



Advice to Competitors

This Advice to Competitors and the separate Rules for Supporters are part of the Race rules. Competitors are responsible for the conduct of anyone who turns up to watch or support them. The terms “supporter” and “support crew” are used interchangeably in the Race rules and are taken as having the same meaning.

ENTRIES ARE ONLY ACCEPTED ON THE BASIS THAT COMPETITORS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAVE READ ALL THE RACE RULES AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THEM.

The failure to follow the instructions of police, traffic wardens, lock-keepers, marshals, umpires or any other organising staff regarding support of crews can jeopardise the future of the Race and may also result in your crew(s), team(s) or organisation(s) being subject to time penalties or even disqualification.

TRAINING FOR THE RACE

1. Under ideal conditions, the race calls for strenuous and sustained effort. In bad weather, it can be extremely arduous and below Teddington on the Tideway, dangerous. Only experienced paddlers who are able to swim and who have trained rigorously for at least three months prior to Easter should attempt the Race.
2. Competitors should spare no effort in training over long distances and in portaging locks with the weight of kit and with the boat that they intend to use for the Race. Training should take place in all conditions, within reason, both by day, and for Senior Doubles, by night. Up-to-date information as to any special dangers on the non-Tidal Thames is available from the Environment Agency. The canal presents particular hazards of its own and should be incorporated in any training schedule.
3. Competitors should wear buoyancy aids during all their training sessions so that they become completely accustomed to the extra weight and bulk and do not put themselves at undue risk in the event of a capsize or other incident during long training paddles.
4. Competitors are reminded that their entry fee covers only the period of the Race. At all other times their boats must carry a current licence plate issued by the appropriate authority for the Canal (the British Waterways Board) and for the River Thames (the Environment Agency). Please do not use the waterways without the right licence, as this could affect permission being granted to run the Race in future. Comprehensive BCU membership incorporates both Thames and Canal licences.
5. We recommend paddlers carry mobile phones (with their supporters' numbers and the Race Control number 0207 620 0298 pre-programmed) in a waterproof container. Unsupported competitors must provide their number to the Organisers and must carry their phone with them.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RACE

1. Accommodation

Devizes

Accommodation is available free of charge, in Scout Headquarters and/or the Corn Exchange in Devizes on Thursday night. Entrants in the Senior Doubles race will have the use of the Scout Headquarters only on Good Friday night. Sleeping bags will be necessary. Under no circumstances

may boats be taken into the buildings. Crews must rise in time to clean up and put all refuse in the bin provided. Please note there is no access to the Corn Exchange after 10 pm as the doors are locked at that time. Devizes' Tourist Information Office: - 01380 729408

Newbury

Camping is available at the Northcroft Leisure Centre for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. Newbury Tourist Information Office: - 01635 30267

Marlow

Camping is available at Longridge Scout Boating Centre for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. No pets on site. Marlow Tourist Information Office: - 01628 483597

Ham (Thames Young Mariners)

Camping is available at Thames Young Mariners for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. Richmond Tourist Information Office: - 0208 940 9125

2. Entry changes

Late entries or entries on the day will not be accepted. Please ensure any changes, particularly changes of address for correspondence or support crews' mobile phone numbers, are notified promptly to the Competition Secretary. At Devizes, all competitors must provide the number of a working mobile phone belonging to their Chief Supporter or Team Leader so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

3. Tide times

High Tide at Teddington is approximately one hour after High Tide at London Bridge. Times of high tide at London Bridge are given in the Tide Tables, the AA Handbook, Old Moore's Almanac and the Thames Book.

Richmond Draw Lock is raised 2 hours before and lowered 2 hours after high tide at Teddington. (i.e. clear passage is only possible during these four hours.) If the way is closed, portage on the left-hand side (boat rollers), but note that this portage is always muddy and extremely slippery.

Supporters and competitors must make themselves aware of the rules concerning passage through Teddington and accept that crews that arrive at Teddington outside the permitted 'window' will not be allowed to proceed further.

4. Results

A full list of provisional results will be posted on the Internet during the course of Easter Monday and a finalised set of results sent to each crew shortly after the Race. The date of the Presentation of Trophies will also be notified at this time.

5. Lost property

Competitors and support parties are requested to hand all lost property in at the Wokingham Waterside Centre or to the Race Organiser's portable cabin at Westminster where all enquiries regarding such property should be made.

6. Finishing arrangements

Arrangements for finishing on both Sunday and Monday will be published over the Easter Weekend. Competitors should always paddle past the sign marked "Finish" until they hear a horn blast, whistle or other signal that indicates that they have finished. Note that the finish at Westminster is on the downstream side of the bridge so do not stop paddling till you have passed the bridge.

In the event of retirement or emergency, call Race Control on 0207 620 0298

POTENTIAL RACE HAZARDS, RISKS AND OTHER ISSUES

1. All other boat traffic including rowing boats with limited rearwards visibility presents a potential hazard. So too do powered motor boats, inexperienced day-trippers using the river in hired craft, Class V passenger vessels on the Tideway, moored barges and large boats berthed on the Thames, which are especially to be avoided at all times. Never approach or attempt to moor up to tethered boats on the Tideway as you may be swept under them under conditions of moderate flow. Rights of way: allow powered craft to use centre of canal as they require more draft and remember that other boats are generally less manoeuvrable than canoes.
2. Road traffic when portaging across roads. Support crew should watch for fast-moving traffic which may not expect to see canoeists crossing roads. DW staff may be present at road crossings but have no authority to stop traffic so canoeists should assume that they have to give way to traffic.
3. Stakes on land and in water plus other submerged obstacles, all of which present trip hazards or can easily damage canoes.
4. Low bridges. (Canal only – if in doubt, portage round). Richmond Draw Lock, if portaged, is always muddy and extremely slippery.
5. Drinking canal or river water. This can cause severe illness and is strongly discouraged.
6. Aggressive swans. Nesting birds to be avoided wherever possible. Portage may be necessary.
7. Extreme weather conditions of all kinds can be experienced at Easter and can cause anything from sunburn and heatstroke to exposure or hypothermia. Sudden changes in temperature and conditions are possible. Be aware of the risks of wearing inadequate or inappropriate clothing. Always dress for the conditions, remember that long-sleeved and long-legged thermals help retain more heat when wet. There is a direct correlation between falls in temperature and race retirements so plenty of spare clothing is advised.
8. Dehydration, severe fatigue, cuts, bruises and severe blistering can all be expected.
9. Weirs – keep well clear especially during times of high river flow. Never shoot any weir at any time during the Race.
10. Lack of public facilities. Relieving oneself in a public place by competitors or supporters is an offence and also a specific breach of the DW rules that can result in time penalties being awarded.
11. Savernake Tunnel (in event of capsize, ledge on right and chains can assist re-entry).
12. Thames Bridges – keep well clear of bridge arches, particularly during times of high flow. All Tideway bridges carry a white isophase light above the centre arch. If this light is in use it indicates that a large or towing vessel is about to pass under the bridge. Arches of bridges which carry an up-side-down triangle (lit red at night), are closed to all traffic.
13. Damage to equipment is likely. Thoroughly check all items before you start. Make sure your support crew carry spare seats, paddles, rudders, torches, torch batteries, lightsticks and other items. All items of equipment can be replaced during the event, with the exception of boats, which may only be repaired.
14. Misbehaviour will not be tolerated. Deliberate breaches of the rules or any failure to follow the instructions of a Race Official or obstructing or impeding them in their work in any way may result in time penalties and, in extreme circumstances, disqualification or a ban from competing in future events.