have asked for Team Managers and Officials, to send me your name, club and car reg to the mail below and for us to let the venue know that you will be there all day. I don't think this is necessary this year but if you want to send it to me to be on the safe side please do. Please don't mail if you are not one of the above, your details will not be taken.

Please mail: Richard@runninginmind.co.uk;

4. Changing facilities

There will be no changing or 'bag drop' facilities at the venue. Parking is relatively close to the event so please come 'almost' ready to run.

5. Registration

Registration will take place in a room to the left as you walk in to the reception area. There will be a sign on the door. Numbers can be collected here on the day. There is a front number for all athletes. In addition, age category numbers will be given to all junior and vet runners indicating which championship race they are participating in. **Numbers will not be handed out to individual athletes;** Team Managers only, will be required to collect numbers. This will help to reduce the amount of traffic through registration. Team declarations are to be made by Team Managers within 48 hours of the event. The detail of this will be sent to you separately.

6. First Aid

There will be first aiders on site throughout the event

7. Toilets

There are limited toilet facilities within the venue. Please use the portaloos which have been provided specially for this event. Please note these toilets will be placed outside, at the far side of the reception area. They will be sign-posted but are not immediately obvious. We have run out of toilet paper in all of the last three years, despite having plenty. I can only assume that some athletes may be using toilet paper in excess to dry their hands. Hand towels are not provided as they don't flush properly. Please don't use toilet paper but 'shake and wipe' and encourage young athletes to do the same. Normal queueing rules to apply.

8. Refreshments

There are some refreshments on sale at the café in the reception area. There will be water provided for athletes as they finish their leg.

9. Spectators

The course is fenced and spectators must stay outside the fenced area at all times. You can, however, watch from anywhere along the 'pitches' side of the course. (The other side is the bank of the A12 and not accessible.) It is a 'looped' course so you will see athletes several times on the course from any one spot. Dogs are allowed on site but must be kept on a lead at all times. Please ensure you clean up any mess.

Unfortunately, there is not sufficient space in the start area for tents/gazebos but there is space for club flags on the grass area which is just beyond the start and changeover area. Please do not gather in large groups around the athletes' entrance/exit gates to help with smooth management of that area. We may ask you to move if the area is blocked.

There is not any official cover but if the weather happened to be really poor, we would allow athletes/spectators into the registration room/s. Let's hope for good weather!

10. course

Course maps are attached. The course is all on the cycle track which is a one-mile complete loop and will be run in a **clockwise** direction.

The U11 race will be 2 shorter laps which equals 2k, the same as a junior park run.

The junior race will be 1 Shorter lap followed by 1 longer lap totalling approx 2.6K.

The senior and vets races will be 3 full loops totalling approx 4.8k, (or 3 miles).

Please take responsibility for remembering how many laps you have run. It is relatively straight-forward but could be slightly confusing when loads of runners are on the course. The marshals will not know which lap everyone is on.

Athletes should only run into the changeover/finish area at the end of their respective race. This is U11 athletes on lap 2, junior athletes on lap 2 and senior athletes on lap 3. U11 athletes completing lap 1, Junior athletes completing lap 1, and Senior and Vet athletes completing laps 1 & 2 should not enter the changeover area but instead continue to run past the changeover area to the right of the cones.

The course is completely flat for U11 athletes. It is mostly flat, with a small hill at the far end of the course for the relays. Junior athletes will go up the hill once and seniors 3 times.

11. Changeover area

There will be a 'coned' waiting area for outgoing runners on the grass next to the track. Enter via the gate which will be indicated and marshalled. As your incoming runner approaches step on to the track as guided. You can leave as soon as indicated to you by the official. Junior athletes are doing the short lap first. Please look out for your fellow runners already on the course.

Please only enter the changeover 'holding pen' area when your fellow runner is on their last lap (Lap 2 for juniors, lap 3 for seniors). This will avoid congestion in the changeover area.

When finishing, please do not hang around at the finish. Walk forwards and towards the exit as guided by the marshals. They will tell you to move if you hang around. Please take some water at the end of your race if you need it, which will be handed to you by the marshals.

12. Results and awards presentation

The race is chip-timed which should make results and presentations easier. Colchester Harriers will make presentations to the first 3 Boys and Girls in the U11 race as well as the first boys' and girls' teams (affiliated clubs, 3 to score). We are aiming to present these promptly after the race around 9.45am, immediately after the start of the Junior girls relay. We will present County 'team' awards on the day. There will be County team medals for the first 3 teams for Essex and Suffolk in each championship. These will be presented as soon after each race as possible. If the weather is fine, presentations will be outside near the green Colchester Harriers gazebo.