

FRONT RANGE DIRT

Connecting the Front Range trail community through independent voices and collaboration.



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FRD MAGAZINE

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FROM THE EDITOR



Every spring, I look forward to watching the foothills come alive. All of a sudden, everything is green, flowers are budding, and we need to remember to watch out for rattlesnakes. I want to shake as much outdoor time as possible from this fleeting season. After a few chilly months of reading mud reports and lapping Clear Creek Canyon, spring inspires me to venture out. It's a time to drive further afield to Evergreen, Staunton, and Buffalo Creek, returning to old favorites I haven't visited since the fall, and trying new loops I've bookmarked from Strava. I can peek into the still-snow-covered mountains and dream of longer adventures ahead this summer.

Spring looks a little different for me this year. At time of writing, I'm seven months pregnant! It's true what they say: that pregnancy is another type of ultramarathon (and I thought my 100-miler was long...). I'm hungry all the time; my muscles ache; and I have a very specific physical therapy regimen. I'm grateful to still be going out on "runs" (to be defined as: waddling the uphill and occasionally trotting the downs) and watching spring return.

As always, our editorial team is continually impressed by the support for this magazine and the hidden writing talents of our running community. While our winter edition focused on slowing down, our spring articles reflect a population ready to rev up for the year. Winter race reports are in, and Front Range runners have pizza, pacers, and perseverance on the mind. We hope you decide to take the longer drive and enjoy some new trails this spring. I'll be living vicariously through you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dru Falco". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "F" and "C".

Dru Falco
Editor

GOLDEN TRAIL PIZZA RANKINGS

BY GABE DORN

Golden, Colorado has six iconic trail systems: North Table, South Table, Chimney Gulch, White Ranch, Apex, and Galbraith. We are on these trails all the time, but have you ever conceptualized them in terms of your favorite pizza? While on a trail, it's not enough to just be burning calories; you have to be thinking about how you are going to fuel the fire. Here are my favorite trails, conceptualized as pizzas.



South Table Mountain

South Table Mountain is to Golden as cheese is to pizza: essential. There's nothing super flashy about a cheese pizza: you know what you're getting, and it's good every time. You don't get the epic toppings or terrain that you would see on other types of trails, but this lack of variability is made up by the knowledge that you are not going to go wrong on South Table. Moreover, South Table attracts the cheesy type: they enjoy routine, don't feel the need to get out of their comfort zone, know what they like, and stick to it.

White Ranch Park

To run at White Ranch Park, you have to be committed, ready to do some work, and prepared for technicality. This mindset is just like trying to finish a supreme pizza. Do I like green peppers and sausage on a pizza that already has pepperoni? Not really. Just like a supreme pizza, White Ranch can be a little hit or miss. It's not always good, and part of you tells you that you bit off more than you can chew. And, the meat sweats are relentless.



Apex Park

Sometimes while running at Apex, you lose sight of the fact that you're actually in Golden, Colorado. You're taken from the high desert to a land of lush towering pines and babbling brooks. The experience is not dissimilar to a Mediterranean pizza. It's always a little bit foreign, and for that, it can be scary. But at the end of the day, you finish feeling more cultured and sophisticated.



Mediterranean Pizza - Indulge

North Table Mountain

Similar to South Table, North Table Mountain is a Golden classic. It's got a little bit more vert, and a little bit more terrain, but it's still pretty simple. If South Table is a cheese pizza, North Table has to be a margarita. You might think you're more sophisticated than plain cheese with a couple slices of tomatoes, but come on! Tomatoes that were once built into the sauce are now just whole slices on the pizza? In the end, it's all just red sauce and cheese. Just like starting your North Table run at New Terrain, a margherita pizza might feel like a healthy option, but when you're done, you always end up leaving a couple pounds heavier.



