

# GREAT RIVER RACE

## REGULATIONS & LONG GUIDANCE NOTES

Every crew member participating in the Race does so at their own risk, including any loss, injury or damage to property or persons.

It is the responsibility of the Boat-Captain to ensure that every crew member, including the passenger and cox, has fully read and understood the **Rules and the Regulations & Guidance Notes** prior to boarding their boat to take part in the Great River Race. In all, the term 'crew' includes the passenger and the cox.

Each boat participating in the Great River race shall have a member of its crew designated as its captain. The captain shall be responsible for ensuring that every crew member is kept fully aware of all rules and regulations in respect of participating in the race and kept up-to-date with any instructions issued by the organisers. Captains shall use their best endeavours to ensure that all crew members act in accordance with rules and regulations and in the best interests of the race.

Each boat shall have a minimum of four oars/paddles and carry a passenger and a cox except for certain classes, such as paddled boats, where the carrying of a passenger is specifically not required. The outriggers and rafts are not designed to carry passengers and strapping on a temporary seat to carry a passenger has safety implications and is not acceptable.

Boats without a passenger will still be required to have a cox. Eligibility of the type of paddle-craft must be agreed with the GRR via [info@greatriverrace.org.uk](mailto:info@greatriverrace.org.uk). The paddling community, in suitable outriggers and rafts, will be eligible for the Paddle Power Trophy but none of the other GRR racing trophies.

In all boats, coxes and passengers are not allowed to help propel the boat except if they have exchanged places with a rower. This exchange is permitted as long as it does not change the profile of the boat, such as age or gender.

All Junior competitors must be registered by their compulsory adult (over 18) passenger/cox and have an adult as part of the crew.

Participation in the Event is personal to the teams that have been entered prior to the race and accepted by the Race-Organisers. You are strictly prohibited from swapping, selling or transferring or offering to sell, swap or transfer the place in the Event or allowing any other boat and crew to wear your Event number.

### **BEFORE RACE DAY:**

- Every crew must secure public liability insurance up to £5 million for any one claim and for any loss, injury or damage to property or persons (including all persons aboard the

craft). Any boat not covered by the required insurance shall be deemed not to have entered the race and not to have any involvement in it.

- To use the Craning or Towing Service you must book in advance through the website. Those crews who book towing and/or craning will receive Tow and/or Crane Cards with full instructions. Note that while every endeavour is made to look after your boat, towing is strictly undertaken at your own risk. The beach immediately downriver of the slipway will be used by all craft arriving by our towing service and any other entries coming by river or launching at Millwall early.
- Crews should bring launching trolleys. There will only be a few trolleys available at Millwall and Ham.
- Overnight security on Friday will be provided at Millwall Slipway.
- There is car parking at WestFerry Print Works opposite Millwall slipway for those who have booked via the website.
- There is carparking at Ham on Friday and Saturday night. This must be booked through the website.

## **EQUIPMENT TO BE CARRIED BY EVERY BOAT**

- It is an absolute requirement that suitable Personal Flotation Devices (PFD/life-jackets) must be worn by all under 18s. Although it is preferred that all other crew wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFD/life-jackets) they must at least have them in their boats close at hand and must be able to put them on quickly if required to do so. If crew members choose not to wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFD/life-jackets) they do so totally at their own risk.
  - Your boat must have 20 feet of strong line attached to a strong point on the boat ready for towing
  - Carry 2 bailers of at least 1 litre capacity each.
  - You should minimise all valuables and what you do take should be carried in waterproof bags.
  - Drinking water and sun screen
  - The ICIs, Bridge plan and relevant papers issued to you at Registration
  - A flag of at least 3Ft x 2ft) which must fly freely
  - A mobile phone with a list of numbers relevant to the race

## **RACE DAY:**

- All crews must conform with the Port of London Authority byelaws on abuse of drugs and alcohol while on land and while racing.

