



Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race 2015

Briefing notes from the Chief Umpire

Regular briefings will be held at Devizes Wharf before starts on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. These notes 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 some paddlers and supporters are penalized for some infraction of the rules. Please don't let that be you.

You can contact the chief umpire, Guy Dresser, at: 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 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 apparently do not have 50N inherent buoyancy specified in the rules. 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 all classes 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. Stages race competitors must use lights on the Tideway this year because of the early tide.
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.

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

Please drive considerately, park carefully and observe restrictions. Crews can be penalized for the poor driving or inconsiderate parking of their support crews.

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.