



RACE MANUAL

Varanger Arctic Kite Enduro

(VAKE)

**You must read and understand the content of this document
before you apply for Varanger Arctic Kite Enduro.
VAKE reserves the right to change the Race Manual before the competition.
Changes will be announced on vake.no or directly to the contestants.**



VAKE-start 2014 | Photo: Ingerid Jordal)

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1. Application, entrance fee and payment

The application form for VAKE 2025 opens November 1st on www.vake.no and closes on November 30th. In the application form we ask for information about your snow kite-, extreme sports- and extreme winter outdoor experience. You must be physically capable and have enough experience to embark on a five-day kite expedition race on the Varanger Peninsula.

Fee

The participation fee for VAKE 2025 is **6500,- NOK per person**. (13 000,- NOK per team).

When you are accepted as a participant team, you have to pay the entrance fee within January 30th 2025 to secure your spot.

If you withdraw from the competition before February 15th, we will refund 50 % of the fee. If you withdraw from the competition after February 15th, there will be no refund.

2. Cancellation

If VAKE is cancelled by the organizers, we will refund the participation fee. We cannot refund any travel expenses.

Force majeure: If we are forced to cancel or terminate VAKE while in progress, there will be no refund.

3. Race description

VAKE is a team competition where teams of two contestants are kite skiing from Berlevåg across the Varanger Peninsula to Vardø. The first team to reach the finish line, wins the competition.

The teams navigate freely between mandatory checkpoints. The race lasts from Tuesday to Saturday and the teams must be self-sufficient, carrying all equipment to survive for at least five days.

Varanger Peninsula has varied and exciting terrain – from rugged and rocky coastlines to large flat plains, canyons and wide-open valleys, long mountain ridges and flat tundra-like coastal landscape.

You will experience all this when competing in VAKE. The variation of nature may create abrupt changes in wind, weather and snow conditions along the route.

Preliminary program 2025

Sunday March 30th 19:00: Get in/check in Berlevåg for all teams. VAKE arrange transfer bus from Kirkenes airport and Vadsø at 14.30

Monday March 31th: Preperation day. Gear testing, gear control, race meeting.

Tuesday April 1st at 10.00: VAKE start in Berlevåg

Saturday April 5th: Sailing window closes. Ceremonies, parties and dinner in Vadsø.

A detailed schedule for VAKE 2025 will be released prior to the competition.

4. Weather and snow conditions in Varanger

In late March and early April, the temperature can vary between +8 and -20 degrees Celsius on the Varanger Peninsula. The average temperature is 0-10 degrees below zero.

The weather has varying cycles at this time of year, from stable high pressure with sunny weather with calm air on the plateau and light to moderate ocean breeze near the coastline, to unstable lows with strong winds and at times heavy precipitation.

There can be rapid changes in weather conditions and powerful polar lows may occur on short notice. Also, due to nature and topography variations, the wind can change a lot even within small distances.

Participants must also expect periods of no wind and can be forced to ski tour long distances with their sleds, especially in the middle of the Varanger Peninsula plateau. The snow cover in April is usually compact and smooth, but you are likely to meet both deep snow as well as hard packed sastrugi.

In the lowland near the coast and on all the ridges, it is likely to be less snow and some areas of rocky terrain.

5. Safety and insurance

You participate in VAKE at your own risk. A valid accident insurance is required for all participants. A declaration form must be signed and handed over to the organizers before the race.

All teams must have a team leader who is responsible for communication with the Race Management. All teams must bring first aid equipment and signal flares.

We will provide each team with a PLB tracking device (Personal Locater Beacon). This must be switched on all the time. You are responsible for the unit. If you lose the PLB tracker, you must cover the costs.

Use signal flares if you need emergency assistance. If you observe flares, report the position as accurately as possible to the Race Management and try to track down and help the needy.

All teams must provide help and medical assistance to other teams and to take part in searches if necessary. Violations = disqualification.

Important phone numbers:

- 113 = Medical emergency in Norway. To be contacted in emergency situations.
- Race Management = (number given prior to the competition). Contact for help that is not acute. Report position and needs.

6. Wildlife and nature considerations

Varanger Arctic Kite Enduro is a “leave no trace”-competition. It is strictly forbidden to leave any kind of garbage (included food waste) or litter behind during VAKE.

More than half of the VAKE route runs through the Varanger Peninsula National Park. When using the National Park for kite skiing, all of you should show the utmost respect and care for the wildlife and nature in this unique area.

