

Race Director Resource Guide

Planning | Onboarding | Services & Pricing | Race-Week Tips

*Everything you need to plan, launch, and run a successful event,
from your first idea to your next finish line.*

Upstate Event Management

A service of Upstate Race Series

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Welcome

Whether this is your first race or your fiftieth, our goal is simple: make your event easier to manage and more successful at the starting line.

This guide brings together everything Upstate Race Series offers, from the first spark of an idea, through onboarding and event setup, to the services, pricing, and race-week tools that keep things running smoothly. It also lays out what we provide, what it costs, and what we need from you. It goes to every client with their onboarding information when service starts, and again with their event renewal information each year. Nothing needs to be signed. Use it as a reference at any stage of your event's life.

In this guide:

- **Your Event at a Glance:** the details of your event and your contacts
- **Part 1: Starting Your Race:** a race director's planning framework, from purpose to growth
- **Part 2: Working With Upstate Race Series:** who does what, our 10-step onboarding journey, payment, policies, and what happens next
- **Part 3: Services & Pricing:** timing packages, add-ons, and vetted vendors
- **Part 4: Race-Week & Operational Tips:** tools and reminders to keep your event on track

Your Event at a Glance

Prepared for the organization below by **Upstate Event Management**, a service of Upstate Race Series ("URS").

Field	Detail
Client organization	[Organization name]
Client contact	[Name, email, phone]
Event name	[Event name]
Event date and start time	[Date] · [Start time]
Venue and address	[Venue, full address]
Distances / waves	[e.g. 5K, 1-mile fun run]
Expected registrants	[Number]
RunSignUp race link	[URL, or "to be created by URS"]
URS Head Timer	[Name, phone]
URS office contact	UpstateRaceSeries@gmail.com · (864) 867-2569

The event belongs to the Client. URS provides the services in this guide and does not take ownership of the event, its brand or its proceeds.

Part 1: Starting Your Race

A Race Director's Starting Guide

Planning a 5K doesn't have to feel like solving a puzzle with missing pieces. Think of it as building a race in five layers. This section walks you through each one.

1. Start With the Purpose

Before permits, shirts, or sponsors, answer two questions:

- Is this a fundraiser or a community event?
- Who are you trying to attract: families, competitive runners, walkers, kids?

Most first-year 5Ks succeed because they are simple, affordable, and community-focused.

Tip: A 5K + optional 1 Mile is the sweet spot for participation and accessibility. It widens your audience without adding much complexity.

2. Pick the Right Location and Date

Your venue decision shapes almost everything else about your race.

Road vs. Trail

- Road: Easier to follow and more beginner-friendly, but requires permits and traffic control.
- Trail: Lower cost and more scenic, but requires strong course marking and can limit beginners.

Public vs. Private Venues

- Public parks: Lower cost, but more approvals needed.
- Private venues: Faster setup and more flexibility, usually at a higher cost.

Must-Have Basics

- Parking plan
- Restrooms
- Water access
- Clear start/finish space

Choosing Your Date

Avoid big local events, school conflicts, and major sports weekends.

Tip: A great race on a bad date will struggle. A decent race on a clear weekend will thrive.

3. Shape the Runner Experience

Keep Pricing Simple

For most first-year 5Ks:

- Early registration: ~\$25
- Late registration: ~\$35
- Shirt add-on: optional, +\$10

Tip: Lower entry fees drive higher participation. Add-ons are where you protect your margins.

Decide What Runners Get

You don't need to go overboard. Keep it lean:

- Finish line snacks and water
- Music or atmosphere
- Simple awards (overall winners + a few age groups)

Year 1 isn't about perfection. It's about execution and experience.

4. Nail the Logistics

Build a Basic Budget

- Fixed costs: permits, venue, insurance, rentals
- Variable costs: food per runner, shirts, timing

A small 5K typically runs \$500 to \$3,000+ depending on setup.

