

# UNBOUND GRAVEL

20 YEARS

XL ATHLETE GUIDE

LIFETIME®

2026

# OVERVIEW

This document covers the Life Time UNBOUND Gravel presented by Shimano XL 350-mile distance, and is intended to provide event participants with all the information they will need to prepare for a successful and rewarding UNBOUND Gravel experience. If you plan to participate in one of our other distances, please refer to the appropriate Gravel Guide document, so you have all of the correct information.

## **Special Note:**

The Flint Hills region of east-central Kansas is an extremely remote area. Always be aware of the distance to the next resupply, and be prepared to travel that distance with the supplies you carry. Participants are solely responsible for their personal well-being, will have to make their own informed decisions, and suffer the consequences of those decisions. Should you need to abandon the event, each XL participant will be given a wristband with a number to call in the event you need to be picked up. That number is 719-257-3938. If you do not feel you are prepared to meet the challenges of the XL, please consider a shorter route option. In case of a serious emergency, call 911.

# EVENT DESCRIPTION

## **LIFE TIME UNBOUND GRAVEL XL**

The UNBOUND Gravel XL is a 350+ mile long ultra-endurance bicycling challenge, held on the gravel roads through the Flint Hills region of east-central Kansas. The event will begin on Friday, May 29, 2026 and will start on Commercial St. in downtown Emporia, Kansas at 3:00 pm. While the course is not marked, GPS files. Each rider will be responsible for printing their own maps and cue sheets. As an additional safety precaution, all XL participants must register for live tracking through Follow My Challenge, cost of Follow My Challenge registration is included in the cost of the XL event. One's own device can be used for this purpose or devices are also available for rent through Follow My Challenge. Participants are not allowed to meet their support crew to re-supply and fix equipment at any point along the route. The event will finish in Downtown Emporia. The finish line will be open until 3:00 am Sunday, May 31, 2026, allowing riders 36 hours to officially finish the course.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

We've got a whole lot of adventure in store for you. Our Schedule of Events outlines the lineup of races, festivities, and key information designed to fuel your UNBOUND Gravel experience. From packet pickup details to race start times, it's your go-to resource to an unforgettable weekend in Emporia. See website for the full line-up of events.