- Facilities at the Start - food, refreshments, loos & ambulance services will be available at Millwall Slipway.
- There is limited space at the slipway entrance, so trailers and cars must be removed as soon as launching is complete. Please avoid inconveniencing others launching. There is car parking available at WestFerry Print Works for those who have booked via the website.
- **Registration** on race day is at Millwall. If you are launching elsewhere a member of your crew must still register at Millwall. There will be a short stay area provided at the Westferry Printworks car park to help with this.
- Registration desk availability will be advised before the race. This depends on the tidal conditions dictating the start time of the race.
- You must complete the Registration Form which can be downloaded from the website under the Services & Forms tab and bring the unsigned form to the Registration desk at the Millwall start where your signature will be witnessed.
- At Registration, crews will be given a flag showing their Race number to be attached firmly to the portside of the boat using the clamp provided. They will also be given waterproof envelopes containing a laminated race number which the passenger or cox must clearly display on crossing the Start and Finish lines, a laminated map of the bridges showing the arches to be used, Individual Craft Instructions, ICIs, showing the crew's Start Time and for the crews that have booked to be craned out at the finish at Ham, they should have their craning card. The flag, clamp and laminated race number must be returned to the Race Administration tent at the end of the race in exchange for GRR certificates.
- **Scrutineering** – Before you launch scrutineers will check boat eligibility and compliance with rules by asking each crew a set of questions and examining the physical state of boats and the designated equipment. There will be a Scrutineer moving around the slip to check the physical state of boats. Along the course, boats will also be checked by an Umpire afloat or on shore for continuous eligibility, and observance of the rules, including flying a flag freely.
- A flag (minimum dimensions 3ft x 2ft) must be flying freely on racing boats at all times.
- Rotation within the boat by the cox or passenger with rowers is permitted, as long as this rotation does not change the class in which the crew is entered, e.g. a mixed or veteran crew. No crew member may be embarked or disembarked en route. Any boat going to shore during the Race for any reason will be disqualified and withdrawn from safety cover.
- The course is approximately 21.6 miles long and you will need to pace yourselves carefully but you may not land or accept outside assistance unless you are withdrawing from the Race.

## **LAUNCHING:**

- The beach will be overseen by Marshals who will be there to adjust moorings and help crews to launch. It is **imperative that you retrieve your boat from the beach before the rising tide prevents access.**
- You MUST be afloat at least 50 minutes before your Start Time.
- The Beachmaster will have volunteers to help with the launching. With the restrictions on river space in the vicinity of the Marshalling and Start areas, it may be necessary to restrict launching. Please cooperate with them and listen to the announcements.
- To facilitate launching, entrants will be called forward in groups of Race numbers by handicap, beginning with low numbers, so please listen out for loudspeaker announcements calling you to come forward to the pontoon. These arrangements are designed to ease congestion. Please cooperate with the Marshals.
- A professional modular floating pontoon, wide enough for two way traffic and accessed from the slipway, will be installed from which boats can be boarded. Once launched, please get your boat clear as soon as possible. Access to the floating pontoon will be controlled from the slip end to avoid overcrowding.
- Unassisted launching will also be possible from the slip adjacent to the Poplar, Blackwall & District Rowing Club, downstream at Ferry Street, London E14 3DT. There will be no special parking arrangements in this area and competitors will be doing so at their own risk.

#### **THE START:**

- Although you will be under close supervision by the safety fleet you should note: PLA Woolwich Radio number 020 3260 7711 for unforeseen emergencies whilst afloat only.
- Competing boats must follow the instructions given by Marshals or Safety Boat Crews. Non-compliance will result in a time-penalty or in serious cases disqualification of the crew.
- All competitors are asked to pay attention to announcements, as the Start time might be brought forward or delayed, according to river conditions. This would affect the start times printed in your ICI.
- After launching you should head towards the designated waiting area at the direction of the Start Marshals. In this location you will find buoys and pontoons which you can moor against. Please do not moor on Masthouse Terrace Pier prior to the race starting as this is reserved for the Safety Boat Fleet.
- The Port of London Authority will impose an area of restricted navigation around the start area. Consequently you must remain in this area at all times. This area will be enforced from 40 minutes before the start.
- If you move into the restricted area from the south side of the River after this time you will be stopped and miss the Race.
- If you are launching from a venue south of the River please make sure you are in the waiting area before the restricted navigation comes into effect.