Margherita - Woody's

Mount Galbraith Via Nightbird Gulch

Galbraith is spicy. The technicality of descending rocky boulders is similar to the sensation you get when trying to navigate a diavola pizza. It's definitely not my first choice, but every once in a while, I need the kick of arrabbiata sauce and chili flakes. It's not to be taken lightly. Quad-busting hard. When I'm in the middle of it, I find myself asking why I ordered it. But after the burn lets off, I find myself remembering how it can't have been that hot, and I'm ready to go back for more.



Diavola - Blue Pan



The Pepperoni Popper - The Pizza Stone

Chimney Gulch

If there is ever a trail that was quintessentially Golden, it would be Chimney Gulch. Just like if there is ever a pizza that was the quintessential pizza, it would be pepperoni. Chimney is meaty and filling. You always work up a sweat with it, and it's almost always good to go. Every time you run it, you remember why you like running. Chimney is the pizza that reminds me that I like pizza, or running; which were we talking about, pizza or running? ▲

Gabe is Editor in Chief at Front Range Dirt. His go-to for pizza in Golden is Blue Pan and is go-to for trails in Golden is Chimney Gulch.

5 THINGS I LEARNED AT DENVER'S BURRITO LEAGUE

BY MATTHEW HUNSUCKER

This past January, Jamil Coury, owner and CEO of Aravaipa Running, started something that essentially turned into a cult movement: Burrito League. In years past, Strava and Chipotle worked together to create various Strava segment challenges across the United States. The grand prize for running the segment the most within the time period and becoming the Local Legend was a year's worth of free Chipotle burritos. The official challenge failed to take off this year, and Jamil took matters into his own hands, creating a segment on a stretch of sidewalk on Mill Avenue in Tempe, Arizona. The Burrito League was born and erupted into 115 chapters globally.

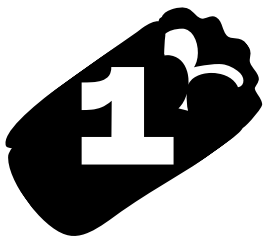
The Denver Burrito League, by means of local running store BPRUNCO, was one of the first chapters to follow the OG league in Tempe. The first day of segmenting was Thursday, January 8th, and the challenge would last 24 days, ending at midnight on January 31st. My first thought of running the same segment of sidewalk for the remainder of January was, "This is dumb." Yet, like most runners, doing dumb things is par for the course.

After starting a day late and falling behind as a result, my wife talked me into competing. Over the next 23 days I would run over 670 miles on that stupid 0.27 miles of sidewalk, averaging just over 29 miles per day. Here are five lessons I learned while doing something so dumb!

BURRITO DENVER LEAGUE

BPRUNCO Mount to Coast 





ZONE 1 IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

Like many runners, I have always been bad at running my easy runs at the right pace. Often we try to squeeze our runs in, and pay by going too fast to ensure we complete our desired distance. I knew that this would not go well when running a ridiculous amount of miles with zero rest days, as taking a rest day would have been detrimental to winning the Local Legend of this segment.

My solution was to run at an easy effort for every run for all 23 days. Running fast would only lead to injuries that I couldn't afford, and definitely didn't want. Thus, for the first time in my running career, I really leaned into zone 1 running and aimed to keep my heart rate around 115 beats per minute. As a result, I was able to run 200 miles per week for just over three weeks.

Avoiding injuries was going to be a huge factor while competing for the win in this challenge. Not only was I planning to take zero rest days for the entirety of this endeavor, but I was going to be more than tripling my normal weekly mileage. This should go without saying, but none of those are recommended training strategies to avoid overuse injuries.

In order to stay competitive, I had to stay healthy. I don't believe runners should stress about their body weight when they are in the thick of training. Food is fuel for your body and when you are pushing its limits, you need to fill it up with the proper nutrients. During Burrito League I was running nearly 4 hours per day. I had to fuel appropriately. My concern here was avoiding RED-S (Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport). This was the fun part. I ate A LOT of food during this 23 day challenge. My goal was to maintain my body weight as the miles piled up.



