



ADVICE TO COMPETITORS

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.

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

- The race is very strenuous and demanding. In bad weather, it can be extremely arduous and dangerous, particularly below Teddington, on the Tideway. Only experienced paddlers able to swim and who have trained rigorously for at least six to nine months prior to Easter should attempt the Race.
- Spare no effort in training over long distances and in portaging locks with the weight of kit and with the boat that you intend to use for the Race. Train in all conditions, within reason, both by day, and for Senior Doubles, by night. Information as to any special dangers on the non-Tidal Thames is available from the Environment Agency. The canal presents hazards of its own and must be incorporated in training schedules.
- Buoyancy aids should be worn during all training sessions to familiarise yourself with your DW race kit. It will also reduce the risk in the event of a capsize or other incident during long training paddles.
- Waterways Licences: Boats must carry a current licence for the canal (Canal & River Trust) and for the River Thames (Environment Agency). Do not use the waterways without the correct licence, as this could affect permission to run the Race in the future and you may be disqualified. British Canoeing or Canoe Wales membership incorporates both Canal and Thames licences. Members of CANI and SCA should separately purchase CRT & EA licences to permit paddling on the course. For overseas (non-UK) residents, DW will provide help with purchasing licences.
- 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 that phone with them at all times – and check it at regular intervals.
- The lower canal (East of Newbury) is a mixed waterway with a combination of flowing river sections and non-flowing pounds. The flow in places can be high and may catch out the unwary paddler. This is compounded by fatigue and for Senior Doubles that this section is often paddled in the dark.

General Arrangements for the Race

1. Accommodation

Postcodes are given to help you when searching on accommodation websites – those listed are not the only websites available. It is advisable to book your accommodation well in advance.

At Devizes: (SN10 1EB) Accommodation is available free of charge to all Stages entrants and supporters in the Scout Headquarters and the Corn Exchange on Thursday night. Entrants and supporters in the Senior Doubles race will have the use of only the Scout Headquarters 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 Bed & Breakfast Syndicate 01380 620660. www.devizes.org.uk*

At Newbury: (RG14 5JQ) Camping is available at the Northcroft Leisure Centre for all competitors in the 'Stages' Event; in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. . www.visitnewbury.org.uk/where-to-stay.aspx

At Marlow: (SL7 1QA) Camping is available at Longridge for all competitors in the 'Stages' event; in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. No pets on site. *Marlow Information Centre: - 01628 483597 www.visitbuckinghamshire.org or email marlow_office@wycombe.gov.uk for a more comprehensive accommodation list.*

At Ham (Thames Young Mariners): (TW10 7RX) Camping is available at Thames Young Mariners for all competitors in the 'Stages' event; in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. www.visitrichmond.co.uk/accommodation

2. Entry changes

All changes must be notified promptly to the Competition Secretary. At Devizes, all competitors must provide the number of a working mobile phone for their Chief Supporter or Team Leader so they can be contacted in an emergency.

3. Tide times

High Tide at Teddington is about one hour after High Tide at London Bridge. Times of high tide at Teddington are given on the DW website.

Richmond Draw Lock is raised 2 hours before and lowered 2 hours after high tide at Teddington. (i.e. clear passage is only during these four hours.) If closed, portage left (boat rollers), this portage is muddy and slippery.

Senior Doubles crews arriving at Teddington outside the permitted 'windows' will not be allowed to proceed until the next tide window.

4. Results

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

5. Lost property

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.

Potential Race Hazards, Risks and Other Issues

1. All other boat traffic including rowing boats with limited rearwards visibility presents a potential hazard. Class V passenger vessels on the Tideway, moored barges and large boats berthed on the Thames, are 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. Allow powered craft to use the centre of the canal as they require more draft. Remember that other boats are generally less manoeuvrable than canoes.
2. Competitors are required to make themselves familiar with the navigation marks and signs for the Tideway. Information including diagrams of the rowing lanes between Kew and Putney and bridge symbols can be found on the Port of London Authority website. www.pla.co.uk and www.boatingonthames.co.uk
3. Road traffic when portaging across roads. Support crews should watch for fast-moving traffic. DW staff may be present at some road crossings but have no authority to stop traffic so always give way to traffic.
4. Stakes in the water and other submerged obstacles can easily damage boats.
5. Low bridges can cause serious head injury. If in doubt, you must portage. In particular there are six low bridges between Newbury and Reading.
6. Do not drink canal or river water.
7. Aggressive swans. Nesting birds are dangerous. Portage when necessary.
8. Extreme weather at Easter can cause anything from sunburn and heatstroke to exposure and hypothermia. Be aware of the risks of wearing inadequate or inappropriate clothing especially at night. Always dress for the conditions, remember long-sleeved and long-legged thermals help retain heat when wet. Lots of spare clothing is advised.
9. Dehydration, severe fatigue, cuts, bruises and severe blistering can all be expected.
10. Weirs – keep well clear especially during times of high river flow. Be wary of side weirs on the canal where the boat may suddenly move sideways.
11. Savernake Tunnel (in event of capsizing, ledge on right and chains can assist re-entry).
12. Thames Bridges – keep well clear of bridge stanchions (supports), 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 a large or towing vessel is about to pass under the bridge. Arches of bridges which carry an upside-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 can be replaced during the event, apart from boats, which may only be repaired.
14. If you encounter an unusual situation at a portage or anywhere along the course, for example, a fallen tree or other obstruction, you must report it as soon as possible to Race Control via your support crew or directly to a race official, marshal or umpire.