Ultraman New Zealand Race Guide



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At a glance

Race Date: Saturday 12 to Monday 14 December 2026 (race week in Wānaka 9 to 15 December)

Location: Lake Wānaka waterfront, Wānaka, Otago, New Zealand

Race Distance: 515 km (320 mi) over three days, 12-hour cutoff each day, 6-hour swim cutoff

Race Start Time: 6:30 am NZDT each day

Format: Day 1: 10 km swim (5 x 2 km loops) + 145 km (90 mi) bike. Day 2: 276 km (171.5 mi) out-and-back bike to Haast. Day 3: 84.3 km (52.4 mi) trail run.

Course

Four legs over three days, all starting and finishing in Wānaka.

Day 1 swim, 5 x 2 km loops. Lake Wānaka from the Watersports foreshore out to "the rock" and back, near the Wānaka Tree. The turn buoy at the start end sits close to shore, with a special-needs area at the lake edge where crew can hand off nutrition and warm drinks each lap. No exit from the water between loops. On the final loop, round the last buoy and swim straight to shore. Water Safety staff patrol the course; there are no personal paddlers.

Day 1 bike, 145 km (90 mi). Clockwise loop from the Wānaka lakefront car park through Luggate and Cromwell, over the Crown Range and down through Cardrona. Finish at Upper Clutha Rugby Club, 15 McDougall Street. The race lists about 1,500 m (4,900 ft) of climbing. The high point is the Crown Range summit, about 1,090 m (3,560 ft) at km 106.

Day 2 bike, 276 km (171.5 mi). Out-and-back from Albert Town Campground on Lake Hāwea Road, past Lake Hāwea and Makarora, over Haast Pass to Haast and back. The race lists about 3,500 m (11,500 ft) of climbing. Haast Pass is crossed twice, near km 75 and km 195; the turnaround at Haast (km 135) is the low point near sea level. Timing finish is outside town, with the finish arch at Upper Clutha Rugby Club.

Day 3 run, 84.3 km (52.4 mi). A loop on well-formed trails: the Glendhu Bay (Millennium) track and the Upper Clutha River track, through Luggate, with a few technical sections. Start and finish at the Wānaka Watersports precinct. The race lists about 750 m (2,460 ft) of climbing.

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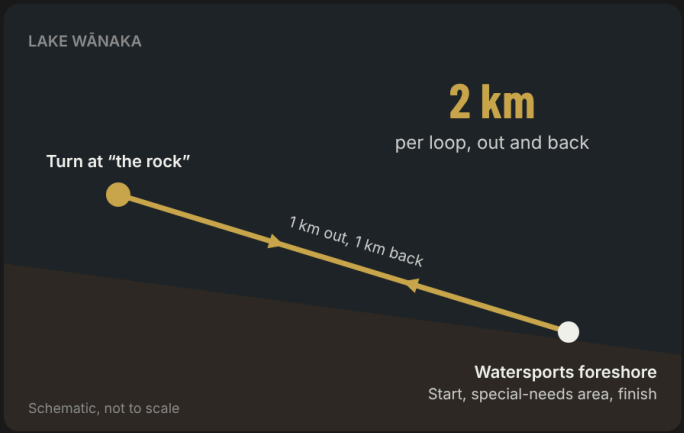
SWIM · DAY 1

DAY 1 SWIM

10 km
Total swim (6.2 mi)

5 loops
No exit between loops

2 km
Per loop (1.24 mi)



Start	6:30 a.m. Saturday
Water	Cold; course unaltered down to 14°C (57°F)
Wetsuit	Legal, plus thermal cap, gloves, booties
Aid	Crew hand-offs at the special-needs area each loop
Transition	10-minute neutral period in the Watersports building
Cutoff	**12:30 p.m. Saturday** (6 hours)

COACH'S NOTE

Eat and drink every loop, even when the cold kills your appetite. Day 1 sets up Days 2 and 3.

Mindset Endurance Coaching

12–14 Dec 2026 · Lake Wānaka

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COURSE OVERVIEW

DAY 1 BIKE



90.1 mi
Bike (145 km)

~4,900 ft
Climbing, race figure (1,500 m)

3,560 ft
Crown Range high point (1,086 m)

COACH'S NOTE

The Crown Range climb starts around km 90. Ride the first two hours easy and save your legs for it.

ELEVATION (FT)

Course: 650 to 3,560 ft



MILE	CHECKPOINT	CUTOFF
5.0	End of no-crew zone (km 8)	
66.1	Crown Range summit	
90.1	Finish, Upper Clutha Rugby Club	6:30 p.m.