Tip: More simplicity = more profit, especially for fundraisers.

Get People to Show Up

You don't need a massive marketing plan, just consistency. Focus on:

- Email: 3 touchpoints (launch, mid-campaign, race week)
- A Facebook Event with weekly posts
- Local run groups, schools, and churches

Most importantly, your registration page should be mobile-friendly, include a donation option, and clearly explain the cause.

Tip: Your registration platform does more heavy lifting for your race than anything else you'll set up.

Timing or No Timing?

- Untimed events are easier to run.

- Timed events attract more runners. In today's race landscape, timing = credibility.
- DIY timing works for small races under ~75 participants.
- Professional timing is best if you're planning to grow.

Build a Small but Mighty Volunteer Team

A typical 5K setup looks like:

- 2-3 check-in volunteers
- 2-4 course marshals
- 2 volunteers at start/finish
- 1-2 floaters or sweepers

Tip: *The right people in the right spots makes for a smooth race day.*

Safety & Course Basics

- Mark every turn clearly
- Have a basic first aid plan
- Communicate your weather policy in advance

Tip: *If a runner can get lost, assume they will. Over-mark the course.*

5. Plan Your Timeline and Set Up for Growth

- **3 months out:** lock location + open registration
- **6 weeks out:** push marketing + confirm permits
- **2 weeks out:** finalize details + order supplies
- **Race week:** confirm volunteers + prep course
- **Race day:** show up early, stay calm, execute

Then: post results, thank your volunteers and sponsors, and start planning next year.

Part 2: Working With Upstate Race Series

You don't have to build your race alone. Upstate Race Series works alongside race directors, schools, nonprofits, and community groups across the Southeast to handle the parts of race production that eat up the most time, so you can stay focused on your cause, your course, and your community. Here's who does what, and how our process works, step by step.

Who Does What

URS provides	Client provides
RunSignUp race setup and registration support through race day	Event permits, venue booking and any venue fees
Promotion to URS runner audiences and social channels	Answers to the race-week logistics questions (power, finish line, parking, load-in)
The Race Week Email on the Monday of race week, with the timing team and Race Day Check-In App setup	Course design, course marshals, aid stations and volunteers (unless URS staffing is added)
Timer on site 90 minutes before start, with bibs and safety pins	Medical coverage and emergency plan
Start/finish setup and chip timing with backup timing	Awards, medals, shirts and packet items
Live results linked to the RunSignUp page; official results within 24 hours	Final award categories confirmed on the RunSignUp page by race week
Final results file with division breakdowns	A single day-of decision-maker (the Client's race director)
Post-event invoice and optional debrief	

URS staff will not change pricing or scope on site. Scope changes go through the URS office contact in writing.

Step 1: Quick Launch

To get your registration page up and running, we only need the essentials:

- ☐ Race name
- ☐ Date(s) and start time(s)
- ☐ Distance(s) (5K, 10K, fun run, etc.)
- ☐ Location, full address and parking information
- ☐ Logo and graphics
- ☐ Pricing tiers and price-increase dates (we recommend 3)
- ☐ Giveaways (shirt, medal, etc.) and the shirt-order deadline
- ☐ Primary contact name, email and phone
- ☐ Short race description and the cause it supports

Tip: Once we have this, we can publish a draft registration page within 24–48 hours.

Step 2: Event Blueprint (Build the Experience)

Event Details

- ☐ Organization / host and charity partner (if applicable)
- ☐ Permit status
- ☐ Estimated participation

Race Structure

- ☐ Distances and start schedule
- ☐ Wave or corral setup (if needed)
- ☐ Cutoff times
- ☐ Policies: dogs, strollers, kids race, headphones, weather

Step 3: Registration Setup (RunSignUp)

We handle setup for you at no cost, including:

- Custom registration page
- Pricing tiers & deadlines
- Participant data collection
- Add-ons (shirts, merch, VIP, etc.)
- Donations & fundraising
- Coupons / comp entries
- Refund & transfer policies

Pro tip: Well-structured registration means higher conversion and fewer participant questions.

