

# 9 - MEDICAL INFORMATION ~ 2012

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## FOLLOW VEHICLE CREW

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The Follow Vehicle Crew is responsible for the immediate safety and well being of the Runner. They must NOT let the Runner become a medical statistic. Be Alert! Watch the Runner at all times. Each year we have runners go down; this is due to Follow Vehicle personnel NOT paying attention to the runner's condition.

- ❖ Watch for signs of fatigue, dehydration, and for physical exhaustion!
- ❖ The *Follow Vehicle Crew* must be prepared to take immediate steps to prevent a Medical Emergency.
- ❖ Because of the extreme difficulty in trying to determine the Runners physical status from the *Follow Vehicle*, it would be wise to have someone with running experience riding as an observer, possibly an Alternate Runner.
- ❖ The crew must make every effort to keep the runner cool and give them water. Keep them **Hydrated**.
- ❖ Abort their run if you are not satisfied with their condition. Slow them down if they show any signs of a problem. Stop them if necessary and give them water until they can continue.
- ❖ Almost without exception, all previous medical emergencies could have been prevented or sharply reduced, if the Follow Vehicle Crew had taken prompt, appropriate action.

## MEDICAL DEPLOYMENT

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A Medical Crew of certified EMT, Licensed Paramedics and Licensed Registered Nurses will be available throughout the race course and Stages to provide emergency medical care when needed.

- ❖ Past history has shown the majority of emergency calls are made in the first six stages.
- ❖ A first-aid station will be established between Stage 5 & Stage 6.
- ❖ This station will be supplied with a Doctor, Nurses, and EMT's who will determine if a Downed Runner requires further medical attention.
- ❖ Ground ambulance transportation will be available to move Downed Runners to the first-aid area or to the hospital. If necessary, the Follow Vehicle should move the runner to the nearest Stage for medical treatment.
- ❖ Air evacuation will be on hand for emergencies that require immediate hospitalization.

## MEDICAL PROBLEMS

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### DEHYDRATION

This is the common cause of most of the Medical Emergencies.

- ❖ Dehydration cannot be determined (In the high temperature, low humidity conditions of the desert) by the quantity of sweat generated.
- ❖ Sweat evaporates immediately to cool the body.
- ❖ It is therefore mandatory that the Runners *drink water* as well as an electrolyte replacement drink periodically throughout their race.
- ❖ Spraying water or pouring over the head of a hot runner will not forestall dehydration. This is not a substitute for Drinking water
- ❖ Offer the Runners a sip of water on a timely basis. Don't ask if they want water, offer it to them!
- ❖ Even so, some Runners will refuse water right up to the time they PASS OUT!
- ❖ During the heat of the day, make certain that you watch their water intake.
- ❖ If it is apparent to you that the Runner is suffering the beginning signs of dehydration, pull them over and get them into some shade. **Lay them flat.**
- ❖ Make them sip water and douse them with water to cool them down. Apply ICE to the back of their neck, arm pits and groin area.
- ❖ Don't let them proceed! Put out the Alternate runner.

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### **FATIGUE**

The medical dictionary defines fatigue as the "Temporary loss of power to respond, induced in a sensory receptor or motor end organ, by continued stimulation".

- ❖ Translation, even though the mind says "go on" the body begins to rebel.
- ❖ "Rubber legs" is the first sign that the Runner is headed for trouble.
- ❖ When Runners legs begin to stiffen they will begin to stagger and they will look like they are running in pain, believe it, they ARE! This is the time to take action.
- ❖ Slow them down and make sure that they drink plenty of water.
- ❖ If necessary, make them walk awhile. Above all, DON'T urge them on!

### **EXHAUSTION**

This can range from simple physical exhaustion to Heatstroke. It most certainly can be prevented by proper care and attention to the Runner by the *Follow Vehicle Crew!*

- ❖ Simple physical exhaustion is when the Runner just plain runs out of gas.
- ❖ This is usually the result of not being physically conditioned prior to the race.
- ❖ If the Runners have been properly hydrated throughout the race and seem to be slowing down, they are fatigued and probably nearing physical exhaustion.
- ❖ Slow the Runner down! Don't encourage the Runners to try harder!
- ❖ Watch them carefully for other signs!

### **HEAT EXHAUSTION**

This is difficult to predict from the *Follow Vehicle*. Once it occurs and the Runner goes down, the symptoms are weakness, nausea, dizziness, weak and rapid pulse, and probably profuse sweating (*if they have been properly hydrated*). Watch for the telltale signs:

- ❖ The Runner who has refused to drink for a long period of time.
- ❖ Possible changes in the Runners head color (temperature).
- ❖ Changes in the Runners leg movements! (Rubber legs).
- ❖ Attitude or personality changes. **Disorientation = Heatstroke**
- ❖ If the Runners seem pale, weak, depressed, or any of other symptoms of distress, take immediate action.
- ❖ Stop them immediately and make further determinations.
- ❖ Get the Runner into the shade and have them **lie down flat**.
- ❖ Re-hydrate them with small sips of water, **if they can tolerate liquids. Some maybe nauseated but either way get them medical attention at the closest Stage.**
- ❖ If immediate action if NOT taken, the Runner could suffer from Heatstroke!
- ❖ If the Runner needs medical assistance, get them to the nearest STAGE.
- ❖ Use the Follow Vehicle to transport the runner to the nearest exchange point and get aid!

### **HEATSTROKE**

Heatstroke is the result of letting a situation get completely out of hand. It is usually the result of the Follow Vehicle personnel NOT observing any of the above indications. Heatstroke most usually results in unconsciousness of the Runner.

- ❖ This is a VERY serious condition and requires immediate Medical Attention.
- ❖ Symptoms will include redness of the face, dilated pupils, very hot skin with a full but slow pulse.
- ❖ Get the Runner into shade immediately! **Lay them down flat!**
- ❖ Get them to the nearest Stage for Medical Assistance! **ASAP**
- ❖ Remove or loosen any of the Runners restrictive clothing.
- ❖ Bathe the Runner liberally in cold water and ice to reduce the body temperature as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Do Not give water to an unconscious person!

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### PREVENTION

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The key to a safe and successful Team is the attention that the *Follow Vehicle Crew* gives to their Runners. They must be ever alert for signs of trouble or the Runner will suffer the serious consequences.

- ❖ Who have you placed in the Follow Vehicle as the Observer? Are they experienced in judging the condition of a runner?
- ❖ In the extreme situation, can those in the Follow Vehicle pick up the runner to place them inside the vehicle for transportation?
- ❖ Runner is beginning to slow down and seems disoriented or in obvious physical distress. **The test is: do they know the time, where they are, who they are or their circumstances. Should they fail any of these tests get them medical help ASAP.**
- ❖ Take immediate action before the Runner becomes a statistic.
- ❖ Be aware, there are no roadside emergency phones, and cellular phone service is sporadic to nonexistent.
- ❖ All Stages will have a Medic Team in attendance.