

Publix Jr. Gasparilla Classic
Saturday, February 14, 2026
PARENTS!!! PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS!!!

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL
4401 WEST CYPRESS STREET
TAMPA, FL 33607

The 2026 Publix Jr. Gasparilla Distance Classic, presented by the Mendez Foundation, will take place at the Jefferson High School Stadium, located at **4401 West Cypress Street**.

To help make Race Day an incredible experience for all children and adults, please take a moment to review the following information.

The Jefferson High School Stadium Field & Track was updated to a new artificial turf & soft track in 2025.

Please note the following:

- **NO DOGS OR ANIMALS** will be allowed inside the Jefferson High School stadium.
- **NO FOOD OR DRINK, OTHER THAN WATER**, can be consumed on the field or track.
 - Parents, if your kids do need a snack or beverage, other than water, please move to the stadium bleachers.
- **DUE TO THE ABOVE, JR. CLASSIC GOODY BAGS WILL NOT BE DISTRIBUTED UNTIL CHILDREN ARE LEAVING.**

The above restrictions are crucial to protecting the field and will be monitored.

PLAN TO ARRIVE EARLY!

900 children are expected to participate in the 2026 Publix Jr. Gasparilla Distance Classic, presented by the Mendez Foundation, The Meb Foundation, Kellogg's, and Q105. This could create congestion on the drive to Jefferson High School. **PLEASE ARRIVE EARLY TO ALLOW TIME FOR PARKING.**

Your child(ren) is pre-registered. Packet pick-up will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will be located at the Jefferson High School Stadium Entrance. Race Day activities will begin at 9:00 a.m. Therefore, it is recommended that you arrive no later than 8:30 a.m., giving yourself plenty of time to pick up your packets and shirts and not miss any of the pre-race announcements, stretching, and entertainment. **Please remember, Jr., Classic Goody Bags will not be distributed until children leave.**

THE RACE DAY SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 8:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Late Registration/Packet Pick-up
- 8:45 a.m.-10 a.m. Stretching/fitness w/the Tampa Parks & Recreation Hype Dance Team – Stage Area
- 9:50 a.m. Mascot Parade
- 10 a.m. 2-year-olds - 30 yds.
- 10:15 a.m. 3-year-olds - 30 yds.
- 10:30 a.m. 4-year-olds - 30 yds.
- 10:45 a.m. 5-year-olds - 1/8 mile
- 11 a.m. 6-year-olds - 1/8 mile
- 11:15 a.m. 7-year-olds - 1/2 mile
- 11:30 a.m. 8-year-olds - 1/2 mile
- 11:45 a.m. 9- and 10-year-olds - 1 mile (rolling start)
- **Jr. Classic Goody Bag Distribution – Begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 12:15 p.m.**

In an effort to serve all children, the Gasparilla Distance Classic Association (GDCA) offers opportunities for athletes with special needs. If you feel that your child(ren) is an athlete with special needs and will be participating in the 2026 Publix Jr. Gasparilla Distance Classic event, if you haven't done so already, please call Diane Franke at (813)254-7866 or email at: diane@rungalasparilla.com (by 5:00 p.m., today) to discuss what reasonable accommodations can be made based on their specific needs.

GDCA officials will provide reasonable accommodation on an individualized basis.

JR. CLASSIC PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS

2 - 4 YEAR-OLDS

- **The 2 - 4-year-olds will start according to their birth months.**
 - Parents, getting your youngsters prepared to start can be a hectic time. Please pay close attention and follow the instructions of the **Start Officials** as they will be attempting to keep you and your children calm, happy, and smiling. We want this to be an enjoyable experience for everyone.

† PARENTS OF 2 - 4-YEAR-OLDS WILL BE ALLOWED TO RUN BEHIND THE GROUP THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE RUNNING IN AND INTO THE HOLDING AREA. PLEASE BE CAREFUL WHEN ENTERING THE HOLDING AREA.

