

MAY 8 & 9, 2021



PUBLIX
Gasparilla
DISTANCE CLASSIC

Run Virtually On Bayshore!

2021 PGDC RACE WEEKEND UPDATED FAQs

During a FB Live Event on Monday evening, February 22nd, we announced the decision that due to COVID-19, the 2021 Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Race Weekend Events will convert to a 100% Virtual Experience.

Though we're still 11-weeks from our new Race Weekend dates of May 8 & 9, we couldn't wait any longer to make a decision. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Guidelines For Large Mass Gatherings, a COVID-19 Positivity Rate of 5% or less for 14 consecutive days is recommended. As of this morning, Hillsborough County's COVID-19 Positivity Rates are as follows:

- 14-Day Average – 8.15%
- 7-Day Average – 7.74%

Considering the above, combined with our responsibility to protect the overall health, safety, and well-being of our participants, our corporate partners, volunteers, staff, operations personnel and City of Tampa personnel, though painful and disappointing, it's the right decision.

The good news...the City of Tampa has given us the approval to close Bayshore Boulevard on Saturday and Sunday, May 8 & 9, so that our registered participants can run or walk their virtual race on Bayshore. We hope to create an experience that, given the extreme circumstances of COVID-19, will still offer a small portion of the traditional Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Race Weekend...running or walking on Bayshore Boulevard.

Additionally, we will host the 8 On Your Side Health & Fitness Expo on Friday and Saturday, May 7 & 8, in the Tampa Convention Center's East Hall. The expo will follow the convention center's COVID-19 Mitigation Plan and be held in its traditional form, complete with 2021 PGDC Race Number and Packet Pick-Up. Together, we'll experience the celebration of safely bringing folks together to enjoy the health, wellness and consumer brand vendors that have been waiting for an opportunity to share their knowledge and products.

With our announcement, several questions and comments have been posted on Facebook and Instagram that must be addressed. As you read and consider the following, please consider that we too, are passionate about the Publix Gasparilla

Distance Classic Race Weekend Events. With each decision that's been made over the last nine months, great care and consideration has been given to what's at risk for each of our stakeholders and the communities we live in. Thank You!

- **This announcement raised questions about refunds and deferrals. Since 2021 Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Registration opened on June 1, the Association's messaging has been consistent. If the race weekend events were cancelled due to COVID-19, the events would convert to a 100% virtual experience and there would be no refunds or deferrals.**

This policy remains in place. There can be no refunds or deferrals.

- **If other major running events can offer refunds and deferrals, what prevents the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association from doing the same?**

In 1978, the Gasparilla Distance Classic 15K & 5K was created with one mission ... to raise much needed dollars for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa. Today, 44 years later, the Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Race Weekend has evolved and grown beyond what could have been imagined in 1978. The organization's mission, however, remains the same. Since its inception, \$5.9 million has been donated to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay and the Friends of Tampa Recreation and several additional youth charitable organizations.

The above represents that the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that places a great deal of emphasis on fundraising for its charities, but always with the participants in mind too. Keeping registration fees at a manageable amount for all choosing to participate is and always has been a priority.

Organizing an event the size of the Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic and preparing the best possible experience for every single runner and walker, requires many of our expenditures to be made months prior to Race Weekend. This starts in July with the essential costs of amenities for all of our events that are spent in the months leading up to race weekend, and many additional, unrecoverable expenses which are crucial to putting on a quality event worthy of your choice.

The bottom line is that the majority of our expenses are paid between three to six months prior to the actual Race Weekend. \$600,000 has already been expended on PGDC shirts, finisher's medals, finisher's towels and Challenge jackets. This amount, combined with the weekend's \$400,000 pre-paid operations costs, makes it impossible to offer a refund or deferral to the following year.

While most will feel the above isn't their concern, it is our truth. We can't speak for other major running events. We can only be transparent and honest about what prevents the Association from making refunds or providing deferrals.