## THUR, MAY 28

**10:00 AM – 1:00 PM** 200 Mile Elite Only Packet Pickup | Lyon County History Center

**1:00 PM – 6:00 PM** All Things Gravel Expo presented by City of Emporia | Expo

**1:00 PM – 6:00 PM** All Athlete Packet Pickup | Lyon County History Center

**1:00 PM – 6:00 PM** Participant T-Shirt Pickup | Expo

**4:00 PM** XL Rider's Meeting | Granada Theatre

*Shakeout Rides - See website for most up-to-date schedule*

## FRI, MAY 29

**10:00 AM – 11:30 AM** Life Time UNBOUND Gravel Kids Crit presented by Sprockids Packet Pickup | Family Zone in Expo

**10:00 AM – 1:00 PM** XL Only Packet Pickup | Lyon County History Center

**10:00 AM – 5:00 PM** All Athlete Packet Pickup | Lyon County History Center

**10:00 AM – 5:00 PM** All Things Gravel Expo presented by City of Emporia | Expo

**10:00 AM – 5:00 PM** Participant T-Shirt Pickup | Expo

**12:00 PM - 2:00 PM** Life Time UNBOUND Gravel Kids Crit presented by Sprockids | Commercial St

**3:00 PM** Life Time UNBOUND Gravel XL Start | Commercial St

**5:00 PM** Rider's Meeting | Granada Theatre

*Shakeout Rides - See website for most up-to-date schedule*

## SAT, MAY 30

**6:00 AM – 9:30 AM** 50/25 Mile ONLY Packet Pickup | Lyon County History Center

**5:50 AM** Elite Men 200 Mile Start | Commercial St

**6:05 AM** Elite Women 200 Mile Start | Commercial St

**6:30 AM** 200 Mile Start | Commercial St

**7:30 AM** 100 Mile Start | Commercial St

**8:30 AM** 50 Mile JUNIOR Start | Commercial St

**9:00 AM** 50 Mile Start | Commercial St

**9:30 AM** 25 Mile Start | Commercial St

**2:00 PM** 50 Mile Awards | Granada Theatre

**5:00 PM** 100 Mile Awards | Granada Theatre

**7:00 PM** Life Time Grand Prix Awards | Granada Theatre

**7:00 PM - 1:00 AM** Crew For Hire Drop Bag Pickup | 702 Mechanic St.

**2:00 PM - 3:00 AM** 200 Mile Finisher Jacket Pickup | Finish Line

## SUN, MAY 31

**3:00 AM** Finish Line Cutoff | Commercial St

**8:00 AM** XL and 200 Mile Awards | Granada Theatre

**7:00 AM - 12:00 PM** Crew For Hire Drop Bag Pickup | 702 Mechanic St.

# GENERAL COURSE INFO

All UNBOUND Gravel event distances will utilize a single-loop format. Although some blacktop roads will be necessary from time to time, the vast majority of the course will be on gravel and dirt roads. Some of these roads receive little to no maintenance throughout the year and can be quite primitive in nature. In the event of inclement weather, gravel and dirt roads can become mud roads. Riders are therefore encouraged to prepare their bikes, their bodies, and their minds to be ready for any and all possible conditions. The course will not be marked.

## LIFE TIME UNBOUND GRAVEL XL COURSE INFO

This 350 (+) mile route will leave downtown Emporia under police escort, traveling throughout Lyon, Greenwood, Chase and Morris counties. There are no official checkpoints along the course, however, the route will go through towns in which participants can utilize local merchants to refill supplies. Support crews are not allowed on the course for any reason other than to pick up an abandoning rider.

### **Mile 57.4 | Madison, KS**

Casey's  
620-287-2714  
210 4th St  
Open: 5am - 11pm

### **Mile 273 | Council Grove, KS**

Short Stop  
620-273-4033  
9 E Main St  
Open: 24/7

### **Mile 109.4 | Eureka, KS**

Casey's  
620-287-2764  
720 N Main St  
Open: 24/7 (just for us!)

### **Mile 357 | Emporia, KS**

Finish Line  
Cutoff: 3am Sunday morning

### **Mile 161 | Matfield Green, KS**

Neutral Aid provided by Life Time  
GU products, Water  
Food Truck: [Thirsty Dawg](#)  
102a Rogler St  
Open: 24/7

### **Mile 206.2 | Florence, KS**

Jump Start  
620-374-0952  
800 W 5th St  
Open: 12am - 10pm (ammended  
hours just for us!)

# EVENT REGISTRATION

Due to high demand, we are unable to accommodate everyone who wishes to participate in Life Time UNBOUND Gravel. Therefore, a random selection process will be utilized to determine who will be allowed to participate. Individuals may submit their name for participation in the 2026 UNBOUND Gravel from November 1st, 2025 until November 15th, 2025. Registration for event entry selection will be free of charge. However, credit card information will be collected at the time you submit your name for consideration. Your credit card will be charged only if you are accepted to participate in the event. Winning entries will be selected on or about November 21st, 2025 subject to event eligibility requirements. The individuals whose names are drawn will be awarded entry. These selected event participants will be notified by email per the contact information they provide. It is imperative that you take your time and input your personal information correctly. Each participant's credit card will be charged the event registration fee, a small processing fee, state sales tax, as well as any additional fees for add-on items chosen by the participant. For more information on event registration, visit [unboundgravel.com](http://unboundgravel.com) and click on the "Registration" tab.

## LIFE TIME UNBOUND GRAVEL XL COMPETITION

Sunday @ 8:00 AM XL and 200 Mile Awards | Granada Theatre

### CLASSES

Men (all ages)  
Women (all ages)  
Non-Binary (all ages)

#### Notes on Classification:

For all classifications and distances, "Racing Age" is based on the Rider's age on race day. Minimum age requirement for UNBOUND Gravel XL is 18 years of age. E-Bikes are only allowed in 50 and 25 mile distances. We reserve the right to add, combine, and/or delete classes.



# ON COURSE TRACKING

Due to the remote and self-supported nature of this event, each rider is required to carry a satellite tracking device to give periodic updates on their location. This device is intended to keep race organizers, emergency service personnel, support crews, and spectators aware of riders' location on course. Potential devices are SPOT, Garmin Inreach, or Zoleo. These devices must be registered with Follow My Challenge to be included on a live-tracking interactive map that will be available to the public to follow the race. Tracking registration fee is included in the price of registration for the UNBOUND Gravel XL.

