



## Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race 2016

### Chief Umpire's Final Instructions to Paddlers

Regular briefings will be held at Devizes Wharf before starts on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. These 'final instructions' are only to help ensure everyone arrives at Devizes with the right kit and in the right frame of mind.

These notes should be read in conjunction with the race rules. Every year the rules are tweaked and improved. Please don't get caught out by relying on your understanding of what the rules used to say.

Before Easter you can contact the chief umpire, Guy Dresser, at: [dwchiefumpire@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dwchiefumpire@hotmail.co.uk) – during the race, you can contact him via Race Control on 0207 620 0298

#### **Senior Doubles starting after midday on Saturday and Senior Doubles going for the second tide (Sunday evening)**

If you intend to leave Devizes after 1200 on Easter Saturday or if you intend to reach Teddington for the evening tide on Easter Sunday, please inform the chief umpire by email by the Wednesday preceding the race. This is so a Race official is present to record your actual departure time. This information is not shared with other crews. You must receive a written confirmation from the Chief Umpire for your late start to be accepted. If you fail to comply, you will be deemed to have scratched and won't be permitted to start.

#### **Senior Doubles Good Friday kit checks**

A limited number of kit check slots are available at Devizes Wharf on Good Friday between 1700-1900. If you want one, email the Chief Umpire ([dwchiefumpire@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dwchiefumpire@hotmail.co.uk)) with your approximate preferred time. These kit checks are ideal for anyone starting early on Easter Saturday. They are available on a pre-booked, first-come, first-served basis only.

#### **Kit checks - general**

Please allow 1 hour for the completion of formalities at Devizes before your start.

Timed random kit checks will be conducted on boats in all classes along the course this year. Penalties will be levied for compulsory kit items that cannot be presented.

#### **Compulsory equipment – all classes**

1. Buoyancy aids/personal flotation devices: We've seen some new ones that comply with relevant ISO standards but don't appear to have the 50N inherent buoyancy we specify. In fact, Adult XL sized versions of these BAs/PFDs do meet that level to achieve compliance but some smaller sizes may offer just 45N. As long as they meet all the rest of the criteria specified in the rules, 45N versions of these BAs/PFDs will be accepted.
2. Survival bags: Competitors must carry one each. The only one permissible is the 'classic' survival bag, a heavy duty 500 gauge tear-proof/water-proof/wind-proof polythene bag measuring at least 1800 x 900 mm, in highly visible day-glo orange, weighing about 290g

each. No lighter weight versions, space blankets, silver blankets, thin gauge or other forms of translucent or coloured plastic bags of any sort will be acceptable.

3. Lighting: all crews in the non-stop race will have to present WHITE lightsticks (one per paddler) AS WELL AS a working torch AND a forward facing white light to kit check at Devizes even though these do not have to be carried in the boat until required. We strongly advise your support crew to carry spare lights and batteries. Stages race competitors (senior singles, junior and vet/junior doubles, endeavour class) do not need lights on the Tideway this year.
4. Vacuum packing of kit is not encouraged. We believe it can make items much more difficult to access when fingers are cold and wet. In any case, kit may not be vacuum packed into the boat before kit check. All competitors must present all items for inspection before it is fitted to the boat.
5. Spraydecks: must be carried in or on the boat at all times (kayaks only).
6. Boat buoyancy: the rules include outline specifications for buoyancy in boats. Please check to ensure your boat has sufficient buoyancy (canoes and kayaks).
7. Be prepared: You should leave for Devizes with all the equipment you need. Don't rely on being able to buy anything at the start.

### **Portaging**

Permitted portages are only as outlined in the rules. Do not portage into weir streams on the Kennet & Avon canal. Marshals will be stationed in many places and time penalties will be awarded to crews who break this long-standing rule. Use of the backwater above Windsor as a short cut is not allowed and crews will incur a 30 minute time penalty for doing so.

### **Navigation on the Tideway (between Teddington and the finish)**

This is spelt out in the rules but every year we have to penalise a few crews who ignore the Port of London Authority regulations and by-laws. For avoidance of doubt:

- keep river right
- don't cross the centre line of the river
- stay away from rowing lanes and rowers
- pass through right hand bridge arches, never the left hand arches
- the PLA use CCTV on bridges and they can stop boats navigating incorrectly

### **Road crossings**

Please obey the instructions of marshals and umpires at all times. We are not legally allowed to stop traffic. If there is a significant stoppage for safety reasons anywhere on the course, a time allowance will be given where it is humanly possible to do so.

### **Driving and parking**

The Driving Instructions document on the DW website has been updated for 2016 with significant amendments. Please download a new version and delete any old ones you have. Please drive considerately, park carefully and observe restrictions. Crews can be penalized for the poor driving or inconsiderate parking of their support crews. The DW driving instructions (available on the event website) have been updated for 2016. Please read them carefully.

### **Finish arrangements and parking restrictions at St Thomas' hospital**

Because of complaints about DW supporter behaviour at St Thomas' Hospital at last year's race, there are significant changes to the arrangements at the finish. DW depends on the cooperation of the hospital to be able to use its grounds at the finish. We have therefore agreed the following measures:

- 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 roof racks capable of carrying boats 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

The entire St Thomas' Hospital area including the car park will be marshalled by DW personnel. 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 about behaviour. 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.

### **Abuse and assaults**

Assaults, whether physical or verbal, are not tolerated. Race officials are all volunteers and entitled to work without fear of assault. Stiff penalties, including instant disqualification, can be applied to any crew whose paddlers or supporters are found to have carried out an assault on any race official.

### **Retiring/emergencies**

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