

Madison - Chicago 200 Relay June 6-7, 2008



What

- This is a running relay race, with each team (typically) made up of 12 persons. This year we expect 200 teams from all over the US and a few international entries are expected for the first time. This translates to about 2,400 total participants. The first member of each team will run a 4 to 7 mile leg and reach the first Transfer Area (TA). At this transfer area the runner will hand off a flexible wrist band to their team mate, who continues on the next 4 to 7 mile leg to the next TA.

When

- The event begins in Madison at 7 AM on Friday, June 6th; and will run continuously to mid afternoon on Saturday, June 7th, in Chicago.

Where

- The event begins in Madison, Wisconsin; continues east on the Glacial-Drumlin trail to Milwaukee. It will take a lap around the famous "Milwaukee Mile" and resumes east and south. The route continues to the Racine / Kenosha bike trail which connects to the Robert McClory trail in Lake, and Cook Counties in Illinois then into Chicago. Most of the course uses groomed bike trails which are very scenic and "flat", ending at Montrose Harbor on Chicago's north shore.

Who

- Runners form teams locally and through linkups on the Yahoo group. They travel from all over the country; with a few international teams expected for the first time this year.
- The Comm Team is a true "hybrid" made up of hams from every county the race touches, plus volunteers from nearby counties in Illinois and Wisconsin. Some approach this event much like any other ARES public service event; where most of us use it as a way to try out techniques, equipment, and processes during this "live fire", two day, two state, emergency communication opportunity.

Typical Comm Team Assignments

- **Transfer Area radio operator** – Usually operates as a pair for a 6 to 10 hour shift. The runners transfer at these areas, and we log all teams and report the first three as soon as they arrive and give hourly totals of the number of teams which have passed. Other voice traffic is passed as the opportunity presents itself.
- **VTA digital operator** – We have been sending tabular data of all team times via Winlink2000. There is a Van Transfer Area every sixth TA. This is where the van from one team picks up their last team member and the van from the next group dropping off their first runner. These VTA's are located in larger facilities which can handle the van traffic better.

- **Net Control voice radio operator** – We operate a net control center in Madison, Milwaukee, and Libertyville. This gives us end-to-end communications for this event.
- **Net Control digital operator** – This position receives the team times from the VTA's.
- **Weather Desk** – We work with three staff meteorologists to provide complete network wide coverage for any severe weather. Weather briefings are sent out hourly for fair weather, and as needed when the conditions change.
- **S.A.L. Desk** – This is a recent addition to our staffing at the Libertyville Comm Center. The “Served Agency Liaison” or SAL Desk will contact each local law enforcement agency along the course and advises them when the first runner is expected in their jurisdiction; and finally when the last team has left their area. We have found it to be very important to keep these served agencies informed in the event they receive telephone calls regarding brightly colored team vans driving around their neighborhood. We have found this to be very helpful in the event of a lost runner. When calling dispatch, they know what is going on and will get the word out to the street patrols much quicker.
- **Shift Manager** – Each Net Control Operation will be staffed by a Shift Manager. This is an experienced operator who has many of these events under their belts. There is a 30 minute overlap between shifts. Each shift will have a briefing prior by their Shift Manager regarding the status of the event. This would be very similar to a typical “Incident Command” operation. The Shift Managers will answer any questions and provide guidance and direction for any tactical decisions that arise.
- Additional “behind the scenes” responsibilities include; Public Affairs (PIO), Digital Communication, Frequency and Repeater Coordination, Message and Form Conformity, Registration Liaison, and MC200 Grant Program Committee.

We have been given a wonderful opportunity to assist with one of the largest communication exercises in the country. Our primary task is to provide the participants, staff, and volunteers with a safe environment to operate in. Anything we do above and beyond is a wonderful training platform for our emergency communications skills. Where else will you be given an opportunity to do this?

If you are interested, I will send you an invitation to join the MC200 Comm Team Yahoo Group. Please send your request to kc9bda@arrl.net , or use the links provided below.

Please join us for the 2008 “MC200”!

73's

Jerry Martin – KC9BDA
MC200 Comm Team Coordinator

MC200 Comm Team Yahoo Group is at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCRCommTeam/>

Subscribe to the MC200 Comm Team at: MCRCommTeam-subscribe@yahoogroups.com