EAT REST & RECOVER

I know that the research on different recovery strategies is all over the place. Some are proven to work; others, not so much. I couldn't take a chance if I wanted to stay competitive and win free burritos, so I tried all that I had at my disposal. Stretching? Don't mind if I do. Foam roller? Yes, please. Hot tub? Well, that just sounds lovely. Oh, and where are those compression boots I haven't used in two years? I spent nearly an hour a day focusing on these recovery strategies. If I had a free moment, I took advantage of it.

Sleep was not just another key recovery tool that I focused on; it was the main strategy. Your body repairs itself the most while you sleep. I had to find a way to squeeze in at least eight hours of sleep every day. This was tough to do when I was up by 4:00am and logging 15-20 miles before heading to work. During the day, I worked my full time job before heading back to that sidewalk for more miles. In order to get eight hours of sleep, I had to be showered and in bed by 8:00pm. If that didn't feel like enough rest, then I squeezed in naps (glorious naps!).



**HAVE
A SOLID
BASE**

As Burrito League started to get competitive, I, of course, looked up my main competitors on Strava. I noticed that each of their last eight weeks of training consisted of 20-30 miles a week of running. I had consistently been running double or triple that amount.

This difference gave me tremendous confidence that I could match the mileage output of my competitors. As their mileage shot up, so did mine. Yet, the big difference was that I had a base that could support this mileage. Sadly, they did not, and both of my closest competitors ended up injured.



**BurritoLopes
of
BP - Run - CO**

For the first two and a half weeks of Burrito League, any one of the top three males in the competition could walk away as the winner. We were constantly trying to make moves, answer the moves of others, and push one another to our limits. Many of the runners competing for the segment crown, and ultimate burrito glory, didn't know one another when this challenge started. As we shared the sidewalk, we shared conversations and encouragement, and lied to one another about how great our bodies felt.

None of us would have completed the mileage we did without the pressure from the others involved. We pushed ourselves until our bodies started to hurt, and then we pushed a little more. As previously stated, not all of us were able to finish the entire challenge unscathed. When others dropped out, it definitely made the challenge less exciting, and I had to re-focus my goals. In order to continue pushing myself, I pretended that my competitors were still on my heels and that I still needed to stay focused. Yet, I would have preferred that everyone survived the challenge and that we were able to push one another to achieve amazingly stupid mileage.



SUPPORT IS KEY

Will Burrito League become an annual tradition? I don't know. Will future renditions have the same flair? Time will tell. What I do know is that I pushed my limits more than I ever thought possible. I will take this experience and adapt my training moving forward, and continue to try and be the best runner I can be. Oh, and I plan to eat a lot of burritos while doing so! ▲

Matthew Hunsucker is a jack of all trades Wheat Ridge trail and road runner, full time Phys Ed teacher, and the current Denver Burrito League Champ.



COMPETITION IS FUN

Lastly, many of the runners who finished in the top five for both males and females had a supportive partner and friends who showed up for them. My wife definitely picked up my slack in our household as I spent HOURS running on the sidewalk. It was no different for the others. I saw spouses bringing snacks, beverages, and moral support daily. For some, it might have been the only time they would see their partner that day. Friends showed up and ran segments, gave pep talks, made jokes, and reminded you how great the trails were during our mild winter.



VOLUNTEER WITH JEFFCO OPEN SPACE



📷 Jacob Cordell
📱 @trailrunnervolunteers

Give back to your local community! Sign up for trail work and support the trails you use. Use the QR code to access Jefferson County's Online Portal, Offero. Once on Offero, create an account and sign up for trail building and maintenance projects in the JeffCo area.





HOW I LEARNED TO KEEP GOING

BY HAYDEN HENRICKSON

As my feet pummeled against the pavement - my heart beating so hard it felt like it might implode, and my legs on the verge of giving out - the Revel Rockies half marathon made me more aware than ever how grueling running could be. I had never wanted to give up quite as much as I did at that moment. But I also noticed the encouraging environment elevated by the people around me. I kept going, finishing the race in just under two hours, feeling a new sense of triumph.