Step 4: Marketing & Promotion

You bring the event. We help bring the runners.

Included Support

- Website listing FREE: high-traffic Upstate Race Series platform
- Social media exposure FREE
- Newsletter promotion FREE: large regional reach

Optional Enhancements

- Email campaign strategy
- Sponsor integration
- Content creation (graphics, posts, reels)

Goal: Drive registrations, not just awareness.

Step 5: Course & Race Day Planning

Course Setup

- ☐ Course map (GPX, Strava or RunSignUp)
- ☐ Aid station plan
- ☐ Traffic control
- ☐ Start/finish layout

Venue Operations

- ☐ Parking flow and parking layout
- ☐ Restrooms
- ☐ Sound, and power at the finish line
- ☐ Safety & medical plan

Race Day Flow

- ☐ Packet pickup plan and whether race-day registration is offered
- ☐ Volunteer coordination
- ☐ Emergency planning

Step 6: Timing & Results

Timed results give your race more credibility with experienced runners, create shareable finish-line moments, and make it easier to build repeat participation year over year.

What We Provide

- Chip timing (RFID)
- Live results
- QR code access
- Awards calculation
- Finish line setup (arch, chute, clock)

What We Need From You

- ☐ Award categories (overall, age group, masters, teams), confirmed on the RunSignUp page by race week

Result: More credibility leads to more runners, which leads to more growth.

Step 7: Packet Pickup & Race Day Execution

- Bib assignment (QR-based check-in)
- Race day registration (if offered)
- Volunteer roles & training

- Awards timing & ceremony flow
- Sponsors to recognize on race day

Step 8: Financials & Settlement

- Registration revenue handling
- Timing/service invoicing
- Optional nonprofit donation integration
- Post-race settlement

Registration funds, invoicing and payment

- Who collects registration money: Upstate Race Series through its RunSignUp partner account, or the Client's own RunSignUp payment account.
- If Upstate Race Series collects it: after the event, URS deducts the invoiced fees and pays the remaining balance to the Client within 30 days of the service date.
- If the Client collects it: URS sends an invoice after the event, due within 30 days of the service date.
- Payable to: Upstate Race Series.
- Accepted payment: check, Zelle, or card through RunSignUp on request.
- Late payment: a \$50 late fee applies to invoices not paid within 30 days of the service date.

What We Need From You

- ☐ Who collects registration payments (the URS RunSignUp partner account or yours)
- ☐ Who receives the invoice and the payout, with a mailing address

Step 9: Policies & Compliance

- Waivers
- Participant rules (pets, headphones, etc.)
- Minor participation guidelines

Changes, weather and cancellation

- **Date change requested by the Client:** no fee. We will work with you on a new date and confirm timer availability for it.
- **Cancellation by the Client:** no cancellation fee.
- **Weather:** our events are rain or shine. Severe weather is a conversation, not an automatic call: we will talk through delaying the start or moving to a new date. If the race is cancelled outright for weather, no fee is owed.
- **Cancellation by URS:** URS will make every effort to supply a qualified replacement timer. If it can't, the Client owes nothing.
- **Runner refunds and transfers:** handled under the Client's own policy on RunSignUp. URS's own events use a no-refund, transfers-allowed policy, but each race director sets their own.

Step 10: Post-Race Wrap-Up

The finish line isn't the end. It's leverage for next year.

- Results distribution
- Photo sharing

- Participant follow-up email
- Post-race analytics
- Debrief for future growth

Returning events: renewal information

Returning events send these each year instead of starting over.

