

## On terrain, map and course

While South Estonian terrains appeal with hills and lakes, and North Estonian terrains with the shoreline and bogs, the Central Estonian terrains are often considered flat, thick and boring. 19th TAOK rogaine attempts to challenge this stereotype. For sure, one of the most distinguished Estonian writers Carl Robert Jakobson (his portrait was printed on Estonian banknotes with the highest denomination – 500 kroons) would not have bought homestead in a boring place. Quite the opposite, in 1874, just after buying land in Kurgja, he wrote to his bride: „I have rarely seen a place as beautiful as Kurgja. It is completely in the forest on both sides of Pärnu river. It is a great place surrounded by forests on all sides.“

The event center is located in the former homestead of Carl Robert Jakobson, currently a farm museum (see <http://www.kurgja.ee/en/>). By the way, the museum is open on Saturdays, but the event clock is ticking at the same time. However, for members of your fan club travelling with you or if you do not plan to tramp all 8 hours, there is a possibility to look around at the museum.

The fact that one of the trans-Estonian long hiking trails from Oandu to Ikla (with a full length of 375 km) is passing through this terrain, is a proof that surroundings of Kurgja are worth a visit. It's very likely that you will see the signs of this hiking trail and will use some sections of it during the rogaine.

While the terrain is not particularly hilly, it is not completely flat either. It may be even a bit surprising to find sand dunes so far from the sea – it is more than 55 km to Pärnu beach. However, once upon a time the waves of the Baltic sea landed here and carried sand which formed those dunes. Luckily, because the course setter now had some land forms where to place controls.

Pärnu river, which is the second longest river in Estonia flows through Kurgja and divides the terrain in two parts. The river is too wide and the water in autumn is too cold to cross it by swimming. So don't even think about it while planning the route. There are actually more rivers on the terrain, but the other ones are smaller. Nonetheless, beavers have occupied some parts of Saarjõgi river making it difficult to cross. But there is a solution - look out for beaver dams. Some of them are also marked on the map.

There are different types of forest, some better runnable than others, but the overall picture is not too bad. You may encounter wood grouse in some parts of the terrain and it may be good to know that this big chicken prefers old pine forests. Moose, rabbits and deers were also spotted when checking the map. They tell you may also see bears here, if you have luck.

There are some new clearings, but also some older ones with young forest. The map may not be quite consistent in depicting them.

Pärnu-Rakvere road passes through the terrain, so be careful when crossing it.

The state forest agency has built some good forest roads and cleaned many forest rides and ditches. Just week ago most of the ditches were dry, but the recent rains have made waters flowing in some of the ditches. Several forest rides are wide and drivable by car, but some are overgrown by nettles and bush.

There are rather few homesteads on the terrain, but concerning those few, please respect the privacy of local inhabitants. There is just one and relatively small out-of-bounds area.

The map scale is 1:30000 as usual, while the contour interval is 2,5 meters. The size of the map sheet is ca 41x41 cm.

There are 45 controls on the terrain with values ranging from 2 to 6. There are 2 water stations on the terrain, but it is also possible to get something to drink at the event center during the race.