Growing up, I often ran with my mom, a hobby that came easily thanks to my soccer background. I began to push myself harder until running felt more like a chore than fun. I lost motivation, eventually quitting running altogether, despite my mom's continued encouragement. One evening, I finally agreed to a short sunset run, and surprisingly, I loved it.

After that, my passion for running came back rapidly. Although it felt fulfilling again, I still faced obstacles that had previously destroyed my desire to run: my body hurt, my mind drifted, and my motivation slowed.

Yet, I kept going.

To build my motivation, I reminded myself of the mental and physical benefits. If I got a cramp or a headache, I set course landmarks to pursue instead of giving up. If I started to feel bored, I'd sing my favorite songs in my head. I kept using the negatives as motivation and turned them into positives. This mindset not only made it easier to persist, but it turned running back into something to be proud of, just like when I was a little kid.

Soon after I returned to running, a realization struck me: I noticed a change in the way I approached classes, paid attention, and stayed organized. When I caught my mind deviating from the task in front of me, I no longer immediately sought a distraction; instead I ate a snack, drank water, or took a deep breath. The mindset I had gained from running began to bleed into other parts of my life, elevating my control.

Last summer, after weeks of researching parts, I initiated the design and construction of a gaming computer. I began with confidence, identifying each part and its placement with ease. Then it was time to test the parts before putting them in the case. I pressed the on switch, hoping to see a combination of lights flashing and fans spinning, but nothing happened. I tried a few more times, finding no success.





With no idea what went wrong, but determined to problem-solve, I inspected every single component, setting myself milestones in the same way I create landmarks during my runs. I checked one part at a time, with little regard to anything else around me. After examining the wiring and placement of the GPU, the seating of my RAM sticks, and making dozens of adjustments to the 24-pin cable, as well as a few more tedious checks, it powered on. I was overcome with joy and pride.

Running is one of the most important, influential parts of my life, and it has helped shape my personality, mindset, and skills. The resilience and adaptability I have acquired started with running, but didn't end there. Whether I'm taking a test, reading a challenging book, or troubleshooting a computer I built from scratch, I've learned to take a breath, reset, and keep moving forward. I'm more positive and motivated to take the hard route, rather than the easy way out. The same drive that keeps me running through pain pushes me through everyday challenges. I believe this mindset will carry me through college and beyond. The perseverance I've developed is not just about finishing the race. It's about how I run it. ▲

Hayden Henrickson is a Denver-based runner finishing his senior year at East High School and heading to college this fall. He has been running since childhood and continues to explore how the sport shapes his mindset both on and off the road and trails

TRAIL HIGHLIGHT: TREMONT MOUNTAIN CIRCLE

Distance

7 mi

Vertical Gain

1240 ft

BY DRU FALCO

Difficulty

4/5

Seasons

Late spring
through fall

It's spring! The sun is shining, there's still snow in the mountains, and we...wait, there's still snow in the mountains?? Despite the low snow year, there's still terrain that won't be open for another couple months yet. Get your high country fix in with this sweet loop in Golden Gate Canyon State Park (GGC). Remember to purchase a state park pass if you don't already have one through your car registration (not sure why you wouldn't, though!), or do it the hard way and bike there (cardio!!).

There are plenty of routes to explore in GGC, but we love parking at Bootleg Bottom Picnic Area and running counterclockwise around Tremont Mountain. This loop makes for a great midweek pickup or chill Sunday jaunt as you build your mileage this spring. Follow the trail signs to connect the Coyote, Mule Deer, and Raccoon Trails, bringing you to a lovely view at Panorama Point before depositing you back at your car. Watch out for the mountain bikers! ▲



COLORADO OUTDOOR

BY DAVID FOX
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORDAN CHAPPELL



PACE SERIES



I was asked to write about something exciting that happened at the Colorado Outdoor Pace Series (COPS). So I am going to tell the story of how a wild pack of coyotes chased all the runners and the Colorado State Patrol helicopters had to swoop in and save everyone! Don't worry, PR's were had all around.

