

	<h2>Advice to Competitors Regarding Footwear, Gaiters &amp; Clothing</h2>	 <p><b>World Rogaining Championships</b> AUSTRALIA 2016</p>
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The advice is being provided to assist Competitors in 14WRC2016 choose their footwear, gaiters and clothing for the event.

There are two key aspects of the terrain for this event which are quite different from many other rogaines with regard to the choice of equipment and particularly footwear and gaiters. These aspects are (i) Spinifex and (ii) the very rocky terrain.

### **Spinifex**

Spinifex (*Triodia* species) is a tough, spiky tussock grass that dominates much of the red sand desert and rocky ranges of Central Australia. There are 64 species of Spinifex in Australia and 34 are found in the Northern Territory. However, in practical terms to a competitor in 14WRC2016 there are effectively two types of Spinifex on the course. There is the Spinifex that grows on the sandstone based soils which is quite tough and spiky and then there is the Spinifex which grows on the limestone based soils which is much tougher and much spikier. There are far greater areas of the “limestone” Spinifex on the course that there are of the “sandstone” Spinifex.

Of course considerable areas of the course have little or no Spinifex and we will provide some indication where on the course the “heavy” Spinifex is. However, there is a reality that competitors who do not have footwear and gaiters suitable to deal with Spinifex will have an extremely uncomfortable event!



Typical Spinifex Area



Spinifex Covered Hillside – A Common Sight on Parts of the WRC Course

For people who have not experienced Spinifex before it is difficult to describe how challenging and painful it can be if you have inappropriate footwear and gaiters. Do not believe that because your existing footwear and gaiters is effective with whatever your local prickles are (eg Queensland Speargrass or New Zealand Spaniard) that it will be effective against Spinifex. The closest thing that the Setting team can think of would be very hard, dry thistles that are about knee high or gorse about 100 mm high.

One member of the Setting team found that their Salomon Goretex Speedcross 3 shoes that had been effective in keeping out all sorts of prickles elsewhere were totally ineffective in Spinifex with dozens of prickles embedded in their feet in less than 1 km of heavy Spinifex.

A number of members of the Setting team have used lightweight leather hiking shoes or boots which have been shown to be totally effective in keeping out Spinifex. Another member has successfully used The North Face Ultra 106 trail running shoes which have a quite high “tub” (see photo below) that protects the toes and sides of the feet.

Having good solid soles on your footwear is essential as often the easiest way to move through the heaviest of the Spinifex is to deliberately tread on top of it. Equally as important is to have impenetrable material on the sides of the footwear, particularly near the toe area and in the first 30-40mm above the soles. The most common form of penetration of footwear by Spinifex is from the side in these areas. If this part of your footwear can be penetrated by a steel needle held firmly between your thumb and forefinger it will be constantly penetrated by Spinifex and that will be very painful!



Impenetrable “tub” material protects the sides of toes and feet



Area able to be easily penetrated by Spinifex

Having gaiters with good Spinifex resistance will also greatly improve your comfort during the event. They will both protect the upper sections of your footwear, an area often having some mesh and/or fabric, and assist protect your lower legs.

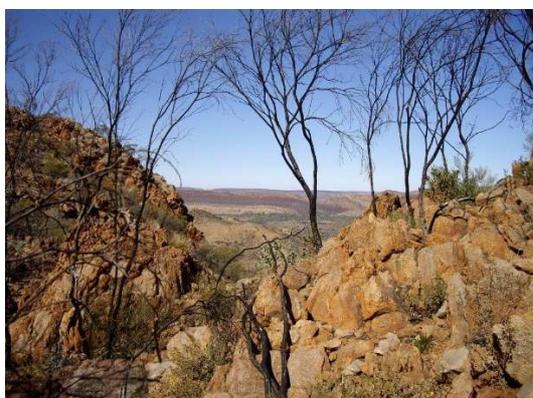
Canvas gaiters, such as the Wilderness Equipment Bush Gaiter available from the WRC event website, are the most effective against Spinifex. All members of the Setting team using Canvas gaiters reported no problem with Spinifex through their gaiters. They did however note the need for care when removing the gaiters due to the many broken Spinifex spines in the gaiters.

The Sea to Summit Quagmire Gaiter, also available from the WRC event website, were used by one Setting team member who found them also to be very effective. Another Setting team member used the Sea to Summit Grasshopper Gaiter, again also available from the WRC event website, which they found to be a good compromise in that they allowed occasional Spinifex spines through but were lighter and cooler than the Quagmire and Bush Gaiter.

It is recommended that gaiters that come up to just below the knee be used for maximum protection. The use of lightweight gaiters, such as Orienteering gaiters, is not recommended as these will be quite ineffective against Spinifex.

Competitors may also consider the use of lightweight gloves with a sturdy material in the palms to protect their hands against Spinifex in the case of a fall.

### Rocky Terrain



Much of the underfoot terrain in the competition area comprises hard, sharp angular rock such as that shown above. It is important to use footwear that has a sole that is very robust and ideally contains a sole plate (a plastic stiffener that reduces distortion of the sole) and provides good protection to the

feet against stone bruising. The Setting team has found that lightweight hiking shoes or boots and good quality trail shoes with are solid sole work well.

Road or cross country shoes running are not recommended.



The photo on the left shows the sole of a good quality trail running shoe that arrived at the WRC event site having been worn previously but in very good condition and then spent 7 days on the WRC Course area for around 8 hours per day.

It is strongly recommended that competitors have footwear that is in very good condition at the start of the event.



Above photo shows a shoe used by a Setting team member that was totally effective in keeping out Spinifex

### Other Clothing

The choice of clothing for roganing is very much a personal matter. Competitors should note that despite the 2016 WRC being held in an arid (desert) region there are many areas of thick, spiky and scratchy vegetation. Full leg covering is recommended. The Setting team used a combination of lightweight walking trousers and robust shorts. If shorts are used it is recommended that there be little or no gap between the bottom of the shorts and the top of the gaiters. The photo at right shows a combination found by the Setting team to be effective.



July offers ideal weather conditions for roganing at the event site. The weather at that time of year is generally characterised by; mild, clear, sunny days and cool nights but extremes of temperature are possible. The levels of ultra-violet radiation are very high and the use of a hat and sunscreen should be considered essential. The weather statistics for the area, based on over 100 years of recorded data, are set out in the table below:

Temperature Data		Rainfall & Cloud Data	
Mean July Maximum	20°C	Mean July Rainfall	15mm
Highest Ever July Maximum	32°C	Mean No of July days >1mm rainfall	1.8 days
Mean July Days/Year Above 30°C	0.1 days	Mean July daily hours of sunshine	9.1 hours
Mean July Minimum	4°C	Mean No of Clear Days in July	21 days
Lowest July Minimum	-7°C	Mean No of Cloudy Days in July	4.3 days
Mean July Days/Year Below 2°C	8.6 days		
Mean July Days/Year Below 0°C	4.3 days		

This event is being held in one of the most scenically spectacular and beautiful places on earth. Having the right equipment for the environment and clothing that will be suitable for all possible weather conditions will allow you to maximise your enjoyment of the area.