Crew stops only at points marked in the crew GPX

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Map and elevation from course GPX

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COURSE OVERVIEW

DAY 2 BIKE



171.6 mi
Bike (276 km)

~11,500 ft
Climbing, race figure (3,500 m)

1,940 ft
Haast Pass x2 (591 m)

COACH'S NOTE

The first 53 km is on your own, so carry enough to get there. The second climb over Haast Pass comes after 120 miles; pace the way out for it.

ELEVATION (FT)

Course: 40 to 1,940 ft



MILE	CHECKPOINT	CUTOFF
32.9	End of no-crew zone (km 53)	
83.7	Haast turnaround (km 135)	
171.6	Finish, Upper Clutha Rugby Club	6:30 p.m.

Return checkpoints: Pleasant Flat 2:30 p.m., Makarora Café 4:30 p.m.

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Map and elevation from course GPX



Schedule and cutoffs

Each day starts at 6:30 am and closes at 6:30 pm, with a 6-hour swim cutoff and staffed checkpoints on Days 2 and 3.

Day and time	Event	Hours from start
Thu 10 Dec, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm	Athlete registration and bike/helmet check, Wānaka Watersports precinct (allocated time slot)	
Fri 11 Dec, 7:30 am	UltraTRIbe Breakfast, Lake Wānaka Centre, 89 Ardmore St	
Fri 11 Dec, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm	Athlete and crew briefings (mandatory for athlete and Crew Captain)	
Sat 12 Dec, 5:45 to 6:15 am	Swim check-in, Wānaka lakefront	
Sat 12 Dec, 6:30 am	Day 1 swim start	0:00
Sat 12 Dec, 12:30 pm	Swim cutoff	6:00
Sat 12 Dec, 6:30 pm	Day 1 bike cutoff, Upper Clutha Rugby Club	12:00
Sun 13 Dec, 6:00 am	Day 2 check-in, Albert Town Campground	
Sun 13 Dec, 6:20 am	Crews depart north	
Sun 13 Dec, 6:30 am	Day 2 bike start	0:00
Sun 13 Dec, 2:30 pm	Pleasant Flat checkpoint, return leg (cutoff risk warning)	8:00
Sun 13 Dec, 4:30 pm	Makarora Café checkpoint (cutoff risk warning)	10:00
Sun 13 Dec, after 4:30 pm	Lake Hāwea: athletes who missed the 10-hour mark leave the course here	10:00+
Sun 13 Dec, 6:30 pm	Day 2 bike cutoff, Upper Clutha Rugby Club	12:00
Mon 14 Dec, 6:00 am	Day 3 check-in, Wānaka Watersports precinct	
Mon 14 Dec, 6:30 am	Day 3 run start	0:00
Mon 14 Dec, 3:30 pm	Stevenson Road checkpoint, km 65	9:00
Mon 14 Dec, 5:30 pm	Outlet Road checkpoint, km 75	11:00

Day and time	Event	Hours from start
Mon 14 Dec, 6:30 pm	Day 3 run cutoff, Wānaka Watersports precinct	12:00
Tue 15 Dec, 10:30 am	Awards Banquet arrival, Lake Wānaka Centre (athletes give a 2-minute speech)	

Aid stations

The race runs no aid stations; the crew supplies all food, fluid and ice at the points below.

Location	When you pass it	What's there	Crew access
Swim special-needs area, lake edge by the start-end turn buoy	End of each 2 km loop	Crew hand-off of nutrition and warm drinks	Yes
Day 1 bike, first 8 km out of town	km 0 to 8	Nothing	No crew
Day 1 bike, marked stops in the crew GPX	km 8 to 145	Own crew	Marked stops only; on the Crown Range only at lookouts and chain bays
Day 2 bike, Albert Town to km 53	km 0 to 53	Nothing	No crew
Day 2 bike, marked servicing points in the GPX notes	km 53 to finish	Own crew	Marked points only
Makarora Café	Out and back	Emergency contact point; crews gather here for a small breakfast	Yes
Pleasant Flat	Out and back	Emergency contact point, Starlink internet	See GPX notes

Location	When you pass it	What's there	Crew access
Haast	Turnaround, km 135	Emergency contact point	See GPX notes
Day 3 run, first 2.5 km	km 0 to 2.5	Nothing	No crew, no pacer
Run access points	km 2.5, 12.8, 23.1, 25.5 to 28.9, 34.1, 37.5, 38.5, 44.8 (mi 1.6, 8.0, 14.4, 15.8 to 18.0, 21.2, 23.3, 23.9, 27.8)	Own crew	Yes
Run access points	km 52.8 to 56.8, 64.8, 70.5, 72.1, 75.5, 80.7 to 84.3 finish (mi 32.8 to 35.3, 40.3, 43.8, 44.8, 46.9, 50.1 to 52.4)	Own crew	Yes

Run km 28.9 to 34.1 and km 75.5 to 80.7 look reachable on a map but are limited-access residential areas; avoid them unless it's an emergency. Athletes carry enough to cover the 53 km no-crew start of Day 2 and the first hour or two of Day 3.

