



Course Descriptions

The course for all races is set on asphalt and turf trails over the rolling hills of Elm Creek Park Reserve. The 10K and 5K races are certified. The average temperatures at this time of year are a low of 42 degrees and a high of 62 degrees. Water stops are provided for the 5K and 10K courses. Refreshments for all participants are available at the finish area. Medical teams are on site throughout the event.

5K Course

The 5K certified course covers the eastern and central sections of Elm Creek Park Reserve. The course uses a combination of paved and turf trails and gravel road.

- The course starts on the roadway next to the Acorn shelter and registration tent. Runners head north to the cul-de-sac, after which they enter onto the paved trail. The trail takes an immediate left into a downhill slope under a canopy of hardwoods.
- The trail continues through a rolling portion of the trail to Goose Lake.
- Shortly after Goose Lake is the 1-mile mark. Runners remain on the paved trail that overlooks Mud Lake to the left. This lake is a favorite nesting site for a pair of trumpeter swans.
- Runners then leave the paved trail and cross to the right onto a gravel road.
- After approximately ½-mile on the gravel road is the only water stop for the 5K course. At this point, the course takes a sharp left onto a wide turf trail.
- Racers continue south on the grassy trail, which transgresses into rolling hills.
- Soon the trail takes a sharp left turn at the bottom of a short steep hill. After a gradual uphill climb, the trail gets steeper and takes a sharp left back onto the paved trail system. Shortly after this turn racers come to the 2-mile mark. The remainder of the course follows the paved trail.
- The trail meanders downhill until it brings racers to the intersection where they earlier connected to the gravel road.
- Racers continue on an uphill curve that heads back toward Goose Lake and near the home stretch. Past Goose Lake, the trail continues through some rolling hills. Then it's the final uphill climb through the canopy of trees back to the cul-de-sac. The finish line is just after the cul-de-sac.

10K Course

The 10K certified course travels around the southern half of Elm Creek Park Reserve. The course is almost entirely on a paved surface with a small section on a gravel road.

- The course starts on the main roadway about 100 yards beyond the stop sign.
- Runners follow the flat roadway toward the main entrance.
- Just before reaching the Chalet parking lot, runners veer right onto the 10-foot-wide paved trail where they pass through the Elm Creek Recreation Area.
- Runners pass under a walkway bridge and reach the 1-mile mark where the trail makes a curve to the right.
- This section is relatively flat and parallels the roadway. On the left, the trail passes a large flat grassy area. The trail begins to drop slightly as it curves and passes a small parking lot and trail spur that leads to the park entrance and roundabout.
- At the regional trail intersection, the course veers to the right and racers cross the 300-foot-long boardwalk that spans Elm Creek and the flood plain that is the home to a variety of wildlife.
- After crossing the boardwalk, racers take a sharp left and the trail veers uphill to the right. This begins a windy section of the course with a slight uphill grade.
- Runners soon reach the 2-mile mark.
- Approximately ½ mile past the 2-mile mark, racers come to the trail spur for Fernbrook Road (County Road 121) and the first water stop.
- Racers stay to the right as the trail runs parallel to County Road 121.
- Racers soon reach the 3-mile mark at a long and straight downhill section.
- Racers cross over the Rush Creek bridge and the road to Rush Creek Group Camp. After the group camp, runners go up a long hill. This brings runners to the northwest corner of the course. At this point the trail turns east.
- Racers approach the 4-mile mark as they enter a mature section of oaks.
- On the right is a pond.
- Racers then cross the entrance road to Eastman Nature Center.

- The trail continues into prairie lands, dominated by turkey foot and big bluestem grasses.
- The course then curves downhill to the bridge over Rush Creek. Shortly after the bridge, runners take a sharp left onto the only gravel section of the course (volunteers are available to assist races using wheelchairs if this segment is muddy). This is the second and last water stop.
- The first portion of the gravel road is relatively flat. Here is the 5-mile mark. The last portion of the gravel road is a gradual uphill, where racers cut to the right onto the paved trail.
- The paved trail curves toward Goose Lake with an overlook of Mud Lake to the right. This lake is a favorite nesting site for a pair of trumpeter swans.
- Racers continue on an uphill curve that goes back toward Goose Lake and near the home stretch. Past Goose Lake, the trail continues through some rolling hills.
- Racers now reach the 6-mile mark and the final uphill climb through the canopy of trees. Then the course takes a sharp right onto the cul-de-sac. The finish line is just after the cul-de-sac.