- Competitors must ensure they are within the waiting area by 20 minutes before their handicap start time. From then on, follow the directions on your laminated Start Guide and Start Layout.
  - • 8 minutes to your start - leave waiting area and drift upriver towards 5-minute marker
  - 5 minutes to your start - drift upriver past 5-minute marker. A Marshal boat will be in this area regulating traffic
  - 2 minutes to your start - The Marshal will call you forward. Drift upriver, be prepared to back paddle to hold well clear of the Start line.
  - 1 minute to your start - The Starter will call you forward to the Start line
  - Cox prepares to show Start Number as boat crosses the line
  - The Starter will instruct you to "GO"
  
- The width of the Start line allows for entrants to pass at least four abreast.
- No boat may enter the start area (defined as being between the 5 minute buoys and the start-line) more than five minutes before its start time to avoid blocking the passage of other boats. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a significant time-penalty.
- Entrants start in rising numerical sequence and any boat crossing the Start line ahead of its correct numerical sequence may be subject to penalty.
- You may overtake a lower- numbered boat only if remaining behind would result in a late start.
- Any boat missing its start time must wait for the Starter's instruction to allow them to start.
- There will be no handicap compensation for a delay if it is the fault of the crew, although timing over the course will be unaffected.
- If your boat starts early and is allowed to continue, it will be penalised on handicap, by the amount of time it has gained, plus a fixed penalty of one minute if the advantage exceeds 30 seconds.
- Any delayed boat attempting to start after the last legitimate starting boat will be stopped and NOT allowed to race.
- The Starter and Marshals are all highly experienced and their instructions must be listened to and obeyed. Their sole concerns are Race safety and efficient administration.

#### **NAVIGATION ON THE RIVER:**

- A PLA Notice to Mariners will have warned other river users of the Race but the normal rules for navigating on the river still apply to competitors.
- The Race is governed by the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, and in particular the following apply: The crew of every boat

shall maintain a good look-out at all times taking care to ensure that progress of vessels coming up astern is watched as well as those ahead.

- Once racers have started, if it is necessary to stop crews racing, the Safety Boat fleet will show Red Flags as per the Red Flag Racing Instructions. All crews must cease racing if red flags are flying on the marshals' and safety boats.
- Competitors are required to give consideration to the requirements of other river users and whenever changing course you must watch out for oncoming vessels and overtaking vessels and take extra care not to obstruct their progress. This applies also to the inshore buoyed stretch between Putney and Syon Reach, which is there to enable non-competing rowers to practice unhindered.
- The cox must remember to keep looking behind especially through the bridges.
- All boats shall keep as close to the right (North/starboard side) of the river as possible at all times but must keep to the left of all the islands, piers and fixed moorings lying off the North bank. Non-compliance may result in disqualification.
- Keep to the right of all Safety & Marshals boats, (as they mark the permitted course) unless they are involved in a rescue.
- It is essential that slow boats keep well inshore to allow room for others to overtake.
- No boat shall pass through any bridge arch other than those marked on the Bridges Plan provided at Registration and must not pass through any closed arch - these will be marked by three red discs at the points of an equilateral triangle with the apex downwards. Your safety and the safety of other river users is of the utmost importance. A laminated bridge map will be provided at Registration.
- You must not overtake whilst passing under a bridge. If more than one craft is heading for a bridge arch, the overtaking craft - in other words the craft coming up from behind/astern - must give way, slow down or stop.
- In other parts of the river, overtaking boats shall ensure that they keep clear of the boats that they are overtaking. They should not attempt to pass between two boats or inshore unless there would be at least 2m between their oars (blades) and those of the boats they are overtaking. They shall take full account of conditions ahead that might force the boats ahead to alter course or slow down.
- Boats being overtaken shall ensure that they act with consideration towards those who are overtaking and not take any action that would make overtaking more difficult or dangerous.
- At **Richmond Lock & Weir** (RL&W) - all rowers / coxes please note that you will be at risk and must not go through the arch until the sluices are fully raised as debris can drop out on the way up. Do not pass the PLA and Safety Boats at the head of the Race - there will be a marshal to direct you - please follow all instructions given. Any boat ignoring this instruction will be disqualified.

- No boat-crew/cox shall act in an aggressive or threatening manner towards any other boat or race official.
- In the event of a collision, all of the boats involved shall stop immediately and exchange details with each other. The cox of each boat shall note down the Race numbers of the boats involved, the precise location of the collision and the time that it occurred. These details should be passed to the Race organisers if requested. None of the boats may resume racing until the other boat/s involved have confirmed that they have noted the details and are safe to continue.