Actually, none of that happened. What was exciting was how a very fun group of people, made up of all ages and running backgrounds, came out to compete and bond in an outside-the-box race series on some dark nights this winter. The entire goal of the series was to provide people with an outlet for a social running experience during a part of the year where the running community has a tendency to hibernate. By that measure, the series was a success!

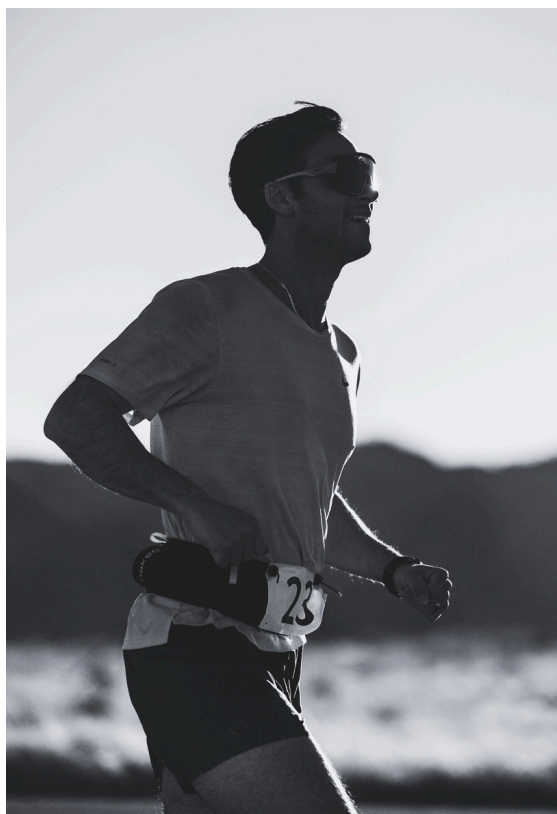
Gabe Dorn gets all the credit for the idea of racing on the Colorado State Patrol Track, and I thank him for letting Golden Mountain Runners run (pun intended) with the idea. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to the volunteers who helped us each week, as well as sponsor support from our local business community, including Golden Endurance, Hooga House, Phun Bar, Unite Fitness, High Point Direct Care, Berkeley Park Running Company, and New Image Brewing! Lastly, thank you to master woodworker Patrick Murray (@patrick's_pastimes) for crafting all of our race awards by hand. Team winners will have their names memorialized forever on a Stanley Cup-style trophy, now proudly on display at BPRunco.

We can't wait to see you next winter at COPS or at Golden Mountain Runners' signature backyard ultra on May 23. Sign up on our website, and come out and run with us every Tuesday evening!

David Fox started Golden Mountain Runners over ten years ago and is constantly engaged with his community, trying to make a difference, one runner at a time. Jordan Chappell is a Denver-based professional photographer who is heavily involved in capturing the essence of racing in Colorado and the throughout the US.











BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

We need you to keep this going!

Please consider writing an article for this publication. The cost is free and your work will be dispersed across the Denver area. We help edit! Topics to write about include, but are not limited to, running stories, training, featured athletes, local routes, community organizations, opinions, race reports, photos, and photo essays.

To submit articles and photos, go to www.golden-endurance.com/frd



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50 & 100 Mile
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PACER



2024
Steamboat Springs, Colorado

WILL YOU... BE MY PACER?