- ☐ Last year's RunSignUp race link
- ☐ New date and start time, with any changes from last year (distances, course, venue, pricing, giveaways)
- ☐ New or changed team members who need RunSignUp access
- ☐ Whether to schedule the free planning debrief before registration reopens

What Happens Next

1. We build or renew your RunSignUp page and send it to you to review.
2. Your event is added to Upstate Race Series marketing: website listing, social media and newsletter.
3. On the Monday of race week you get the Race Week Email: timing team, check-in app password and final logistics.
4. On race day your timer arrives 90 minutes before the start. Live results post to your RunSignUp page.
5. After the event you get the invoice, the final results file and an offer to renew for next year.

Part 3: Services & Pricing

Full-Service Race Solutions Across the Southeast

Whether you're planning your first 5K or organizing a large-scale ultra or XC meet, Upstate Race Series offers full-service race solutions to help your event run smoothly from start to finish.

Core Services

We support race directors, schools, nonprofits, and community groups with:

- **Chip Timing & Results:** Road, Trail, XC, Ultra
- **Registration Management FREE:** RunSignUp setup & support
- **Event Consulting FREE:** logistics, permits, course design
- **Marketing & Promotion FREE:** social, email, and club outreach
- **Race Essentials (Vetted Vendor List):** custom bibs, awards, shirts, signage

Registration Support: Powered by RunSignUp

As a certified RunSignUp contractor, we offer hands-on assistance for all registration needs:

- Event page setup & pricing
- Bib assignment, wave starts, and add-ons
- Participant transfers, refunds, and deferrals
- Custom emails, payout reports, and fundraising tools
- Store integration for merchandise sales
- Live check-in & results through RaceDay apps

Race Timing Packages

All packages include RFID chip timing (Agee Timing System), bibs and safety pins, finish line arch and chute setup, a race clock, and instant results, live and online. Road and trail races (5K to ultra) and cross country meets are priced in the table below.

Your Services and Fees

These are our standing rates for your event. Chosen add-ons are marked below.

Service	Rate	Included?
Setup: arch, clock, chute, cones, bibs, safety pins, live chip timing	\$500 flat	Yes, every event
Per registered runner (road and trail races, 5K to ultra)	\$2.50 per runner	Road and trail
Per registered runner (cross country meets)	\$1.00 per runner	Cross country only
On-site time	First 3 hours included, then \$60 per hour	Yes, every event
Registration management on RunSignUp	No charge	Yes
Marketing to URS runner audiences	No charge	Yes
Race website and consultation	No charge	Yes
Music / PA (Bluetooth mic, speaker, approved playlist)	\$350	☐
Additional staffing (timer, check-in, RunSignUp specialist)	\$60 per hour	☐ Hours: [#]
Equipment rental (course arrows, generator, tables)	Quoted: [\$]	☐

Estimated total: \$500 + ([per-runner rate] × [registrants]) + add-ons = [\$ estimate]. The final invoice uses the actual registered count and actual on-site hours.

Add-On Services & Vetted Vendors

Need extras? We can also connect you with trusted local vendors for music/PA, photography, awards, custom bibs, restroom rentals, and event apparel.

Service	Price	Vendor
Music / PA Services	\$350	Upstate Race Series
Photography & Video	Varies	Dove Light Photography
Awards & Age Group Medals	Varies	Hickory Handcrafted
Custom Bibs w/ RFID Tags	Varies	RunVirt
Porta-John Rentals	Varies	Royal Flush
Event Apparel	Varies	Graphic Cow

Marketing Reach

When partnering with Upstate Race Series and Upstate Running Club, your event gains access to a built-in audience of 10,000+ local runners, including:

- Upstate Race Series Website
- Event listing on UpstateRaceSeries.com (30K monthly views)
- Upstate Race Series Facebook Page (12,000+ followers)
- Upstate Running Club Community (3,000+ paid members & 7,000+ Facebook members)
- Quarterly / Club Newsletter (16,000+ subscribers)
- Social Media Promotion (Facebook & Instagram features)
- Inclusion in the Upstate Running Club race calendar
- Optional discount, price-increase, and follow-up marketing campaigns
- Paid Advertising Opportunities

Why Race Directors Work With Us

- 50+ years of combined race directing and timing experience
- Reliable, professional, and community-focused
- Personalized support from planning through race day
- Trusted by 150+ events annually across SC, NC, and GA

Note: We're here to help make your event successful, memorable, and easy to manage, so you can focus on your cause, your course, and your community.

