**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST MARATHON August 21st 2016 9.00am**

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION: NB YOU MUST CARRY YOUR COPY WITH YOU**

This is an OFF-ROAD/TRAIL Marathon. There are no mile markers and few signs or marshals, (though these will be in place where necessary). The whole idea of the event is to use these route instructions to make your way along the well-used, well-signposted Northumberland Coastal Path from Alnmouth to the race’s turn at Long Nanny Bridge, south of Beadnell Bay and return to the start.

***OS Landranger maps 75 & 81 Map show the full route.***

Apart from the 3 sections of beach described below, all you need to do for most of the way is to follow the blue, or blue/white Coastal Path signs. These have all been renewed recently. Provided you keep the sea on your right going north and on your left on returning and avoid running on any roads, you won’t go far wrong! Other than the section between Low Newton by the Sea and Newton Links car park the route is rarely more than a few metres from the sea.

The Garmin measured, shortest route that we’ve used each year is as follows:-

**ALNMOUTH TO BOULMER DRINKS STATION:**

1) This year the race’s START and FINISH in Alnmouth is on the beach by the children’s playground, next to the river Aln. It then continues north along the beach past Marden Rocks, (take great care here the rocks can be slippery) to the CONCRETE STEPS (Marshal here) near Seaton Point. (approx 2.2 miles)

2) Ascend steps and turn immediate RIGHT at the top, past some old caravans on left, look carefully for the NCP signs to bear LEFT before the newer caravan park, past the farm & then continue straight ahead North to Boulmer. (3.45 miles approx) Approaching Boulmer, the footpath goes through the car park & merges with the road at the Lifeboat Access. Stay on path here, & continue past the Fishing Boat Inn on right, then along a gravel section to the DRINKS STATION here (on both the out & back legs.)

**BOULMER TO CRASTER DRINKS STATION:** 3) Continue along gravel path, closing all gates for livestock, to a wooden footbridge across a stream. (4 miles approx) and follow path NORTH to a concrete footbridge at Howick (5.2 miles approx)

4) Cross concrete bridge & turn immediate RIGHT at Coastal Path sign, do not go through gate onto farm track. Go slightly uphill & continue on this path for approx the next 2.5 miles to Craster.(Take care on path near cliffs with large seabird colony) Approaching Craster take the path on the seaward side of the houses to arrive at the DRINKS STATION (out & back,) next to the children’s park before entering the village. (7.5miles approx)

**CRASTER TO NEWTON LINKS DRINKS STATION:**

5) Continue on coastal side of playground – not through housing estate, to pub garden then descend on footpath, (marshal here), on lower path closest to harbour on right and then North, through gate, on prominent footpath towards Dunstanburgh Castle. After the last gate before the castle take the lower path skirting the BOTTOM LEFT of the castle,(do not go up to Castle) to Embleton golf course. Take care with footing on this section. Run on the SEAWARD side of the golf course & descend on to the beach as soon past the rocks, (care here!) as possible. Run along Embleton Beach to its end at Low Newton by the Sea. (11.1 miles approx) For those who don’t like sand, it is possible to continue along the path here that skirts the golf course on your left.

6) On leaving the beach at Low Newton by the Sea, go uphill on path to right of road, after a few metres turning RIGHT through gate before the lone bungalow & follow signpost directions diagonally uphill in NE direction. (Do not take lower path nearer sea on this occasion) Follow the path NORTH to a pay-machine car park next to the farm at Newton Links House. (12.2 miles approx) DRINKS STATION in car park both out & back. (Watch out for vehicles here)

7) Continue on the path, heading NORTH of car park for another mile to reach the TURN at Long Nanny Bridge where numbers and times will be recorded. (Provided you keep heading NORTH with the dunes on your right, you won’t miss the bridge – it’s the only way over the river without getting wet!)

**THE RETURN FROM LONG NANNY BRIDGE:**

8) After having your number recorded you will be directed immediate right here, ie. EASTWARD to the beach. Run EAST along footpath to right of barbed wire fence, to 2nd stile, over stile and on to Newton Links Beach. Run SOUTH on beach. Just before its southern end leave the beach by turning RIGHT, (Marshal here,) back to Newton Steads car park/DRINKS STATION. Now all you have to do is run back from here EXACTLY the way you came! Finish at far end of Alnmouth beach where you started.

**REMEMBER:** If you are unable to complete the course please make your way to the nearest Drinks Station & inform one of the marshals there. Transport to the Finish will be arranged. Do not simply walk off the course without informing us. We will have Frontline Medical First Aiders patrolling the course to assist anyone in difficulty.

Look out for these … …and these

 