



1948-2010 - Celebrating 62 Years of Personal Endeavour

April 2010

The Toughest Easter You Could Ever Have Devizes Westminster 2010 – The Canoeist's Everest

Over Easter 2010, over 560 kayakers will set out from Devizes having completed months of training to participate in the UK's toughest, open to all endurance event – the 62nd annual Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon.

BBC Blue Peter presenter and Amazon canoeist Helen Skelton briefly considered taking part before deciding to delay saying maybe next year. We'll look forward to that.

James Cracknell, Olympic Gold Medallist, took part last year, and reflects "I'm glad I did it in a balmy year. The Devizes to Westminster is as tough a 24 hours as I've ever had but the bacon butty at Westminster makes it worthwhile," says Cracknell.

Weather conditions are looking challenging with heavy rain forecast and a steady flow on the river. For competitors looking to win these are ideal conditions to push the course record of 15 hours and 34 minutes that has stood for over 30 years.

For most, it's the culmination of months of obsessive, dedicated training. The event takes canoeists to the limit of mental and physical endurance, battling against the steady and inevitable onset of physical depletion. It is the longest non-stop kayaking marathon in the world.

The non-stop race covering 125-miles starts on Saturday 3 April. No sleep, no rest, eating and drinking on the move. Non-stop means non-stop. The fastest complete the course in around 17 hours, others will take around 24-hours, happy to have completed one of the toughest, open-to-all endurance races on the planet.

The course sets out from Devizes, heading along the Kennet & Avon Canal to Reading, then down the Thames to Teddington ending just downstream of Westminster Bridge.

The four-day race, for juniors, is equally demanding, starting on the 2 April, completing the course over four stages to finish on 5 April, Easter Monday. Open to anyone over 15 years of age – many schools take part – you'll need to train for at least six months if you're new to paddling.

For more information about Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon or to follow the race online over the Easter weekend visit www.dwrace.org.uk

For more information, an interview or photographs contact Peter Hutchison on peter.hutchison@ukonline.co.uk or 07736 424200.

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