Polar fox project: On the Varanger Peninsula, there is a rare and fragile population of polar foxes. There is now an ongoing project of releasing and feeding new individuals as an attempt to preserve the population. This will affect the VAKE route, and the number of teams allowed to sail into the National Park.

If you observe polar foxes during VAKE, report position, time and number of animals to VAKE secretariat as soon as possible.

Reindeer

Reindeer herds are preparing to move from winter to summer pastures during VAKE and the female deer are only weeks from calving at that time.

Be careful and keep your distance from reindeer herds! Follow further instructions from Race Master if given on race meeting.

Please help us take care of this unique area so we can keep kiting in Varanger, and we can have future VAKE events!

7. Route, checkpoints, rest and deadlines

This preliminary route and deadlines are based on the 2019 edition of VAKE (picture below). Changes will occur. The final route for 2025 will be ready in March. Check <http://www.vake.no> for updates. We will also e-mail teams.



The Varanger Peninsula - Nordatlas

At Checkpoint Jakobselva, you enter the Varanger Peninsula National Park. Due to preserving wildlife and reducing the impact on the National Park, there can be a limited number of teams that can continue from CP Jakobselva. Normally we have permission for 30 teams, but the number of teams can be adjusted depending on the permission from the National Park Council.

Checkpoint*	Distance**	Type	Rest	Deadline***	Service
Berlevåg	0	Start		Tuesday 10.00	
Ragguvidda	25 km	Manned		-	Followed by a challenging valley crossing
Storkløftfjellet	51 km	Unmanned			
Stjernevann	63 km	Manned	2h	-	Heated tent, first aid personnel, results
Mattavarri	92 km	Unmanned	-	-	
Jakobselva	111 km	Manned	1h	Thursday 18:00	Heated tent, first aid personnel, results
345	131 km	Unmanned	-	-	
Vadsø	151 km	Manned	2h	Friday 11:00	Heated tent, first aid personnel, results, charging station
Falkefjell	166 km	Unmanned	-	-	
Komagvær	191 km	Unmanned		Saturday 10:00	
Vardø	220 km	Finish		Saturday 12.00	Heated tent, first aid personnel

*There will be more checkpoints / passing points in the waypoint list given to teams before the race

** The distance above is mainly air distance from checkpoint to checkpoint and is impossible to match. The actual sailing distance is often twice as long due to wind and safe navigation between checkpoints.

*** VAKE can change these deadlines according to general race development and weather.

Manned checkpoints have mandatory rest. When teams arrive, checkpoint personnel will give a "departure time". The team must stay at the checkpoint until departure time. The team is responsible for keeping track of the time.

Unmanned checkpoints *can* be marked with three red sign-sticks in a cross. Both participants must pass the unmanned checkpoint within a radius of 50 meters, or to the side given in the list of waypoints (starboard or port).

8. Racing rules

Ways of moving

You are allowed to:

- kite/sail using kite or skisail. Maximum line-length is 50 metres
- have one team-member sailing and towing the other
- walk (tour) on skis
- use snowshoes (but you also have to bring touring skis)

You are not allowed to:

- walk (tour) on skis when conditions allow sailing
- walk on feet/snowshoes as a replacement for touring skis
- to use other sailing equipment than kites or skisails

Freedom of navigation/restrictions in the National Park

Unless any other instruction is given, you may navigate freely between checkpoints, within safe margin.

Inside or close to the Varanger Peninsula National Park, there may be some corridors you must follow, or marked areas you cannot enter. Information on these areas will be given when the detailed route, maps and waypoint list is released.

Violations of these regulations or navigation errors will lead to time penalty or exclusion from the race.

A serious consequence of navigating errors / violations to the rules may be that VAKE may not get any further permissions to enter the national park at all, which means no future VAKE.

Classes

There is only one class in VAKE. The team shall consist of two persons, of which one is the team leader. The teams can be males, females or mixed and compete on the same terms.

You must be over 18 years of age to participate in VAKE.

Experience requirements

Both participants must have broad snowkiting experience and be able to kite with a pulka in varied and rough terrain and wind.

Experience from overnight trips in cold winter conditions is mandatory.

Participants must be able to stay out in the cold, have experience and knowledge of winter touring equipment and know how to pitch and secure a tent in bad weather.

Both participants should have knowledge of map-, compass- and GPS-navigation.

Food

The teams must be totally self-sufficient during the competition. Teams cannot receive care, food or supplies from others during the race, nor leave equipment or waste behind.

Equipment

The equipment requirements for VAKE are strict. Read the Packing List carefully before you apply! Lack of mandatory equipment will lead to exclusion from VAKE.