BY KIM O'MALLEY

Spring is here, prom is in the air, and teenagers all across the Front Range are hanging their hopes and dreams on cardboard signs with the same bravado as someone expecting to land a parking spot at Chautauqua on a Saturday morning. Prom season means promposals are in full swing, often equal parts bold public spectacle and questionable decision-making. And speaking of bold public spectacles and questionable decision-making, if you're running a big ultramarathon this summer, this is also the season to pop your own big question: *will you be my pacer?*

I've run a handful of 100-milers and have been a pacer at some of the highest-stakes ultras in the country, including Angeles Crest, Western States, Run Rabbit Run, and Leadville. Here are a few things to consider when asking someone to support your big day.

Choose wisely. Let's be honest, not every significant other or running bestie is up for being your pacer, but one thing is certain: you and your pacer will be awkwardly bonded for life. Over the course of the race, your pacer will likely become your therapist, nurse, babysitter, and bodyguard, all while protecting whatever dignity you have left by gently reminding you that an aid station running out of mashed potatoes probably isn't an existential crisis. So how do you find this unicorn of a human? Surprisingly, a pacer doesn't have to be someone you are super close with!

Don't ask:

- Your boss; remember you have to show your face at work on Monday
- The nicest person you know
- Your actual therapist
- The friend who was late to their own wedding

Do ask:

- A near stranger with Roy Kent energy who casually logs Green Mountain hill repeats as a "fun run" on Strava
- That run club friend who didn't flinch at your mid-run bathroom emergency
- A nurse, teacher, first responder, or other professional that requires calm under pressure while managing human emotions

Manage expectations. Henry Winkler once said, "Assumptions are the termites of relationships." If your prom date has Casa Bonita reservations but you were expecting more of a Cafe Jordano vibe, chances are you will end up in the drive-through line at the new In-N-Out Burger and never make it to the actual prom. Unless you are one of the elites, your pacer shouldn't expect to get in a quality 20-mile training run. The first time my road-marathoner brother paced me for an ultra, I stumbled into the aid station at mile 49 with wrecked quads from a



ten mile descent that I knew I had to climb right back up. I spotted him nearby doing strides and dynamic drills like he was about to toe the line at a sub-two hour marathon. As we left the aid station, he took off ahead at what, for him, probably felt like a very reasonable pace. A few seconds later, realizing I wasn't right behind him, he turned around to find me death-marching out of the aid station, trying to wash down a turkey sandwich with a Coke. So, let your pacer know not just how many miles you want them to cover, but what that actually means for pace and time on feet. Remind them that they'll probably need more layers than they might anticipate because pacing often means standing around at aid stations, waiting in the cold, or running through the night. That usually translates to a puffy jacket, long pants, rain gear, gloves, a hat, and definitely their own nutrition.

Dial in your race plan and logistics.

Figure out your pacer's logistics early so you aren't stressing about it during taper week. Confirm your pacer has a ride to and from their starting and ending points, and be sure your pacer knows the rules so they don't accidentally disqualify you.

Share the course GPX file with your pacer and ask them to use their own navigation system like a GPS watch or an offline Avenza map. One of the most important jobs of your pacer will be keeping you on course and relieving you of the mental load of navigating.



While you are out there logging miles, your devoted support crew will be logging time in a very uncomfortable camp chair, so equip them with the tools they need to mitigate the misery. Ultrapacer.com will become your pacer's best friend. It uses course-specific data to predict split times and helps your crew know when to expect you at aid stations. On race day it will help recalculate your splits if you are ahead of or behind schedule, which becomes really important when everyone is operating on little sleep, fighting over the last slice of cold gas station pizza, and can't agree on basic math.

Token of appreciation. You don't necessarily need to put a ring on this situation, but extend a gesture of appreciation. Some simple ideas:

- A handwritten note. A few days before every 100-miler, I write notes to my pacers and loved ones. It forces me to slow down and think about what really matters.
- A book. Whether it's a classic like *The Old Man and the Sea* or the latest Adam Grant self-help book, share a book that has some meaning to you or your journey.
- Race merch. A lot of races have crew or pacer-specific merch you can give as a memento.
- Gift card to your local run shop or practical gear: socks, soft flasks, sunglasses, water bottle or a much more comfortable camp chair.
- Pay it forward. Be the pacer you hope to see in the world for someone else.



