



## **1948-2016 - Celebrating 68 Years of Personal Endeavour**

### **DW2016 – RACE NEWS – RELEASED 9 MARCH 2016**

#### **Finish Arrangements at Westminster - St. Thomas' Hospital**

Last week the DW directors met senior staff at St Thomas Hospital to discuss finish arrangements for 2016. St. Thomas' is a working hospital, and a key strategic emergency facility for the capital in the event of a major incident. It is also located at the finish of the DW race. Without the hospital's continued support, the future of the DW race is severely jeopardised.

Unfortunately, as a direct result of complaints made after DW 2015, the hospital is considering ending its support for the Race, and withdrawing permission to allow our use of their facilities.

Examples of inappropriate behaviours included:

- Over height vehicles being jammed into the hospital car park
- Abysmal parking which blocked access for emergency vehicles and spaces for disabled drivers
- Verbal abuse of St Thomas' staff

We have agreed the following measures will be implemented this year:

- NO minibuses, vehicles with trailers or any vehicles sporting v-bars/canoe racks will be permitted in St Thomas' car park. Instead, all these vehicles must use public parking elsewhere, such as the South Bank where there is a car park next to the Royal Festival Hall, a short walk from the DW finish steps.
- DW supporters' cars without canoe racks may continue to use the St Thomas' Hospital car park but no boat loading will be possible there.
- At the end of the race, all boats must be taken from the steps area at the finish toward the South Bank car park where they must be loaded onto vehicles.
- No boats are to be carried upstream of Westminster bridge, placed in the DW village area by St Thomas' hospital or loaded onto cars in the hospital car park.
- No race supporters may use any facilities inside the hospital buildings except in the case of a genuine medical emergency. DW supporters, competitors and support crew may only stay within the clearly marked DW village area
- Race marshals will be posted as appropriate to ensure the above measures are followed

Any infringement of these measures or abuse of St. Thomas' staff will be reported to the DW race organisers. Stiff time penalties will be given to teams/crews whose paddlers or support crew are found to have breached the above measures.

### **General Supporter Conduct**

In 2015, we had many complaints along the course, including at Stages Race Finish Sites, about the conduct of Support Crews, and in some cases Team Leaders. So far in 2016, the DW Organisation has received numerous complaints made about supporters' conduct at Waterside races, specifically about inconsiderate driving and parking, offensive language and lack of consideration for residents. Needless to say, the public perception is that these races are part and parcel of DW.

DW relies heavily on the goodwill and support of numerous organisations, residents' associations and local authorities up and down the course, to ensure that we can continue to run the race. All paddlers and support crew are ambassadors for the event and as such have a duty to act responsibly and courteously to safeguard the future of our sport.

***Any proven complaints about supporter/support crew conduct during DW 2016 will result in time penalties being applied to the crew - or team - concerned.***