Part 4: Race-Week & Operational Tips

Resources, updates, and operational tools to help your next event run smoother from registration to the finish line.

Website V2 Recommendation

We highly recommend upgrading your race website to RunSignUp Website V2. Our team can complete the upgrade for you, or your team can do it internally if you have dashboard access and are comfortable navigating the backend tools.

Website V2 includes:

- Improved mobile design
- AI-driven content tools
- Better sponsor visibility
- Enhanced participant engagement tools
- Cleaner registration flow
- Improved email and marketing integrations

Race Day Check-In, Packet Pickup & Bib Assignment

If your event offers early packet pickup, the bib pickup location is: 318 Spokane Drive, Greenville, SC 29607

We strongly encourage your team to create an admin configuration inside the Race Day Check-In App to assist with common race week troubleshooting situations such as:

- Event transfers between distances
- Bib number corrections
- Reassigning lost or forgotten bibs
- QR code check-in support

Example: *If a participant drops from the 10K to the 5K but isn't properly transferred in RunSignUp, they may incorrectly populate in the 10K results, which can affect awards and placements.*

The QR code placeholders included in Website V2 emails are also an excellent tool to streamline packet pickup and reduce race morning congestion. The placeholder ID is "REGISTRATION_ID."

Shirt & Giveaway Inventory Management

The giveaway inventory tools inside RunSignUp can be a major lifesaver during race week. We strongly encourage:

- Keeping giveaway inventory enabled
- Offering a "No Shirt" option
- Tracking inventory sizes within the dashboard

This helps prevent over-ordering, reduce leftover inventory, eliminate unavailable size selections, and improve participant experience during late registration.

Standard Races	Larger Races
Order 10–14 days out	Order 21+ days out

If needed, our team can help walk you through setup and ordering timelines.

Photo Uploads & Participant Sharing

If your event offers race photography, we highly recommend uploading photos directly to your RunSignUp registration page. Photographers can be granted limited access specifically for photo uploads.

Once uploaded, RunSignUp's photo matching system can connect participant bib numbers with results, certificates, and individual race photos, creating excellent opportunities for participant engagement and future event promotion through social sharing.

Music & PA Services

One of the newest additions to our services is music and PA support. A high-energy environment and clear communication on race morning can dramatically improve participant experience, volunteer coordination, and overall race flow.

Race Week Email

Beginning race week, our team will send a "Race Week Email" on the Monday prior to your event. This email will include:

- Event logistics review
- Timing contact information
- Race Day Check-In App password
- Final operational reminders
- Race morning considerations

Note: Please review this email carefully with your staff and volunteers so we're all aligned heading into race weekend.

Branding & Event Identity

We fully support maintaining your organization's identity and branding. While we promote partner events through our website, newsletters, and social platforms, we are not attempting to take ownership of your event. Our goal is simply to help elevate your race, improve participant experience, and help your event continue to grow within the running community.

Giving Series

New to 2026 is our Giving Series, part of the annual race series identity (Trail, Ultra, Youth, Brew, and Road). If you're a nonprofit organization and aren't already part of our Giving Series, please reach out and we can set up a time to chat about the program and how we're directly giving back to the nonprofit service providers in the Upstate who are hosting annual events.

Let's Get Your Race Started

Thank you for trusting our team to support your events. We appreciate the opportunity to serve your organizations and communities throughout the Southeast.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can assist with registration, timing, marketing, or race day planning for your upcoming event.

QUESTIONS? LET'S TALK

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Think of us as your behind-the-scenes crew, so you can focus on the big picture.