If participants do not wish to purchase a satellite tracker, Follow My Challenge has devices available for rent within the tracking registration form for \$40. Rental devices will be delivered to Emporia ahead of the event, completely set up and ready to go and available for pickup at Packet Pick-Up. Please return any rental devices upon finishing the event, either at the finish festival or the next morning at the awards ceremony.

## Additional Information:

- Rental devices will be distributed at the event.
- Return rental trackers to the XL coordinator at the event finish. It is the responsibility of the event participants to return rental devices after the event.
- Names will be added to the tracking map approximately one week prior to the start.
- If needed, a return address will be provided in the payment confirmation email and is also available on the Follow My Challenge USA website.
- Live Tracking: <https://www.followmychallenge.com/live/unbound-xl-2026>

All questions should be directed to: [usa@followmychallengeusa.com](mailto:usa@followmychallengeusa.com)

**REGISTRATION AND RENTAL CAN  
BE FOUND AT THE BELOW LINK:**



**DOT TRACKER CAN BE FOUND AT  
THE LINK BELOW:**



# EVENT RULES

1. UNBOUND Gravel Athletes must utilize an approved bicycle. This bicycle must:

- Consist of a frame mounted on two wheels, one behind the other.
- Have a seat and have handlebars for steering.
- Be propelled solely by the operator via two pedals connected to the rear wheel by a chain or belt.
- Have two hand-operated brakes (fixed gear and coaster brake bikes are not exempt from this rule).
- The same bicycle frame must be utilized for the duration of the race. Other components may be swapped out in checkpoints. Athletes may assist each other on course with parts.
- Singlespeed riders must utilize the same gearing for the duration of the race.

2. Athletes must wear a helmet while operating their bicycle.

3. Athletes must pass over the timing mats at each of the official checkpoints. Cut-off times will be established for reaching each checkpoint for rider safety, based on an average of 10 mph. If you reach a checkpoint after the cut-off time, your time will not be scored and you will no longer be an official participant of the race.

4. UNBOUND Gravel athletes are responsible for themselves throughout the duration of the event.

This includes:

- **Navigation of the course.**
  - The course is UNMARKED. While we will mark significant turns/dangerous sections on the course, you should not rely on course markings. We have navigation resources for you on our website which includes GPS files.
  - Riders must stop at all stop signs at highway crossings before continuing along route.
- **Interaction with local vehicle traffic**
  - Roads are open to the public and athletes are expected to follow Kansas bicycle laws. <https://www.ksdot.org/bureaus/burRail/bike/BicycleStatutes.asp>

5. Each athlete in the 100 & 200 mile must have present at least one support crew person to come get them should they need to abandon the event.

- Multiple riders may share the same support crew. Riders who do not have a personal support crew can purchase support through the Crew-For-Hire program during registration, or afterwards by contacting [unboundgravel@lthevents.zendesk.com](mailto:unboundgravel@lthevents.zendesk.com).
- You may use businesses in the checkpoint towns as your support for resupply, however, you must have someone willing to come pick you up should you choose to abandon the event. XL, 25, and 50 mile distances can call **(719-257-3938)** for pickup.

# EVENT RULES

6. Support Crews, friends, and family members are NOT allowed on or near the course, except to pick up a rider who is abandoning the event. **IF A SUPPORT CREW VEHICLE IS SPOTTED ON COURSE, THEIR RIDER WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

7. Outside support is only allowed at official checkpoints, with these exceptions:

- No outside support ANYWHERE for the XL distance
- Athletes may help other athletes with mechanical support, navigation assistance, or by any other means.
- Athletes may resupply at local businesses and stores along the route.
- Athletes may receive “neutral” support from local residents at a stationary location from which any other event participant could also receive aid.

8. The primary route must be followed at all times. No short cuts or alternate routes are permitted.

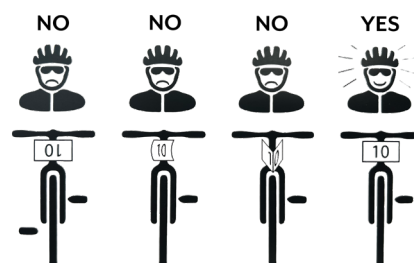
- If you intentionally exit the course for food, supplies, or any other reason, you must re-enter the course at the same spot at which you left.
- If you get lost, you shall make every reasonable attempt to backtrack to the point where you left the course; or to re-enter the course as soon as possible and without gaining an advantage.
- Note: “Advantage” is not defined by race position.

