

HISTORY

Both Cuero, Texas and Worthington, Minnesota have become famous through the years for their much publicized turkey celebrations. Cuero traces its origins back to 1912 when the first Cuero Turkey Trot was staged. In 1973, Cuero initiated its annual celebration which is known as the Cuero Turkeyfest.

One thousand miles due north (as the turkey flies) is Worthington, Minnesota, a town that has remained in the limelight with its annual festival, King Turkey Day, which traces its origin back to 1939.

Both Cuero and Worthington call themselves the "Turkey Capital of the World." Both have traditionally herded large flocks of live turkeys down their main streets ahead of gigantic festival parades. Both towns celebrated their centennial birthday celebrations in 1972...and both towns consider the turkey supreme during their annual celebrations.

The Great Gobbler Gallop was initiated in 1973 to determine which community-Cuero or Worthington-deserves the right to proclaim itself the "Turkey Capital of the World". The challenge was issued by Ken Long of The Cuero Record on behalf of the citizens of Cuero, and was accepted by Lew Hudson of the Worthington Daily Globe, on behalf of the citizens of Worthington.

The Great Gobbler Gallop is staged annually, with the winning city earning the right to retain the "Traveling Turkey Trophy of Tumultuous Triumph" for a one year period, and the right to proclaim that they are, indeed, the Turkey Capital of the World! To the loser, the "Circulating Consolation Cup of Consummate Commiseration".

RACE DISTANCE

The Great Gobbler Gallop is run on a predetermined race course, measuring approximately one and one-half city blocks (150 yards).

One heat of the race must be held in Worthington, Minnesota and a second heat must be held in Cuero, Texas; thus giving both race teams and both turkeys the same advantages in respect to changes in altitude, terrain, and other geographic conditions.

RACE TEAMS

Each town may enter a minimum of three and a maximum of three "handlers" and one coach who will serve to guide their respective racing turkeys to the finish line. One member of the team shall be designated as the "team captain" and the other two shall be designated as "handlers". Each city, however, may select other team members, such as managers, team physicians, road crew, cheerleaders, etc., to serve ONLY IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY. During the actual running of the Great Gobbler Gallop, only three (3) handlers will be permitted to handle the bird from each community.

RACE RULES

Once the race begins, and the two turkeys are released from the arms of the team captains, no physical contact will be permitted between the handlers and their birds. Audible and visual devices will be permitted to help encourage the turkeys toward the finish line, BUT IN NO WAY MAY THESE DEVICES COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE BIRDS.

The penalty for physical contact between the race teams and their birds for whatever reason will be five (5) seconds per instance of contact.

A time penalty of 30 seconds will be assessed in the event that a turkey should escape from the race course and need to be carried back onto the course. In this instance, a bird shall be brought out directly from where it exited the course, without advancing the bird any further towards the finish line.

A time penalty of 2 (two) minutes shall be assessed in the event that forward progress is achieved by throwing or carrying the bird.

In the event that a bird should escape entirely, become incapacitated, or refuse to run, a penalty of 30 seconds will be added to the winning birds time, but assessed to the losing bird. Thus, if the winning bird completed the race in one minute, then the losing turkey will be assessed a race time for that particular heat of one minute, 30 seconds.

In the event a bird refuses to run, either from fright, stubbornness, or death, causing the team to receive the 30 second time penalty, that team may exercise the "SUBSTITUTE OPTION" which permits either town to run a substitute turkey for the final heat in each year's Great Gobbler Gallop

RACE JUDGES

Each town will designate four judges who will serve over the race in each of the respective communities. Two of the judges will serve in the capacity of "team judges", and must come from outside the home county, and their duty is to assess any penalties which may result from touching the birds. The remaining two judges will serve as official timekeepers, who will time the race teams from the start of the race to its conclusion. Two additional "back up" timekeepers may be allowed in the instance of a stopwatch failure or human error. There will be one "Overall Race Judge" whose duty will solely be to read the stop watches and determine the winner in the event of a tie. The Overall Race Judge will have the distinguished position of announcing the winner after reading the stop watches.