VAKE is a kite skiing competition. Snowboards or split boards are not allowed. The main reason for not allowing snowboard is safety and agility of movement in the rough Varanger scenery.

The skis should be equipped with touring (randonnée) or telemark bindings. If you use pure alpine bindings, you must have extra touring skis for touring, or proper adapters for the same purpose (not recommended). Snowshoes cannot replace extra skis.

At the starting line, you must be self-sufficient on all equipment, camping gear, food and fuel reserves for 5 days in the sub-arctic wilderness. You cannot receive equipment nor leave anything behind during the competition. If a team loses a kite (taken by the wind), **you must retrieve the kite before continuing.**

Failure/breakage of essential equipment during the race, can lead to exclusion from the race at the next manned checkpoint or a penalty at the final total time. Malfunction of life saving equipment, such as stoves, may lead to exclusion.

Handlers

A team may have handlers, but those may only carry excess luggage which is not used during the competition. You can receive moral support, updates on weather and medical help.

Lower weight limit

A lower limit of 38 kg of equipment (including sleds and backpacks) per team has been set. Study the packing list for further explanation.

Failure to meet this limit may result in denial from starting in VAKE, so prepare carefully!

Daily sailing window / night rest (preliminary version, can be changed)

Start Berlevåg: Tuesday April 1st at 10:00

Sailing window closes Saturday April 5th at 16:00

Sailing window

Tuesday: 10:00-21:00

Tuesday-Friday: 07:00-21:00

Saturday: 07:00-16:00 (end of race)

This means that between 21:00 and 07:00, the teams must stay at one spot and set camp. This could be at checkpoint or anywhere along the route.

If your team arrives at a checkpoint and the mandatory rest overlaps the night rest, you will get to sleep longer the next morning. We add the remaining checkpoint rest next morning.

Final results

The order of teams passing the finish line, or distance from the finish line via remaining checkpoints when the sailing window closes.

Aborting or leaving the race

You have applied to VAKE and should have the skills, stamina, equipment and food to stay out for as long as five days.

If you find VAKE too hard and have to abort the race due to exhaustion or equipment failure that is not considered as an emergency, you cannot expect any transport arrangement by VAKE before Friday.

If you choose to abort early (1st or 2nd day) you have the following options:

- You still have 2-3 days to enjoy and kite the Varanger Peninsula! Kite to Stjernevann or Jakobselva within Friday morning and get the arranged transport from there.
- Move by own force to nearest road and use public bus transport or handlers to transport you to Vadsø. There will be no organized sleeping arrangements by the VAKE crew before Saturday.

No wind?

The race will go on despite periods of calm. Teams need to consider whether they want to tour or wait for wind.

Interruptions/pauses

Race Master can stop the race temporarily by extreme weather forecasts and severe weather, or by sudden changes in the position of reindeer herds. In the event of such a message, all teams must stay at their positions or set camp until further notice is given by Race Master.

By long lasting bad weather like snowstorms or polar lows, the race can be cancelled.

Power lines

There are power line crossings in VAKE. The lines are 66 000 volts! The lines are to be passed with packed and/or secured kites. When you need to pass a power line, you must land the kite at a safe distance and safely bring it under the line. You launch again at a safe distance.

Passing power lines with a flying kite (kite under the power line) is extremely dangerous. In moist air or snowy weather, kites can lead electricity even without contact!! Trying to kite under the lines will lead to **instant exclusion** from the race.

Right-of-way / sailing behaviour

The Varanger Peninsula is vast and there is plenty of space. Show good sportsmanship and respect your fellow kiting friends!

In VAKE the right-of-way rules counts TEAM-wise, not for the individual kiter.

The teammates shall, especially in heavy traffic, stay close and sail on the same path and change directions together. Hence, also give way and keep right-of-way together. Practise this as a team before you go to VAKE!

The main right-of-way rule is to give way for crossing traffic when you as a team are on a port tack – meaning your kites are positioned between 9 and 12. In other words – you have the right of way when you are kiting to your right side and must give way when you are kiting to your left. The right-of-way rules will be reviewed at the race meeting.

Authorized personnel at checkpoints can also disqualify or stop teams from continuing at any time due to violation of rules or for safety reasons.

Protests

If your team wants to protest on results, other teams' behavior / violation of rules, the organizing of VAKE or other issues, a written statement/protest must be presented within two hours after the sailing window is closed.

You can also file a protest at the manned checkpoints. Contact the crew for instructions.

A jury consisting of a staff member and two third party members will consider each protest.



VAKE-start 2015 | Photo: Ekaterina Golitsyna

Have fun and be safe!