



RULES FOR SUPPORTERS

These Rules for Supporters form part of the Race rules. Competitors will be held 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 rules. Competitors and Team Leaders should ensure that all support crews read these rules. *Ignorance of the rules will not be an acceptable excuse in the event of a protest or penalty.*

SUPPORTING THE RACE – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Supporters perform a vital role in providing food, drink and spare kit to their paddlers and monitoring their well-being. They are an essential and valued part of the Devizes to Westminster Race.

However, the behaviour of support crews affects public perceptions of the Race as much as or more than that of competitors. To safeguard the future of the race, supporters must behave responsibly at all times and follow the instructions of police, traffic wardens, lock-keepers, marshals, umpires or organising staff with regard to parking, access, noise or other matters. Supporters should also behave considerately to residents, lock users and other members of the public who may not be aware that a race is in progress. Any breach of these rules may result in a time penalty being imposed on the crew being supported. Lack of sleep or the emotion of watching close friends or relatives under extreme physical stress can cause supporters to behave inappropriately. This is understandable but will not be regarded as an excuse by the Organisers.

ABUSE

The Race Organisers will not tolerate any physical or verbal abuse. *Please note the specific paragraphs covering incidents of assault and/or abusive behaviour which are contained in the General Rules.* Abusing or deliberately impeding a Race official in any way will result in disqualification and may also result in a ban on the individual, crew, team or organisation concerned from taking part or being involved in future races.

SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONS – ALL CLASSES

Driving and Parking

Obey all traffic rules and restrictions at all times. Do not race from lock to lock as you will arrive too early and add to congestion at the next portage. Remember, the average speed of a kayak on the canal is less than 6 mph. Observe parking restrictions, do not obstruct emergency access or park across driveways, near to railway crossings or on junctions. Do not park on private property as your car may be blocked in.

Portages

Do not swamp the course with supporters and vehicles. Supporters of Senior Doubles should minimise the number of cars they have following them. Other classes are subject to specific rules set out below. Keep dogs on a lead at all times and keep them inside vehicles at night time on the Senior Doubles race to avoid disturbing residents along the course. Keep noise to a minimum especially during the hours of darkness and in residential areas. Follow instructions from marshals and umpires at locks, especially portages down rollers on the Thames, where access may be restricted on safety grounds to one person per crew.

Closed or Restricted Access Portages

Do not go to LITTLE BEDWYN, BLAKE'S LOCK and COUNTY LOCK, SHIPLAKE or BOVENEY. They are closed to support crews. Do not park on the SONNING LOCK access road or on BOULTER'S ISLAND. Do not go through the Runnymede Hotel grounds (at BELL WEIR). These are for hotel guests only and are out of bounds to supporters and their vehicles.

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Mobile phones

Please give the Organisers the working mobile phone numbers of support crews so they can be contacted in the event of an emergency. Penalties may be imposed on crews whose support team cannot be contacted by Race Control.

Lighting and visibility

Take care at night with torches. Do not shine them directly at paddlers as it damages their night vision. Do not use flashing or novelty lighting which may distract paddlers or annoy local residents. Carry spare white light-sticks and torch batteries. White light-sticks are compulsory for use at night. No other colour is permitted. Crews won't be allowed to start or continue without them. It is paddlers' responsibility to ensure they have the right colour sticks before leaving Devizes.

SUPPORT CREW RESTRICTIONS – STAGES CLASSES ONLY

Supporter and Car restrictions – armbands and car stickers

Boats in the Stages (4-day) classes are limited to 2 support vehicles and 4 support crew each. Four arm bands and two vehicle stickers will be given to each crew with their boat number at Devizes. Stickers must be displayed in support vehicles. Arm bands must be worn at portages, camp sites and at the finish at Westminster. Teams are permitted one additional Team Leader vehicle. The Team Leader must pick up a vehicle sticker and arm band in person at Devizes. With the exception of the Team Leader vehicle, only one vehicle and two support crew may ever be present at the same time at any one portage.

Restricted areas

At a portage only supporters with an arm band may provide food and drink or other physical support to competitors. "At a portage" is defined as "anywhere along the racing line near the water's edge". The racing line is defined as "any point where a crew exits the water to wherever it chooses to get back in and the length of the tow-path in between". Only support crew vehicles displaying a valid sticker may park at a portage. For vehicles, "at a portage" means the nearest car park to the portage or any road adjacent to the portage. Designated sticker-only car parking may be signposted or otherwise notified to supporters.

Spectators who are not providing tangible support to crews

The Organisers urge other spectators to avoid portages and go to alternative viewing places such as bridges, riverside- or canalside-roads and other open ground near the water. A list of such locations will be published on the Race website.

Campsites

Sticker-only car parking may include areas around the stage stops at Newbury, Marlow and Ham. At stage stops only supporters with armbands will be permitted near the outer exclusion area around the campsite and then only to hand over camping equipment and other items. No supporters are allowed into the inner area of the campsite. Crews must erect their tents, mattresses and other equipment themselves. Entrants in the Junior Doubles class must cook for themselves. Outside assistance is not permitted and will be penalised.

Westminster

At Westminster only supporters with armbands will be permitted between the London Eye and Westminster Bridge. Others should stay upstream of the Bridge or downstream of the London Eye. Supporters may not interfere with, crowd around or distract the time-keepers at any point. Each breach of the restrictions on supporters will receive a 30 minute time penalty. Repeated breaches will result in disqualification. In the event that a specific crew cannot be identified, the penalty will be applied to the team or organisation concerned. It is a serious breach of the rules to attempt to impede a Race official in any way. This includes, but is not limited to, instances where a supporter falsely claims not to be following the race, refuses to identify the crew or team they are supporting or refuses to follow a reasonable instruction.

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

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Guiding principles

Common sense is to be the underlying principle of the supporting arrangements. The Organisers will not penalise anyone who provides sustenance, replaces essential kit or effects repairs to a competitor's boat in the event of a proven emergency. Substantial penalties will apply to any crew, team or organisation deemed to be in breach of the spirit of the rules.