1 Reply

Also- I know we've talked about but feel like I need to make it official- will you be my pacers?!

Seal the deal. It's important that you and your pacer feel out this arrangement before fully committing. If you've had a casual conversation on a run or over beers, don't assume you've locked your pacer in. To be fair, it's a big ask, so give them time to think about it and don't be offended if your pacer isn't up for it. Once the dust settles, make sure you officially confirm they're still in. Plans change, injuries happen, and sometimes people simply come to their senses.

You don't need an extravagant, viral-worthy spectacle, but at some point, "make it official." I once had at least five different conversations with a friend about pacing him in his first 100-miler. Every time we talked about it, I thought he was just feeling it out and apparently he thought the same. Eventually, he finally had to just come out and ask me, "Will you be my pacer or not?" Not exactly a proposal (ultrarunners aren't known for their finesse), but it locked me in. 🏔️

Kim O'Malley is a Conifer-based ultrarunner, educator, and adventure instigator who loves building community and encouraging others to do more than they think is possible. Kim is also a proud mom to two teenage boys who teach her words like "proposal" and "situationship" and other emoji things she still doesn't understand.



ASK THE SOUTH

Question:

I dragged my feet all winter in signing up for a race and now they are all sold out. My summer is ruined, what do I do?

South Table Jogger:

You mean putting in for Western States and Hardrock for the 24th year didn't pan out and you spent your winter mourning the loss, like when you broke up with your first high school girlfriend that never really liked you and was kind of weird and awkward anyways? Not registering for races over the winter was not your problem. Your problem was not having your 2026 season perfectly planned by the summer of 1987. At this rate you might as well start planning for summer 2048, because the odds of getting into Western States or Hardrock on the billionth try just keep getting worse.

But honestly, the marquee races often don't live up to the hype. After travel, expenses, and death marching for 100 miles, you come back to Colorado telling your friends you took a 'vacation' to Olympic Valley. Here are three better alternatives.

Plan Your Own Route

Races are contrived! They often involve out and backs, random loops to add miles, and double track jeep roads bypassing wilderness areas. You can plan a much cooler route on your own terms. Iconic routes in Colorado include the Pawnee Buchanan Loop, Four Pass Loop, Junco Lake Loop, Grand Traverse, Gore Range Traverse, Collegiate Peaks

Loop, Nolans 14, and the Kokopelli Trail. Or make up your own route. Ever thought about running to the top of a fourteener from downtown Golden? It's been done.

Find Races That Are Still Grassroots

Contrary to popular belief, not all races in Colorado sell out. Maybe this means you won't make a one hour influencer documentary about "Conquering the Toughest Race In The World" that's definitely not about the toughest race in the world, but you'll have all the same joy, trials, and fulfillment of the more popular races. And don't worry, if you still want to make a YouTube recap, surely at least your mom will watch it. A lot of local community-driven organizations tend to have registration late into the summer. Check out Revenant Running, Human Potential, and Tempest Adventures. A comprehensive list of races in the United States can be found at Ultraracecalendar.com

Take a Year Off From Racing!

There's nothing wrong with not racing. In fact, you will be able to spend more time in the mountains if you do not have to taper into a race and recover from it. The big mountain ultras can be fun, but they also crush your time spent playing in the mountains. By taking a year off, you will not melt into a puddle. I know it's hard to imagine, but you have spent the majority of your life not racing. You will survive.

TABLE JOGGER

Follow Up Question:

But how can I be cool if I'm not training for a marquee hundred this summer? What am I going to tell my friends?