Crew access

A crew of 2 to 4 adults with one vehicle is mandatory for every stage, and Leap Frog is the only allowed support method.

- **Crew setup:** Every crew member signs the Crew Member Agreement before Day 1. Two must hold valid driver's licences. One is Crew Captain, who attends all briefings, checks in at every start and finish, and files any protest in writing within 30 minutes of the stage finish.
- **Vehicle:** One vehicle per team, showing the race numbers (rear windshield lower right, front windshield lower left). Large 4WDs such as an F250 or Dodge Ram, campervans, large vans and trucks are banned because of narrow shoulders.
- **Swim:** Crew hands off at the special-needs area each loop. Only 2 crew may enter the Watersports building, and only once the athlete starts the final loop. Transition is a 10-minute neutral period from entering the building; the athlete cannot leave before 10 minutes. Showers and toilets inside are athlete-only. Bikes are racked outside near the exit road; mount at the Mount Line with helmet fastened before touching the bike.

- **Bike, Leap Frog:** Pass the athlete at normal road speed without slowing to talk or hand off. Stop only at points marked in the crew GPX, all 4 wheels off the road, hazards on, hi-vis on anyone outside the vehicle. Never follow, pace or drive alongside the athlete.
- **Day 1 bike:** No crew in the first 8 km. On the Crown Range, stop only at lookouts and chain bays.
- **Day 2 bike:** Crews leave Albert Town at 6:20 am, before the athletes, and must be checked off by the UM Marshal heading north. An athlete whose crew isn't checked off cannot start. First 53 km is no-crew.
- **Run, pacing:** Athlete runs solo for the first 2.5 km. After that, one pacer at a time, on foot, in the official pacer bib, with no wind blocking. No bikes or wheeled support on the run course, crew vehicle included. If the athlete shows substantial fatigue, one crew member must accompany them. Crew and pacers traditionally run the final stretch in together.
- **Phones:** Each team needs a working mobile and WhatsApp for race group messages. No communication devices between athlete and crew during racing, and no headphones for athletes or pacers. Reception is poor around Haast Pass.
- **Medical:** Athletes check in and out with medical each stage. The race provides no emergency medical care; the crew drives the athlete to care or calls 111. IV fluids at any time, including between stages, mean disqualification or Participant status.
- **Penalties:** 6 minutes for a first infraction, 12 for a second, disqualification for a third, cumulative across all three days.

Weather

Typical mid-December conditions in Wānaka run from about 9°C (49°F) at the 6:30 am starts to about 22°C (71°F) in the afternoon

Window	Time	Typical temperature	Light
Day 1 swim	6:30 am to 12:30 pm	9°C (49°F) air at the start, warming through the morning	Daylight; sunrise about 5:52 am
Day 1 bike	Late morning to 6:30 pm	Up to 22°C (71°F) in the valleys; cooler on the Crown Range summit at about 1,090 m	Daylight

Window	Time	Typical temperature	Light
Day 2 start, Albert Town	6:30 am	9°C (49°F)	Daylight
Day 2, Haast Pass and West Coast	Midday	Wetter than Wānaka; Haast is New Zealand's wettest town	Daylight
Day 2 return and Day 3 afternoons	12:00 to 6:30 pm	Up to 22°C (71°F); December extremes in Wānaka have reached 32°C (90°F)	Daylight; sunset about 9:22 pm, after every cutoff

Wind: NIWA station records analyzed by Otago Regional Council show Wānaka wind mostly from the W to NW, with E to SE breezes next most common. On Day 1, that favors a tailwind heading southeast toward Cromwell and a cross to headwind heading north over the Crown Range and through Cardrona. On Day 2, expect northwest headwinds heading toward Haast Pass and a tailwind home.

Gear choices: Plan for a cold swim and a cold first hour on the bike each morning, then warm, dry afternoons with strong sun. Day 2 needs rain and cold gear in the car for the pass and the West Coast. Ice and extra fluids matter most on the Day 3 afternoon, which the race itself flags as potentially hot.

Swim conditions

Wetsuit legal and recommended: cold lake water; temperatures less than 14°C (57°F) may result in course modifications.