• **How is the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association able to host an indoor expo, but not an outdoor event?**

Although indoors, the 8 On Your Side Health & Fitness Expo will be hosted by the Tampa Convention Center. The Tampa Convention Center's Mitigation Plan provides the mandates that must be followed for hosting the event. For example, every guest and employee will be subject to health screenings before entering the building. Physical distancing and mandatory mask policies will be enforced, and the maximum capacity for building visitors at all times will be no more than 4,000.

For comparison, hosting an in-person version of the Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Race Weekend requires more than 1,500 volunteers. These 1,500 volunteers would touch each and every one of our registered participants at Aid Stations, at the Start, at the Finish, providing Hand Sanitizer at port-a-let locations, etc. With this many touchpoints, the COVID-19 risk factor increases exponentially.

The expo requires a maximum of 100-volunteers at all times. This lowers the risk for everyone associated with the expo...the attendees, vendors, volunteers and staff.

• **When can I run or walk my virtual race?**

The 2021 Publix Gasparilla Distance Classic Race Weekend Events have been converted to a 100% Virtual Experience. Registered participants and those that will register, now have two options for running or walking and completing their virtual race:

1. Your virtual race can be completed anytime between now and May 9, 2021.
2. You can take advantage of "Running Or Walking Virtually On Bayshore" on Saturday and Sunday, May 8 & 9, 2021.

• **How will I receive my 2021 PGDC Pre-Race & Post-Race Amenities? ****

If you are already registered or will register, there are two available options:

1. 1st Class Delivery of BOTH of your 2021 PGDC Pre & Post Race Amenities via the US Postal Service. Please note the below shipping cost covers the 2021 PGDC Pre & Post Race Amenity Shipments.

- 15K, 5K & 8K - \$15
- Half Marathon & Challenges - \$20

2. 2021 PGDC Pre-Race & Post-Race Amenity Pick-Up during the 8 On Your Side Health & Fitness Expo on Friday, May 7 (9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.) or Saturday, May 8 (6:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

- For convenience, the **2021 PGDC Pre-Race & Post-Race Amenities** will both be available for pick-up during the expo. There will be no requirement for completing your virtual run or walk and uploading results prior to pick-up.

- **In the coming days, all pre-registered participants will receive an email with instructions for selecting a 2021 PGDC Pre-Race & Post-Race Amenity Delivery or Expo Pick-Up Option.**
- **For new registrations, the 2021 PGDC Pre-Race & Post-Race Amenity Delivery or Expo Pick-Up Option will be selected during registration.**

**** 2021 PGDC Pre & Post Race Amenities**

- **2021 PGDC Pre-Race Amenities include the following:**

- 2021 Publix Reusable Shopping Bag
- 2021 PGDC Official Event Shirt
- 2021 PGDC Personalized Race Number
- 2021 PGDC 'I Earned This Booty' Running Cap
- 2021 PGDC Finish Tape
- 2021 Challenge Jacket – if participating in one of the Challenges, a jacket and all applicable event shirts

- **2021 PGDC Post-Race Amenities include the following:**

- 2021 PGDC Finisher's Bag
- 2021 PGDC Finisher's Medal
- 2021 PGDC Finisher's Towel
- 2021 Challenge Finisher's Medals – if participating in one of the Challenges, a Challenge Finisher's Medal and all applicable Finisher Medals and Finisher Bags

- **Why must participants cover the Shipping Costs when the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association elected to convert to a Virtual Event?**

—The Gasparilla Distance Classic Association is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that truly exists to raise funds for local youth charitable organizations. We don't exist to make money in any capacity, nor do we generate millions of dollars in sponsorship and registration fee income.

The additional costs associated with packaging, postage and staff are incremental and not previously accounted for in our expenses.

In closing, please remember this is a fluid situation. After making last night's announcement, we've taken your concerns and comments to heart and in the coming days will be responding to each of them. Any additional responses will come via the updating of these Frequently Asked Questions on rungasparilla.com.