



## 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

1. The race is very strenuous and demanding. In bad weather, it can be extremely arduous and below Teddington, on the Tideway, dangerous. 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.
2. 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.
3. Buoyancy aids should be worn during all training sessions to familiarise yourself to the extra weight and bulk also not putting yourself at undue risk in the event of a capsized or other incident during long training paddles.
4. The entry fee covers only the period of the Race. At all other times boats must carry a current licence plate issued by the appropriate authority for the Canal (the British Waterways Board) and for the River Thames (the Environment Agency). Do not use the waterways without the correct licence, as this could affect permission to run the Race in the future. Comprehensive BCU membership incorporates both Thames and Canal licences.
5. 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 a number to the Organisers and must carry their phone with them at all times.

### General Arrangements for the Race

#### 1. Accommodation

**At Devizes:** Accommodation is available free of charge, in Scout Headquarters and/or the Corn Exchange in Devizes on Thursday night. Entrants in the Senior Doubles race will have the use of the Scout Headquarters on Good Friday night only. 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' Tourist Information Office: - 01380 729408*

**At Newbury:** Camping is available at the Northcroft Leisure Centre for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. *Newbury Tourist Information Office: - 01635 30267*

**At Marlow:** Camping is available at Longridge Scout Boating Centre for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. No pets on site. *Marlow Tourist Information Office: -01628 483597*

**At Ham** (Thames Young Mariners): Camping is available at Thames Young Mariners for all competitors in the 'Stages' event, in the case of Junior Doubles this is compulsory. *Richmond Tourist Information Office: - 0208 940 9125*

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

## **2. Entry changes**

***Late entries or entries on the day will not be accepted.*** 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 London Bridge are given in the Tide Tables, the AA Handbook, Old Moore's Almanac and the Thames Book.

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.

Supporters and competitors must accept that crews arriving at Teddington outside the permitted 'window' will not be allowed to proceed onward.

## **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 date of the Presentation of Trophies 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. Road traffic when portaging across roads. Support crew 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.
3. Stakes in the water plus other submerged obstacles, are a hazard and can easily damage boats.
4. Low bridges can cause serious head injury. On the canal, if in doubt, you must portage
5. Drinking canal or river water. Do not drink as it can cause severe illness
6. Aggressive swans. Nesting birds can be dangerous. Portage if necessary.
7. Extreme weather at Easter can cause anything from sunburn and heatstroke to exposure or 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.
8. Dehydration, severe fatigue, cuts, bruises and severe blistering can all be expected.
9. Weirs – keep well clear especially during times of high river flow.
10. Savernake Tunnel (in event of capsizing, ledge on right and chains can assist re-entry).
11. 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.
12. 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.