### **RACE SUPPORT SAFETY SERVICES**

- The Race will be patrolled in sections by safety craft under the control of Chris Lowe, Northern Exposure, Race Safety Officer, who will be in constant radio communication with all units on a dedicated channel.
- The Safety fleet, comprising low freeboard, suitably equipped RIBs or similar craft, (showing a flag with the word SAFETY in white on a black background) will patrol the Race on a rolling basis and are there to provide emergency assistance. Their priority is people not belongings. We cannot accept any liability for ANY personal items, so please keep them to an absolute minimum. All safety boats will carry a first aid kit.
- The Port of London Authority will have a number of patrol boats covering the course and Ambulance units will be situated at the Start and Finish.
- If your boat is swamped, you must stay with it and await rescue. Do not try to swim to shore.
- If your craft is immobilised for any reason - and you need urgent assistance - your cox should cross and uncross arms above his/her head and, if possible, wave a piece of white clothing.
- In the event of a serious incident a large plain RED flag will be raised at the scene by a Safety Boat. On seeing this, all competing boats must stop racing, not overtake and adopt a single file through the area. Racing may continue when the RED flag has been passed and no other is in sight.
- PLA launches or one of the Safety Marshal's fleet will be positioned at pre-determined points identified as presenting a potential hazard and their job is to guide the competitors through their particular area and to keep them to the North side of the river.
- It is important that competitors follow the instructions of the safety fleet and most are fitted with CCTV to enforce this.
- **Below Lambeth Bridge** - If your boat / crew gets into difficulties here (i.e. man overboard (MOB), boat foundering/swamping or capsizing) which prevent you from continuing safely without help, you will be recovered by a safety boat and taken to the nearest ERV, Emergency Rendezvous Point. This will count as a retirement, and you will not be allowed to continue in the Race. Your boat may be towed to the Finish line. The crew should be prepared to make their own way to the Finish. Please note we cannot accept responsibility for any damage caused to your boat should it be taken under tow by a safety boat, although every care will be taken. Do ensure that a bow line is attached

to a strong point to cover this eventuality. Remember if boats are towed, towing will be undertaken only at the boat owner's risk, including any loss, injury or damage to property or persons (including any persons aboard the craft).

- **Above Lambeth Bridge** - In this area, you will be assisted with recovery by a safety boat. You may then be allowed to continue in the Race if the boat is deemed to be in a safe condition to do so. At any point on the course, a safety boat may instruct you not to continue if they feel it would not be safe. Their decision is final.
- When approaching **Hammersmith Bridge**, coxes should aim to pass under a point between the words 'Hammersmith' and 'Bridge' (clearly visible on the bridge's superstructure) to avoid the possibility of being swept northwards towards Dove Pier.
- Between **Chiswick Bridge and Isleworth** it may be necessary to halt the Race to give time for the curtains at Richmond Lock and Weir to be raised. All competitors should follow the safety boat instructions but NOT pass the flag or overtake other competitors until the Red Flag is lowered and the Race restarts, unless otherwise instructed.

**BOAT RETRIEVAL:** Advice to be confirmed

#### **THE FINISH:**

- The Finish Line will be marked by a FINISH notice prominently displayed on a boat moored at Hammerton's Ferry on the Twickenham (North) side of the river and by a pole flying a FINISH flag on the Ham bank.
- It is important that the overall finish period is not unduly lengthy; any competitors arriving at Putney after the tide has turned will be required either to take their boat ashore there or accept a tow to the finish. A sweeper boat will follow the Race to keep an eye on stragglers.
- The river will be closed to all non-competitor traffic (including support boats) between the downstream end of Eel Pie Island and the upstream end of Glover's Island during the race. Any non-competing craft in the closure area will not be allowed to leave the area until it reopens.
- The Finish Scrutineers will check that every boat is carrying a cox and a passenger and that crews conform to the individual rules of each class entered. Transgressions may result in disqualification.
- Changing and shower facilities will be available at the TYM Campsite, a ten minute walk away. Portaloos, a variety of food stalls and bar will be positioned in the riverside area in front of Ham House.
- Parking at the Finish – you must park in the designated field 100 yards up Ham Street which has ample space and will be patrolled from midday Friday to midday Sunday. All vehicles must have a valid permit displayed at all times. Parking permits can be downloaded from the website.
- The field will be marked with designated areas for boats / trailers and vehicles. Please follow the instructions of the volunteer Marshals and Security



Officers and do not leave vehicles parked in the wrong areas. Please note that vehicles and contents are left here entirely at the owners' risk and that the gate into the field will be locked from 8pm every evening from Thursday through to Saturday for security purposes.

