



**PRODUCT REVIEW
GOLITE VO24 AR PACK
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Summary: This hydration pack has been built with the functionality necessary for multi-day expedition racers. This makes it ideal for anyone who wants to run or cycle with light to medium weight loads.

Value: 9/10

Performance: 9/10

I used the pack during GeoQuest 09 where the pace was fast and sustained. The pack performed flawlessly throughout the whole race. Load control straps keep the pack centred and tight against your back so there's no bouncing around, regardless of how much or how little is in it. There's heaps of convenient storage, including side pockets which are great for water bottles, room for a bike helmet in the back pocket, and a generous amount of bungee cord for those bulky items for anything that 'just won't fit'.

The biggest problem with any pack that you run with is getting it to stay in one place on your back and not swing around. The guys at GoLite have come up with the solution and designed it into the VO24. So the pack is not only functional, but it's super comfortable. No rubbing, chafing, no sore shoulders and no bouncing.

The GoLite VO24 is the perfect pack for just about anything, at 623g it's light enough for sprint events, has enough space for longer events and is durable enough to take anywhere.

My wife doesn't call me pacman for nothing; open a cupboard anywhere in the house and there's a good chance you'll find a pack stuffed up the back somewhere. Everything from bladder only hydration packs to 70L expedition packs, then there's the variations such as light weight racing packs, casual day packs, computer specific packs, bum bags, fuel belts, travel packs, duffel bags I think I've tried just about every way of carrying a pack I can think of. The sad thing is none of them are quite right. This is because we have very specific requirements for whatever we are doing. Adventure racing is no different, packs need to be light, strong, close fitting, not too sweaty, easy to use, have heaps of accessible storage, etc etc.

When I was given the chance to try a GoLite VO24 racing pack, I thought; "uh huh, another mid size racing pack, that lives up to only some of the promises". Greg from Area 51 assured me it was designed by adventure racers for adventure racers; I'd heard that before too. First impressions when I picked up the pack were that it wasn't as light as the brand suggested. This is actually a positive at 623g it's still lighter than most of its contemporaries (don't believe some of the stated weights, some brands are more than double the published weights). The pack looks good and is heavily tapered towards the top. It has load control straps which rather than just cinch the pack together actually connect down onto the waist strap, this not only compress the pack when it has small loads but also help keep the pack centred on your back and not bouncing around. The zips are watertight to help keep your gear dry, but the GoLite boffins don't try and make dumb claims like the pack is waterproof. In fact there are generous drain holes in the bottom of the pack, essential for adventure

racing where you are regularly required to swim with your pack. The outside pocket is a good size and can just fit a bike helmet, the bungy is also generous. One negative comment is the bungy hooks are a bit fiddly to use when you're in a hurry. If you want to stuff a jacket in the bungies without undoing them it's fine. Side pockets are easily accessible and easily hold a water bottle and a trekking pole, which you can get at without turning yourself inside out. The hip pockets are generous enough to hold bars, gels and snacks or anything else you care to stuff in them, which is essential for a race pack where you have to eat on the run. Another thoughtful touch is the access for your hydration hose. It's located on either side, not in the middle. This means the hose doesn't end up rubbing a hole in your neck on those long hot trekking stages, a small thing, but just another indication that this is a well designed bit of kit.

So how did it perform? The guys at Area51 made lots of claims, and I'm happy to say the pack lived up to all of them. Top of the list is that it fitted well. The pack comes in four sizes (two for men and two for women specific packs, which are lighter and narrower than the men's) It sat snugly on my hips and didn't drag on the shoulders; no stiff traps the next day. You can run with this pack, even when it's full you have to try really hard to make it swing from side to side and you just can't hit it with your arms as they swing through, which is something of a revelation. I raced with it in mild to cold weather so I can't say what the breathability was like or whether it would get sweaty and uncomfortable in hot weather. The 3 L bladder I was using was easy to access, although if you took it out, it was a little awkward to get back in the pack when it was full, particularly when the pack had gear in it. With all the use I'm planning to give this pack, its durability will be quickly tested. Looking at the obvious quality of the materials and the workmanship, I'm certainly not expecting anything but the highest level of quality that's already been demonstrated by the guys at GoLite.

For more information on the GoLite VO24 AR Pack features go to www.area51.net.au or [click here](#)