9. Athletes must remain within the primary boundaries of the roadway at all times.

- If the roadway is bordered by fences, stay between them.
- If the roadway is in open range (no fences), stay out of the ditch and on the road.
- Leaving the roadway is cutting the course.
- Hopping the fence is trespassing on private property, and as such is punishable by law. We will fully cooperate with local law enforcement.

10. Drafting off riders in a different race category is strictly prohibited. For clarity, Elite Women may not draft off any Elite Men or any Amateur Rider, and Elite Men may not draft off any Elite Women or any Amateur Rider athlete. Amateur Riders may draft off any other Amateur Rider, regardless of that Amateur Rider’s category (Age Group, Single Speed, Male, Female, etc.) Drafting on a non-participant cyclist, or on a motorized vehicle will result in disqualification. **This rule applies ONLY to the 200 Mile distance**

11. Athlete “Race Plates” MUST be affixed to the front of the handlebars. Athlete “Race Plates” MUST NOT be bent, folded, wrapped around the head tube, or in any other position than flat against the handle bars. Improper attachment of the race plate will cause timing chips not to register and may be cause for disqualification.



# EVENT RULES

12. All athletes must attend Packet Pickup before race day to receive their event packet. (Full Schedule of Events will be available on the website closer to the event date).

- A government-issued photo I.D. will be required to sign in.
- Event packets will be given out to registered athletes only. No one else can receive your pack for you.

13. Challenges to event results must come from a registered participant, must be made either in-person, or via email to [unboundgravel@ltevents.zendesk.com](mailto:unboundgravel@ltevents.zendesk.com), and must be received no later than 24 hours after closing of the race finish line.

14. All deferrals must be submitted to [unboundgravel@ltevents.zendesk.com](mailto:unboundgravel@ltevents.zendesk.com) no later than midnight on Wednesday, the day before packet pickup. You WILL NOT be able to pick up your packet if your entry is deferred to the next year.



# PREPARATIONS

## SUPPLIES YOU *MUST* CARRY

- Helmet (approved by CPSC or Snell standards)
- Navigation system (GPS device, cue sheets, map, etc)
- Cell phone
- Hydration system (bottles or pack with enough to go 50 miles, we recommend at least 2 liters)
- Nutrition (bars, gels, sports drink, enough to fuel you to the next checkpoint)

## ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES YOU SHOULD *SERIOUSLY* CONSIDER

- Two+ spare inner tubes (yes, even if you have tubeless tires)
- Tire repair plugs if rider's tires are tubeless
- Tube patch kit
- Tire repair boots or gorilla tape
- Tire inflation system (we recommend CO2 inflators for speed PLUS a hand pump for reliability).
- Tire levers
- Bicycle multi-tool that contains:
  - All allen wrenches needed for the various bolts on your bike
  - Chain tool
  - Spoke wrench
- Spare chain quick links
- Red tail light
- Cash, debit or credit card (to purchase supplies from local businesses)



# EMERGENCY INFO

## AREA HOSPITALS

It is, of course, our hope that no one will need this information. In the unfortunate chance that you do, print this off and keep it with you and your support crew.

### GREATER EMPORIA, KS AREA:

Newman Regional Hospital  
1201 W. 12th Ave.,  
Emporia, KS 66801  
(620) 343-6800

### TO THE NORTH WEST:

Morris County Hospital  
600 N Washington St,  
Council Grove, KS 66846  
(620) 767-6811

### TO THE SOUTH:

Greenwood County Hospital  
100 W 16th St,  
Eureka, KS 67045  
(620) 583-7451

### TO THE SOUTH WEST:

St Luke Hospital  
535 S Freeborn St,  
Marion KS 66861  
(620) 382- 2177

**EMERGENCIES DIAL 911**

# SAFETY

The race has subscribed to a severe weather text alert system through MyAlerts. To download the MyAlerts app and receive local alerts for the area you are in, follow these instructions:

## **Download the MyAlerts App:**

- Go to your device's app store (App Store for iOS devices or Google Play Store for Android devices).
- Search for "MyAlerts" in the search bar.
- Tap on the app when it appears in the search results.
- Tap the "Download" or "Install" button to download and install the app onto your device.

## **Allow Location Access:**

- When prompted, allow the MyAlerts app to access your device's location. This is crucial for receiving local alerts based on your current location.

## **Enable Notifications:**

- Upon opening the app for the first time, you may be asked to enable notifications. Make sure to allow notifications from the MyAlerts app to receive alerts.