5-10 YEAR OLDS

- **COURSE POLICY: PARENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RUN WITH THE CHILDREN. CHILDREN MUST BE PREPARED TO RUN UNASSISTED.**
 - If you feel your child cannot do this, he/she should not participate in the event. This will be strictly enforced to ensure the safety of all entrants.
 - Parents, getting your children prepared to start can be a hectic time. Please pay close attention and follow the instructions of the **Start Officials** as they will be attempting to keep you and your children calm, happy, and smiling. We want this to be an enjoyable experience for everyone.
 - There will be course marshals, trained Tampa Parks & Rec volunteers, and members of the Bayshore Project Running Club assisting each age group on the course.
- **Registered children participating in the 2026 Publix Jr. Gasparilla Distance Classic, presented by the Mendez Foundation, must wear their race numbers on the FRONT of their shirts/jackets!**

SAFETY - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

All events will take place within the Jefferson High School Stadium. **ALL FINISHERS WILL BE LED INTO A SECURE DOUBLE-BARRICADED HOLDING AREA.** Children will be supervised by Race Personnel until they are picked up by their parents. Please stress to your children the importance of following the directions given by Race Personnel. The following procedures will be followed in the Holding Area:

- The kids will be led into the holding area.
- Once inside, they will be presented with a finisher's medal & Zephyrhills Natural Spring Water.
- At that point, parents will be allowed to pick up their children at the two designated breaks in the secure holding area barricades.
- A Tampa Police Department Officer and GDCA race personnel will be stationed at each of the two barricade breaks.
- **PARENTS, PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO ENTER THE HOLDING AREA OR REACH OVER/THROUGH BARRICADES TO REMOVE YOUR CHILD(REN).**
- Parents are encouraged to point out their children to GDCA personnel, who will then take them to the secured openings in the holding area barricades.
- **PARENTS, PLEASE BE PATIENT...LET GDCA RACE PERSONNEL DO THEIR JOBS!!!**

**Gasparilla Distance Classic Association race personnel
will be wearing red, white & blue polo shirts.**

LOST & FOUND

If your child does become separated from his/her race group, there will be a "lost & found" located in the SECURE HOLDING AREA. Upon arriving at the Jefferson High School Stadium, please take your child to the Holding Area – help them to understand that should they become separated from you, the SECURE HOLDING AREA is where they should go...point out the Tampa Police Department Officers who will be in position no later than 9 am.

On Race Morning, please take a picture of your child that includes their clothing. Should you become separated from them, the picture will be a great help for the Tampa Police Department Officers and Gasparilla Distance Classic Association Race Personnel.

DON'T FORGET....ARRIVE EARLY! Race Day will be full of fun and exciting Pre- and Post-Race Activities! We have a lot of fun-filled activities planned for the Publix Jr. Gasparilla Distance Classic, presented by the Mendez Foundation, for participants.

RACE DAY SPECIAL ACTIVITIES WILL FEATURE THE FOLLOWING:

- Mendez Foundation Craft Activity Area With “Carmen & Wagner.”
- Fun with Q105's Mason Dixon, Roxanne Wilder & Bobby Rich, Meredith
- Ferman Automotive “Face Painting.”
- Bay Area Mascot Character Appearances.
- Interactive Activities with Publix Super Markets, City of Tampa Parks & Recreation, Q105, Ferman Automotive & More
- Visit with Pepperjack, and Plato, the Publixaurus

DIRECTIONS TO JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

From Brandon

Take Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway, West on Crosstown Expressway to (use the two right lanes) Exit 10 to merge onto I-4 West toward I-275/Tampa International Airport. Use the left two lanes to take the exit towards I-275 South. Merge onto I-275 South to Exit 40A at Westshore Boulevard. Take Exit 40A to Westshore Boulevard. Right on Westshore to Cypress Street. Right on Cypress Street to Trask Street. Left on Trask Street to Jefferson High School Parking Lot Entrance.

From St. Petersburg & South Tampa

Take I-275 North to Lois Avenue at Exit 40B. Take Exit 40B to Lois Avenue. Left on Lois Avenue to Cypress Street. Left on Cypress Street to Trask Street. Right on Trask Street to Jefferson High School Parking Lot Entrance.

From North Tampa

I-275 South to Exit 40A at Westshore Boulevard. Take Exit 40A to Westshore Boulevard. Right on Westshore to Cypress Street. Right on Cypress Street to Trask Street. Left on Trask Street to Jefferson High School Parking Lot Entrance.

From I-4

I-4 West to Exit 40A at Westshore Boulevard. Take Exit 40A to Westshore Boulevard. Right on Westshore to Cypress Street. Right on Cypress Street to Trask Street. Left on Trask Street to Jefferson High School Parking.