South Table Jogger:

Just remember there's nothing that is actually cool about trudging through the night at 2.0 miles per hour smelling like sewer and feeling like the walking dead. At the end of the day, running is cool, and racing can be cool if you want it to be, but just being able to say you did a "marquee" 100-miler to your coworker Todd on Monday, who has no idea what you're talking about and just wants you to leave him alone, isn't cool. Stop trying to make it cool. 🏔️



TRAILS RULE!

BY YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL USER

On any given weekend in the Front Range, our trails are full. Runners chasing vert, hikers with dogs, families exploring, horseback riders plodding along, and mountain bikers flowing downhill: the dirt we love is shared dirt. Trail etiquette is about preserving access, protecting relationships, and keeping multi-use trails accessible for all.

Here's what that actually looks like:

Yielding Is Not Optional

The basic trail yielding rules remain the same:

- Bikes yield to hikers and runners (both uphill and downhill)
- Everyone yields to horses
- Descending riders yield to climbing riders

Mountain bikers: climbing riders are still required to yield to downhill runners and hikers. Pulling over for five seconds preserves goodwill that keeps trails open and accessible for all.

Stay On the Trail

Slow-rolling off the edge of the trail to "avoid pulling over" or to maintain speed is a lame move. Even small deviations matter. This practice accelerates erosion, damages vegetation, and makes the trail wider (there once was a time when Golden's trails were single track).

Most of our Front Range trails are multi-use, single-track corridors designed to minimize impact while giving everyone access. If the trail is narrow, slow down, wait, or communicate; don't carve your own line.

Trail Dos

When overtaking another trail user, announce: "On your left." Courtesy creates goodwill.

- Call out early
- Slow down before you reach them
- Thank them when they move

Leave No Trace (LNT) principles always apply when you're outside. Pick up trash, even if it's not yours. If do come across a trail issue, do contact your local county authority. Jefferson County Open Space can be contacted through their website: <https://www.jeffco.us/>. Other counties have similar sites.

Trail Don'ts

Trail damage equals trail closures, so be mindful of your usage habits.

- Don't cut switchbacks
- Don't use social trails
- Don't pass others off-trail
- Don't use muddy trails

Trail Doodoos

Dawg: pack out everything and keep your furry best friend leashed. Leaving a dog poop bag “temporarily” with the intent to pick it up on your way out? That’s littering, even if you plan to retrieve it.

Poop bags left on trails are:

- Illegal and can result in fines
- Flat-out inconsiderate; no one wants to see poop bags on the trail

Unless you’re in an explicitly designated “off-leash” trail or area, keep your dog on a leash. In Jefferson County, there are no designated open-space trails where dogs can legally run off-leash like a dog park. Check your county guidelines for details.

It’s Not Just About You

The Front Range has exploded in trail users. More trail users = more trail pressure. Trail etiquette is about:

- Long-term access for all
- Community respect
- Setting an example

Trail access isn’t a right; it’s a privilege. We’re fortunate that many of our Front Range trails are open to everyone. Many trail systems restrict mountain biking, dogs, or other uses entirely.

Let’s do our part to protect and maintain access for all by being responsible stewards of the trails.

The Bottom Line

Follow the prescribed trail etiquette.

Be predictable.

Be courteous.

Have fun. 🏔️



LOCAL GROUP RUNS

MONDAY

- Golden Mountain Runners
- Rocky Mountain Runners
- Trail Sisters Lakewood

TUESDAY

- Golden Mountain Runners
- Golden Trail Runners
- Foothills Running and Cycling Club
- Fleet Feet Littleton

WEDNESDAY

- Rocky Mountain Runners
- Runners Roost Boulder

THURSDAY

- BPRunCo
- Denver Trail Runners
- Trail Sisters Golden
- Runners Roost Golden/Lakewood

FRIDAY

- Rocky Mountain Runners

SATURDAY

- Citius
- Fleet Feet Littleton

SUNDAY

- Parent Run Club

**FRONT
RANGE
DIRT**

GOLDEN
ENDURANCE
Physical Therapy & Performance