

Modern pack burro racing began 54 years ago with a 23-mile race starting in Leadville and ending in Fairplay, after traversing Mosquito Pass.

Pack Burro racing has evolved from that single race to a series of six races in Central City, Cripple Creek, Frisco, Fairplay, Leadville and Buena Vista. The last three are considered the Triple Crown of pack burro racing.

The Buena Vista Pack Burro race has been an annual event held every August during Gold Rush Days. The race is a 130 mile running event in which a runner runs with a burro loaded with 33 pounds of mining gear, including a pick and shovel on his pack saddle.

The 13.5 mile loop starts at McPhelemy Park on West Main Street. The first obstacle is the railroad tracks and then the footbridge across the Arkansas River. Once across, the course zigzags on the Whipple Trail up to the Midland Railroad grade (County Road 304). The course follows this old railroad bed for approximately 3.5 miles. At the parking area, which is a good spot for spectators, the course bears to the left and continues for approximately 1.5 miles where it intersects the old Midland cutoff road. The course heads south down to the Midland grade bike trail which the runners follow back to County Road 304, continuing on back to town, crossing that bridge again and up Main Street to the finish line at the Railroad tracks.