## **Select City of Emporia Alerts:**

- Within the app, navigate to the settings or locations section.
- Find and select "Current Location" alerts or any related options such as "Community Alerts".

## **Receive Unbound Mapped Area Alerts:**

- By selecting Current Location alerts, you will automatically receive alerts related to the Unbound mapped area when you are within the Unbound route.
- These alerts may include weather updates, Unbound race alerts, route changes, and other important information relevant to riders and spectators.

## **Set Quiet Hours (Optional):**

- If desired, you can set quiet hours through the MyAlerts app.
- This feature allows you to customize times during which you do not wish to receive notifications.

## **Stay Informed During the Event:**

- City staff will post alerts two days prior to the event and throughout the event as needed.
- These alerts will be sent to your device if you are within the geofenced Unbound route area.

## **Post-Event Options:**

- After the event, you have the option to keep the MyAlerts app on your device or delete it.
- As MyAlerts is a location-based app, if you choose to keep the app, you may continue to receive alerts based on your location and subscription settings.

**In case of emergency, call 911. This is true of riders and support crew. For riders, local emergency service organizations appreciate the use of the [What3Words App](#). This app designates a unique three word code to every 10 foot square in a worldwide grid. If you or a rider need assistance, you can give the dispatcher your three word code and they will be able to pinpoint your exact location without needing street names.**

# WEATHER

In the event of severe weather:

- Attempt to get into a building or car;
- If no structure is available, get to an open space and squat low to the ground as quickly as possible (if in the woods, find an area protected by a low clump of trees - never stand underneath a single large tree in the open);
- Be aware of the potential for flooding in low-lying areas;
- Crouch with hands and knees;
- Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees, fences, telephone lines or power poles; Stay away from natural lightning rods such as golf clubs, tractors, fishing rods, bicycles or camping equipment;
- Stay away from rivers, lakes or other bodies of water;
- If you are isolated in a level field or prairie and you feel your hair stand on-end (indicating lightning is about to strike), crouch down, putting your hands on your knees. A position with feet together and crouching while removing all metal objects is recommended. Do not lie flat on the ground.

## **Emergency shelters are available:**

- **Madison High School**
  - 1500 Southwest Blvd
  - Madison, KS, 66860
- **Council Grove High School**
  - 129 Hockaday Street
  - Council Grove, KS, 66846
- **Matfield Green School for Rural Culture and Creativity**
  - 102a Rogler St
  - Matfield Green, KS, 66862
- **Americus Community Center**
  - 516 Locust St
  - Americus, KS, 66835

# Visit EMPORIA!



## PLAN YOUR VISIT at [visitemporia.com](http://visitemporia.com)

Welcome cyclists! We've got the inside scoop on where to **eat**, where to **shop**, and **things to do**. For free visitor information, visit our website, look for the yellow guide stands downtown, or stop by the Visit Emporia tent at the expo!

# SPONSORS

THANK YOU

Thank you to our amazing sponsors for helping make Life Time  
UNBOUND Gravel presented by Shimano possible.

# LIFETIME<sup>®</sup>

# SHIMANO



# APPENDIX A

Life Time UNBOUND Gravel is dedicated to providing high-quality, grassroots events to the endurance cycling and running communities. Although we are not affiliated with any sanctioning bodies, we do agree with and fully support the Fundamental Rationale for the World Anti-Doping Code, which states...

“Anti-doping programs seek to preserve what is intrinsically valuable about sport. This intrinsic value is often referred to as “the spirit of sport.” It is the essence of Olympism, the pursuit of human excellence through the dedicated perfection of each person’s natural talents. It is how we play true. The spirit of sport is the celebration of the human spirit, body, and mind, and is reflected in values we find in and through sport, including:”

- Ethics, Fair Play, and Honesty
- Health
- Excellence in Performance
- Character and Education
- Fun and Joy
- Teamwork
- Dedication and Commitment
- Respect for Rules and Laws
- Respect for Self and other Participants
- Courage
- Community and Solidarity

Doping is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport. To fight doping by promoting the spirit of sport, the Code requires each Anti-Doping Organization to develop and implement education and prevention programs for Athletes, including youth and Athlete Support Personnel.

## **THEREFORE:**

Athletes who are currently serving a ban from sport or competition by WADA or any intergovernmental organizations, governments, public authorities, and other public and private bodies fighting doping in sport will not be allowed entry or participation in UNBOUND Gravel events.