



## SUPPORTERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

### **General Principles of Support in the Race**

Supporters perform a vital role in providing food, drink and spare kit to their paddlers and monitoring their well-being. They are an essential and valued part of the Devizes to Westminster Race.

The behaviour of support crews affects public perceptions of the Race as much as, or more than, that of competitors. Supporters must behave responsibly and considerately at all times and shall observe restrictions along the course and adjoining areas as may be imposed by the Organisers.

Note :- The terms "supporter" and "support crew" are used interchangeably in this document.

### **Competitors' Responsibility for their Supporters**

Competitors are responsible for the conduct of anyone who turns up to watch or support them. Competitors/Team Leaders must ensure that all support crews read these rules. Ignorance will not be an acceptable excuse in the event of a protest or penalty.

### **Abuse**

The Race Organisers will not tolerate any physical or verbal abuse whatsoever. Abusing, assaulting or deliberately impeding any official in any way will result in disqualification and may also result in a ban on the individual, crew, team or organisation concerned from taking part or being involved in future races.

Lack of sleep or the emotion of watching close friends or relatives under extreme physical stress can cause supporters to behave inappropriately. However any breach of these rules may result in a penalty being imposed on the crew being supported.

### **Chief Supporter**

Each boat should have a Chief Supporter who is responsible for any communications with Race Control, and who Race Control will attempt to contact in the first instance if there is any problem.

The Chief Supporter of each crew must confirm/provide the Competition Secretary with their name and mobile phone number as required on the Entry Form. They should also supply a landline number of a supporter who can relay messages should mobile communication fail. Support crews must be readily available at all times to be contacted by DW Control. If you cannot be contacted immediately you may receive a text asking you to make contact. You should check for messages at regular intervals. Penalties will be imposed on crews whose supporters are found to be un-contactable on the numbers provided.

### **Guiding principles**

Common sense is to be the underlying principle of the supporting arrangements. The Organisers will not penalise anyone who provides sustenance, replaces essential kit or effects repairs to a competitor's boat in the event of a proven emergency. Substantial penalties will apply to any crew, team or organisation deemed to be in breach of the spirit of the rules.

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

## Supporting Instructions – for Supporters of ALL CREWS

### Driving and Parking

Do not race from lock to lock as you will arrive too early and add to congestion at the next portage. The average speed of a kayak on the canal is less than 6 mph. Observe local parking restrictions; do not obstruct emergency access or driveways, railway crossings or junctions. Do not park on private property. Observe specific race access and parking rules.

### Portages

Do not swamp the course with support crews and vehicles. Minimise the number of cars following. Stage race classes are subject to specific rules set out below. Do not allow dogs to cause nuisance of any sort. Keep noise and disturbance to a minimum in residential areas, especially at night. Obey instructions from officials at locks, where access may be restricted on safety grounds to one person per crew.

### Closed Portages

No supporters are permitted at any of the following locks. There are no exceptions to this rule:

- Little Bedwyn
- County
- Blake's
- Shiplake
- Boveney
- Sunbury Lock and Rollers (Crews may be fed along the lock cut.)
- Molesey Lock and Rollers
- Teddington Lock and Rollers

### Parking/driving restrictions apply at the following locks:

- Crofton Flight: Observe all parking notices and cones. Do not park on or by the Freewarren Bridge (middle bridge). Please use the Pay and Display Car Park at the Pumping Station, if that is full there is parking available in the adjacent field. To reach the canal make your way on foot through the grounds of the pumping station, under the railway line and out on to the canal where you can turn right or left to get to a lock. Marshalls will be on site on both Friday and Saturday.
- Cunning Man, Burghfield: Do not park in the pub car park.
- Sonning: Do not park on the access road to the lock.
- Boulter's Island, Maidenhead: Do not park on the main road or on/in/at the approach to the island. Use the public car park. Following residents' complaints, the DW Race is now required by the local council to pay for traffic wardens there; illegally parked vehicles will be ticketed. Use the public car park which will be fully open.
- Bell Weir: Do not go through the Runnymede Hotel grounds to access the portage; these grounds are for hotel guests only and are out of bounds to supporters and their vehicles.
- Sunbury Lock: Rollers closed to supporters. Following complaints from the pub landlord, do not drive down towards or park in or near the Weir Public House. Please note, even if you use the pub, any car in the pub car park with a canoe roof rack may be clamped. All support crew must now park only in the car park of the Walton Leisure Centre and may provide support anywhere along the lock cut on the towpath side.
- Molesey Lock and Rollers: Closed to supporters. Support may be provided from the towpath up or downstream of the lock.

Other restrictions may apply. In all cases, follow directions from race officials.

