

ULTRA-TRAIL AUSTRALIA -START GROUP SEEDING PROCESS EXPLANATION

The reasons why Ultra-Trail Australia has the start group seeding process and why it is done the way it is are listed below. If runners take their time and read the information on start groups here and on the website, they will see it is actually a very simple process. If a runner does not want to bother with providing any start group seeding information, that is completely fine as long as they understand they will be seeded into the last start group.

1) This is a trail running event using a large proportion of narrow single trail and very little wide road. Multiple start groups are critical in order to split up the huge field of runners and reduce congestion on course for the benefit of all runners and the event.

2) The only way to seed people into start groups is to know every entrant's individual running capability. This can only be determined with past trail running results (ITRA Performance Index Rating or we can also use road marathon or half-marathon times) OR by a coach who both myself and the runner can work closely alongside (SQUADRUN provide this most excellent support).

3) In the past we have allowed any trail run result to be input. This was manageable with under 1000 runners and before the event had so many international runners but it was still a huge amount of work to sort through and try to compare how a result in any small or large trail run around the world may compare to a result in UTA. This turned into a very unreliable and unrepeatable comparison system. Sometimes we were provided with international results without a single Arabic numeral or English word. Due to the difficulties, this approach was discontinued after the 2017 event.

4) Using ITRA Performance Index Ratings provides us with the simplest, most reliable and repeatable comparison of any trail race worldwide and therefore a comparison of all runners who have competed in an ITRA registered trail race. Refer to UTA website under the 'Start Groups' section of the UTA100 or UTA50 for further information about ITRA including how any trail race can register with ITRA.

5) If a runner doesn't already have a General Performance Index Rating and is planning on running in an ITRA registered race to assist their UTA seeding, they should be aware that after a race, it can take between 1 and 4 weeks for the race organiser to finalise the race results, upload them to ITRA and for ITRA to calculate the Performance Index for the specific race. As UTA seeding information is needed by mid-March, runners need to plan to complete an ITRA registered trail run prior to the end of February and even then they should check with the race organiser if the organiser can fast track finalising their results and uploading their results to ITRA. Refer to the [ITRA calendar](#).

6) A road marathon or half-marathon is included as a start group seeding option as it is probably the most easily accessible option for anyone worldwide and is a very

reliable and repeatable test of running form. Even though it is on road and not trail, it does provide a good indication of someone's running capability and without anything else to go by at least it gives us something to use. A large proportion of our runners come from Sydney and The Sydney Marathon Clinic Road Race Series is ideal as there is a SMC half-marathon every month in Sydney between September and May. <http://www.sydney marathon clinic.org.au/index.php/runners/calendar>

7) We have always assisted everyone to be in the most suitable start group but to do this we need runners to assist us by providing us with required information. Our thoughts are that it is simple and fast for us to seed a runner if they have done an ITRA registered race in the 3 years prior to UTA race day. If a runner has done another trail run that isn't ITRA registered, they can email the organiser of that race with some PDF documents provided on the UTA website and ask the organiser to consider registering the race with ITRA. If ITRA is not an option for a runner, many will have access to a road marathon or a half-marathon before mid-March no matter where in the world they live. If neither of those two options are available for a runner, but the runner wants to be seeded not into the last start group then there is a perfect option to get suitably seeded by joining SQUADRUN by mid-January. This is such a simple fall back for anyone, anywhere in the world as long as they speak English. Not everyone has access to an ITRA registered race or a road marathon or half-marathon but everyone has access to SQUADRUN. As a side benefit of joining SQUADRUN to get a suitable group seeding, the committed, talented and extremely hard working coaches, Kerry and Ali will also get you into the best form you could possibly be in for UTA.

8) There are always so many runners, especially in UTA50, who should be seeded into anything but the last start group but have to be seeded into the last start group due to choosing 'No Seeding'. With only a small effort by these runners, to complete one of the other seeding options by mid-March, we would gladly and easily seed them into an appropriate start group.

9) While all runners are most welcome to contact us for any reason, we do ask runners to please read all available information on start groups and act accordingly to first help themselves in getting an appropriate seeding. Please understand that having runners email us to ask for special treatment in considering results that don't fit into our requirements, such as a result in a non-ITRA registered trail race, takes up a huge amount of our limited time.

My wish is that all runners who shouldn't be in the last start group do actually provide us with either a result in an ITRA registered trail race, a road marathon or half-marathon or they join SQUADRUN by mid-January. Everyone would then be seeded suitably leading to only minimal congestion on course on race day.

Tom Landon-Smith
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Ultra-Trail Australia