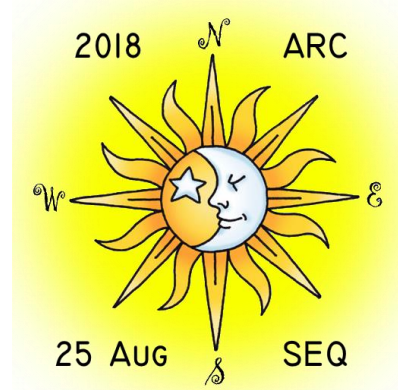


### **Protect Yourself from Grass Seeds**

During the first course setting site visit to the site of the 2018 Australasian Rogaining Championships it was noted that the bane of rogaining is SE Qld grazing country, spear grass seeds, were about in abundance. In normal circumstances the combination of the frosts, the winds and the wandering cattle between May and the end of August will knock most of them down. But it has been a very abnormal year to date and there will always be some about.

Anyone who has experienced spear grass seeds in their clothing or shoes will know how insidiously uncomfortable they are. But they are very easily avoided. The answer is pretty simple, it is all about the gear that you use with the three key items being; shoes, gaiters and pants.



### **Shoes**

It is recommended that you use either Goretex lined shoes or leather ones. Shoes with uppers that are even part mesh and without Goretex are very quickly and easily penetrated by spear grass seeds that will then proceed to penetrate the skin and flesh of your feet! So the key is to minimise the amount of mesh on the upper and ensure they are Goretex lined. Note it is also suggested that you replace the standard laces with elastic or Kevlar ones which both stops grass seeds in the laces and makes retightening them a 5-second job. The bonus of Goretex lined shoes is that you can keep your feet dry on wet ground!

### **Gaiters**

It is recommended that you use heavy duty bushwalking style gaiters made of Cordura or canvas. Grass seeds do not penetrate them. It is essential that the gaiters are well secured over the shoe by a robust tie under the shoe that will last for the full 24 hours and the front hook secured low down over the lace area. Consider using a piece of tape to ensure that the hook can't escape in the heat of battle. If you are using elastic or Kevlar laces then do not hook you gaiters to these as it will break them over time. Use a loop made from a robust shoelace (like the one you replaced with elastic or Kevlar) to make a loop to hook the gaiter into.

### **Pants**

You need trousers or shorts that are impenetrable to grass seeds. I have used Earth, Sea, Sky brand "Taslan Longs" for rogaining for 20 years. They are very light weight, don't absorb much water, dry quickly, are cool in the heat and warm in the cold (sort of!) and are essentially impenetrable to grass seeds and most other nasty prickles, particular for the first few years of their lives. They will rip on barbed wire and the seeds will then stick to the frayed edge of the hole and fall through the hole, but that is generally not a major problem and when they get bad I replace them. A pair generally lasts me several years and I do a fair few rogaines a year. No doubt there are other brands of trousers which are suitable also but I have no personal experience with them. Using tights or orienteering pants in bad spear grass country will guarantee you a thoroughly miserable time!

Those are the key elements. I also use bushwalking type shirts which again do not attract grass seeds and if you intend to use gloves in grass seed country then go for the type with a Gortex or similar covering rather than thermal or woollen ones. Standard thermal gloves become very porcupine like very quickly! And it may be sub-zero at the ARC so gloves may be appropriate.

If you want anything more on this or other rogaining trivia please contact me on 0407-880-681 or [robp17@gmail.com](mailto:robp17@gmail.com)

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