Substantial time penalties will apply to crews whose supporters ignore any of these restrictions or closures.

### Lights

Do not shine lights directly at paddlers as it damages their night vision.

Do not use flashing or novelty lighting.

Carry spare white light-sticks and torch batteries.

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

## Penalties

Despite our best efforts to educate support crews and paddlers about the race and to urge them to behave properly and race within the letter and/or spirit of the rules, we occasionally have to penalize boats for infractions. In recent years, examples of penalties levied include:

- A three- year ban from entering the DW race was imposed on a crew who completed the course of the DW race during the Easter weekend without entering.
- Disqualification of a crew who removed their buoyancy aids, giving them to their support crew to carry.
- Disqualification of a paddler found using a buoyancy aid that had failed kit inspection at Devizes. Despite starting with a replacement, the competitor later substituted it with the original, failed item.
- Disqualification of a crew who climbed over a safety barrier at a level crossing to retrieve items thrown to them by their support crew.
- Disqualification of a crew after they completed the race despite being ineligible to do so as both competitors were substantially under the minimum age required for entry.
- Disqualification of numerous boats who failed to reach designated way points or to complete stages within the maximum time limits set out in the rules.
- A half-hour time penalty was imposed on a crew who ignored Port of London Authority regulations and paddled by the bank on the wrong side of the river on the lower Tideway.
- A half-hour time penalty was imposed on a crew whose supporters attended an out-of-bounds portage.
- A half-hour time penalty was imposed on a crew who urinated on a towpath in full view of the general public.
- A half-hour delayed start was imposed on a singles competitor who was found to have aided a club-mate in another class, contrary to the spirit of the rules.
- A half-hour time penalty was imposed on a team whose supporters opened lock gates for their paddlers and closed them in front of following crews, despite requests to wait before doing so, contrary to the spirit of the rules.
- A half-hour time penalty was imposed on a crew whose supporters ignored a race official's instruction not to park on a coned road at a portage.
- A ten-minute stop-and-wait penalty was imposed on a crew whose support crew was found carrying their paddles on a portage.
- A ten-minute penalty was imposed on a crew that used an item from their compulsory kit early in the race and failed to replace it in a timely manner.

**Supporting Instructions (4-Day paddlers only)**

This applies to Junior Doubles, Vet/Junior, Singles and Endeavour.

Severe congestion and over-crowding at portages have resulted in these restrictions.

Supporter and Car restrictions – armbands and car stickers

Each boat in the Stages (4-day) classes is limited to 2 support vehicles and 4 support crew. Four arm bands and two vehicle stickers will be given to each crew with their boat number at Devizes. Stickers must be hung from the interior mirror in the support vehicle. Arm bands must be worn at portages, camp sites and at the finish at Westminster. To avoid congestion only one vehicle and two support crew may ever be present at the same time at any one portage. Extra supporters are not permitted even if they do not arrive by car.

Each team is permitted one additional Team Leader vehicle. The Team Leader must pick up a vehicle sticker and arm band in person at Devizes. The Team Leader must wear the arm band as above.

Restrictions at Portages

At a portage, only supporters with an arm band may provide food and drink or other physical support to competitors. "At a portage" is defined as "anywhere along the racing line near the water's edge". The racing line is defined as "any point where a crew exits the water to wherever it chooses to get back in and the length of the towpath in between". Only support crew vehicles displaying a valid sticker may go to a portage. For vehicles, "at a portage" means the nearest car park to the portage or any road adjacent to the portage. Designated sticker-only car parking may be signposted or otherwise notified to supporters.

Spectators who are not providing direct support to a crew

The Organisers urge other spectators to avoid portages and go to alternative viewing places such as bridges, river-side or canal-side roads and other open ground near the water.

Campsites

There will be Sticker-Only car parking areas at the stage stops at Newbury, Marlow and Ham.

At stage stops only supporters with armbands may approach the campsite and only to hand over camping equipment. No supporters are allowed in or around the campsite.

Entrants in the Junior Doubles class must erect their own tents, assemble beds and prepare all their food without any outside help. Outside assistance is not permitted and will be penalised.

Westminster.

At Westminster only supporters with armbands will be permitted between the London Eye and Westminster Bridge. Others should stay upstream of the Bridge or downstream of the London Eye.

Supporters may not disturb the time-keepers at any point, for example by shouting or screaming at their crews.

Under no circumstances can supporters use banners on Westminster Bridge. (This is not a DW rule but imposed by London Transport and Westminster City Council.)

Each breach of the restrictions on supporters will receive a 30 minute time penalty. Repeated breaches will result in disqualification.

If a specific crew cannot be identified, the penalty will be applied to the team or organisation concerned.