

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION OF THE “ROCK RACE” SEMI MARATHON

Hydra might have no roads to speak of but its network of trails connecting its settlements with its beaches, monasteries, chapels, old pastures and its highest peaks are maintained in excellent condition.

The Rock Race is an 18 km mountain running event which aspires to highlight the beauty of Hydra’s mountain scenery, without exposing the participants to the demanding elements of the Hydra’s Trail Marathon. It guides the runners through old threshing floors, chapels, abandoned windmills and ancient foot bridges, but the best part is, arguably, the coastal portions of the race where you will be running along the coast.

Distance: 18 km

Cumulative elevation gain: 1,015 m

The Rock Race will start at the port and the first section, as well as the last is the same as that of the Hydra’s Trail Marathon.

1<sup>st</sup> section: Distance 6,100 m

Start at the port. We follow the central, cobblestone artery, south, up towards the mountain for 1 km. The 2<sup>nd</sup> kilometre is an uphill, concrete portion which we leave by turning left on a steep uphill trail known as “red soil”. After 2.9 kilometres the trail takes us downhill to the windmills (km 4.7). A mild downhill leads us to a dirt road, where we bear right, on level ground at first and then uphill. Just before the highest point (5.9 km) we turn right and up and we bear right again at the next dirt road where we reach Station 1 (6.1 km).

2<sup>nd</sup> section: Distance 2,100 m

On our left we can now see a beautiful beach (*Limnioniza*) on the back side of Hydra and an old threshing floor. Caution! Don’t let the breath-taking view lure you downhill! On the contrary, we go uphill through the pine trees to the highest point (6.8 km) where a steep downhill will take us to the dirt road at kilometre 7.3 which leads easily downhill to Station 2 (8.2 km)

3<sup>rd</sup> section: Distance 5,500 m

Because of the distance between the Stations and the elevation gain, this is arguably the hardest portion of the race. The dirt trail is level for the first 3 kilometres and then a steep uphill on old cobblestone begins. Locals refer to this portion as the “soul tormentor” but the breath-taking views might sooth your soul a little. We reach the mountain ridge and enter a short downhill trail through a pine forest. Exiting the forest, we must turn left (CAUTION! THE OLD ROUTE WENT STRAIGHT!). Soon, at kilometre 13.4, we will encounter a volunteer where the two routes ( “Rock Race” and “Hydra’s Trail Marathon”) split. Station 3 is at 13.7 km.

4<sup>th</sup> section: Distance 4,300 m

This downhill portion with many steps leads us through a dense pine forest to the highest point of the settlement which overlooks the harbour and offers magnificent views. At the point called *ahouria* (stables), a volunteer will show us the way. We encounter the first houses. Running on cobblestone, we go through the port of *Kaminia*, a very picturesque fishing village, passing stone houses and Tavernas. Approaching the finishing line at the main port of Hydra, we can now hear applause as we enter the horse-shoe shaped harbour. All the residents of the island will be there to cheer on each and every athlete.