#### **POST RACE:**

- Disputes Procedure - Should any of the competitors consider another boat has acted in breach of the rules in a way as to endanger the safety of other boats or themselves and, if they consider this breach to be of sufficient severity, they should inform the organisers within 30 minutes of the last boat crossing the finish line. Breaches of rules may result in time penalties, or, in extreme cases, disqualification of the boat concerned.
- In the event of a reported infringement of the rules, instructions or a collision, a Disputes Committee comprising three members with good Race experience, including a member of the Great River Race Trust, will be convened as soon as possible. The Committee will be provided with all the information available. They are authorised to call members of the crews involved to elaborate on the information. Crew members will conform to any such request. The Committee shall come to a conclusion as to culpability on the part of all parties and rule accordingly. This decision will be final, there will be no right of appeal and, once taken, the matter will be closed.
- Any unacceptable behaviour identified on Race Day in terms of abuse of sites, people, property or facilities will result in the offending team being disqualified.
- Prizegiving - The ceremony will be held at Ham riverside as soon as all award winners are known, so please listen for announcements.
- Post-Race Party The post-Race party will be held on Saturday evening, in the main marquee on Ham riverside. Music will be provided from 18.00hrs, and caterers will be around all evening - as will be a fully licensed bar.
- Lost Property - Whilst we want you to enjoy yourselves, the Great River Race cannot be held responsible for any personal belongings lost or stolen during the Race Weekend. So, please keep an eye on all personal property at all times whilst on GRR Sites.
- Please can we ask that you place all litter in the bins provided at the Start and at the Finish. Your cooperation on this is much appreciated. We have to hand back all Start and Finish sites in good order and the Great River Race Trust charity will be penalised if the owners are not satisfied. We would really appreciate it if you could take your personal litter away with you and not leave it to the few GRR volunteers to clear on Sunday morning.

#### **PENALTIES SUMMARY:**

The race-organisers do not want to make this race over-regulated as this would change to its whole character. However, they do need to take account of the risk of some competitors deliberately ignoring the rules of the race. To be fair to the

majority of participants who do try to avoid rule-breaking, they have therefore introduced a series of penalties to be imposed in serious cases. While some serious infringements of the rules may result in disqualification, other lesser misdemeanours may result in time penalties.

Set out below, are recommended penalties for the different types of infringement of rules etc.. It should be noted that while these are recommendations, they will be reviewed by the Disputes Committee which may or may not change the penalty if they consider that in question does not match the severity of the offence.

1. Failing to comply with instructions given by Safety Marshal  
**Disqualification**
2. Abusive behaviour to GRR officials, marshals or safety boat crews  
**Disqualification**
3. Not following instructions given by marshals at Richmond half-tide Lock  
**Disqualification**
4. Under 18 crew-members not wearing PFDs **Disqualification**
5. Not having all required equipment on board **Possible Disqualification**
6. Not being covered by the required insurance **Disqualification**
7. Being in start area prior allotted time **TP 5 mins**
8. Crossing the start line more than 30 seconds early **TP 1 min plus adjustment of handicap equal to the advantage gained.**
9. Failure to display race-numbers clearly **Time not recorded**
10. Passing through wrong bridge arch **TP 5 mins**
11. Deliberately obstructing an overtaking boat **TP 5 mins**
12. Failure to fly flag freely Per each reported incident **TP 5 mins**
13. Crew members rowing or paddling who are not part of the class entered. Per reported incident **TP 5 mins**
14. Coxes using their steering paddles or oars to help propel the boat while coxing Per reported incident **TP 5 mins**
15. Overtaking too close to another boat **TP 5 mins**
16. Overtaking under a bridge **TP 5 mins**
17. Not stopping after a collision **TP 15 mins**