Item	Detail
Water	Lake Wānaka, Roys Bay, fresh water. 5 x 2 km loops from the Watersports foreshore to "the rock"
Typical temperature	Local reporting puts Roys Bay at about 14°C (57°F) at the start of the swim season, rarely above 18°C (64°F) at the surface

Item	Detail
Wetsuit legal	Yes. Also allowed: booties, gloves, insulated skull cap under the race cap, thermal vests under the wetsuit, facemask
Required	Race-supplied swim cap as the outer layer the whole swim
Cold rule	Course runs unaltered down to 14°C (57°F); below that the race may shorten or modify it

The race calls cold-water training the single most important preparation. Expect 2:30 to 6:00 in the water, and keep eating and drinking at every loop.

Gear checklist

Three 12-hour days in daylight, with a cold lake swim, cool mornings, a wet West Coast turnaround and warm afternoons; bike lights are required all day.

Paperwork and race kit

- [ ] Passport or photo ID for registration (required by race)
- [ ] Travel and medical insurance details
- [ ] Signed Crew Member Agreement for every crew member (required by race)
- [ ] Crew names, phone numbers, vehicle make, model and registration for registration (required by race)
- [ ] Run bib, worn on the front (required by race), plus race belt or pins
- [ ] Watch and bike computer charged, with chargers and a power bank
- [ ] Course GPX files loaded on the bike computer and the crew's device
- [ ] Nutrition and hydration for three days, plus 20% spare, and electrolytes
- [ ] Anti-chafe, high-SPF sunscreen, lip balm
- [ ] Antacid, anti-nausea and personal medications
- [ ] Dry clothes and shoes for after each stage and for medical check-in

Swim

- [ ] Wetsuit, with lube for neck and wrists

- [ ] Race-supplied swim cap, worn as the outer layer (required by race)
- [ ] Insulated skull cap, neoprene gloves and booties
- [ ] Thermal vest for under the wetsuit, if tested in training
- [ ] Two pairs of goggles, one tinted and one clear
- [ ] Earplugs if used
- [ ] Swim feeds and warm drinks in labeled bottles for the special-needs area
- [ ] Towel, warm layers and a shower kit for the Watersports building

Bike

- [ ] Bike serviced before travel and presented at registration (required by race)
- [ ] Spare bike, if bringing one, checked and stickered at registration (required by race)
- [ ] Hard-shell helmet as inspected, with the helmet sticker (required by race)
- [ ] White front light and red rear light, each visible from 200 m, on at all times (required by race), plus chargers
- [ ] Seat-post number sticker (required by race)
- [ ] Tires and tubes matched to your setup, valve extenders if needed
- [ ] CO2 inflator or pump you know how to use, levers, multitool
- [ ] Spare derailleur hanger, chain link, spare Di2 or AXS battery and charger
- [ ] Bottles and cages, aero bottle if used
- [ ] Cycling shoes, two kits, socks, sunglasses with clear and tinted lenses
- [ ] No headphones or other devices that block hearing

Run

- [ ] Trail-capable road or light trail shoes, plus a spare pair
- [ ] Socks and spares, blister kit
- [ ] Hat or visor, sunglasses
- [ ] Handheld bottles or hydration vest to carry the first hour or two
- [ ] Official pacer bib for any pacer (required by race)
- [ ] Ice bandana or arm sleeves for the afternoon

Cold and rain

- [ ] Arm warmers, knee or leg warmers, light gloves for 9°C (49°F) starts and descents

- [ ] Wind vest and a waterproof jacket for Haast Pass and the West Coast
- [ ] Ziplock bags for electronics and nutrition
- [ ] Warm drink plan for the swim and the first hour of Day 2

Crew and vehicle

- [ ] One vehicle, no large 4WD, campervan, large van or truck (required by race)
- [ ] Race numbers on rear windshield lower right and front windshield lower left (required by race)
- [ ] Hi-vis vests for every crew member outside the vehicle, loaned at registration (required by race)
- [ ] Working mobile phone with WhatsApp joined to the race group (required by race)
- [ ] Crew GPX with marked stops, plus printed course notes for Haast Pass dead zones
- [ ] Emergency contact list from registration kept in the vehicle
- [ ] Large coolers, ice and water for all three days, restocked each night
- [ ] Labeled bins by stage: swim, bike, run, cold and rain
- [ ] Crew food and drink, folding chair, first-aid kit, sunscreen
- [ ] Crew instruction sheet: feed timing, Leap Frog plan, meeting points
- [ ] Pacer kit: shoes, bottle, pacer bib
- [ ] Crew finish-line plan and team dress-ups, if planned