

Devizes to Westminster Easter weekend

Admin Information

Devizes to Newbury	34 miles
Newbury to Marlow	36 miles
Marlow to Ham	38 miles
Ham to Westminster	17 miles



The Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race

The Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race starts in Devizes, Wiltshire, finishing just downstream of Westminster Bridge in central London, opposite the Houses of Parliament. The race has been held annually over the Easter Weekend since 1948.

The race is 125 miles long and has 77 portages. The first 52 miles are along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, the next 55 miles are on the River Thames to Teddington. The final 17 mile section is on the tidal portion of the Thames.

Useful links:

- Devizes to Westminster Race <http://www.dwrace.org.uk/>
- Hammer Nutrition <http://www.hammernutrition.co.uk/>
- Contact list
- All information on the DW website for supporters and paddlers.

Start/Finish Locations

Location	Post code
Devizes Wharf	SN10 1EB
The Hourglass, Devizes Marina, Horton Ave, Devizes	SN10 2RH
Westminster Bridge, south side	SE1 7GL

In Devizes

- a. Boat preparation and equipment check
- b. Compulsory kit check
- c. Spares pack handed to support crews – paddle, rudder, rudder wires, thumb nuts

Check in: It will include:

- a. Registration of crews – ID wristbands, race numbers, ID for support crews (2 per car)
- b. DW Officials Briefing for all support crews

1. Communications: you need

- a. WhatsApp group
- b. Email group
- c. Contact list
- d. Mobile phones – charged overnight by support crew, input emergency DW number and support crew numbers
- e. Trackers issued by DW – website url on DW website. For more information read <http://www.dwrace.org.uk/paddinfotracking.html>

2. Kit and equipment

A. Boats

- a. Checked by crews.
- b. Spares for repairs – rudder, rudder wire, thumb nuts, paddles, seats
- c. Tool kit in cars - screwdrivers (Phillips and flat head, large and small) Spanner, Multi-tool, scissors for tape, pliers)

B. Kit

- a. Paddles
- b. Personal Flotation Device
- c. Cagoule
- d. Spray Deck
- e. Spares – dry kit for possible kit change or swim
- f. Spare kit – in your partner's support car (each car has spare kit for both paddler)
- g. Compulsory kit bag in boat in bag – see list of what needs to go in it.
- h. Leggings and tops
- i. Shoes (spare pair in case yours break?)
- j. Pogues/paddling gloves
- k. Sunglasses/hat/suntan lotion
- l. Dry/warm kit - Shower kit/dry robes /towel / woolly hat / gloves / clothes etc
- m. **Support crews:** torch, fuel, bottles, food, Wellies / waterproofs/ umbrella/ warm change of clothing
- n. Drinks system, powders, gels & refill system, refill bottles plus spare bladder

3. Safety and Wellbeing

- a. Sleep – As much as possible!
- b. Nutrition – All food and drink to be supplied by support crews.
- c. Hygiene – hand sanitiser / soap / Milton for water systems overnight
- d. Health - tummy aches, blisters, aches and strains, headaches (dehydration?) – don't ignore it, clean it, stretch it, strap it, water it, feed it, warm it, report it.

4. Hydration & race food.

- A. Hydration – Some teams use Camelbacks during the race and training, either 2lt or 1.5lt (other crews may use bottles). Paddlers need 0.5-0.75lt of water per hour. A 1.5lt camel back should last them 2hrs. **Support crews should aim to refill camelbacks every 2 hrs.** 2 litre packs shouldn't be filled – 1.5lt at a time is fine but a larger pack is easier to fill.
- B. Shakes during racing – “Perpetuum” – a powder added to water that acts as a liquid food (carbohydrate) so they are replenishing during the race as they won't have time to do it at the end of the race. It can also be used in a gel format during portages.
<http://www.hamernutrition.co.uk/perpetuem-79-c.asp>
- C. Shakes for Recovery – similar to Perpetuum but used immediately after the race to help the body recover <http://www.hamernutrition.co.uk/recovery-drinks-48-c.asp>
- D. Recovery drinks mix with milk – flavoured milk shakes
- E. Electrolytes – help paddlers absorb water in the gut – particularly helpful if they are not drinking enough or it is very hot - <http://www.hamernutrition.co.uk/electrolyte--endurolytes-120-capsules-11-p.asp>
- F. You can buy in single sachets which is worth it for paddlers wanting different flavours etc.
- G. Snacks – During the racing you need to replenish your energy constantly so that your body doesn't start using its reserves. Bananas, hot Cross buns with honey, flapjacks etc.
- H. For some paddlers this works – for some it is not recommended, the snacks are taken during the racing as they can be hard to eat / process during exercise. The powders / Gels are more than sufficient while they are in the boat.
- I. Once off the water – clean hands and eat snacks until hot meal is ready (within the hour)
- J. Warm breakfasts, warm drink, warm supper

5. Start site info

At Devizes: (SN10 1EB) Entrants and supporters in the Senior Doubles race will only have the use of the Scout Headquarters on Good Friday night. Under no circumstances may boats be taken into the buildings.

Devizes Bed & Breakfast Syndicate 01380 620660.

www.devizes.org.uk Devizes to Westminster 2019 Advice to Competitors

Newbury: (RG14 5JQ) Not far from Devizes and less busy if you've left booking accommodation too late!

Visit Newbury: - 01635 30267. www.visitnewbury.org.uk/accommodation

6. Finish at Westminster.

(St Thomas's Hospital, County Hall, London Eye).

THERE IS NO PARKING FOR MINIBUSES OR OTHER HIGH VEHICLES, CANOE TRAILERS OR VEHICLES WITH ROOF RACKS/CANOE RACKS AT ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL.

All such vehicles must use car parking available at the South Bank (by the Royal Festival Hall). Follow signposts to car parking.

NO BOATS MAY BE LOADED ONTO VEHICLES AT ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL. ALL BOATS MUST, ON FINISHING, BE CARRIED TO CAR PARKS AT THE SOUTH BANK.

Support vehicles that do not have roof racks may use St Thomas' Hospital car park. **Any attempt to load boats at the hospital will be penalised.** The St Thomas' Hospital car park is marshalled by DW staff. To reach St Thomas's Hospital pay and display car park, follow signposts. Follow the instructions of DW officials at the County Hall steps at all times. Although it may appear otherwise, the steps and walkway in front of County Hall are private property and the DW race requires the ongoing cooperation of the owners to be able to run the event to this location. Reception for crews is in the clearly marked "DW Village" within the grounds of St Thomas's Hospital.

PLEASE NOTE: NO DW PERSONNEL, WHETHER PADDLERS OR SUPPORTERS MAY ENTER ANY HOSPITAL BUILDING EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY. ST THOMAS' IS A MAJOR EMERGENCY CENTRE AND A WORKING HOSPITAL. TREAT THIS AREA WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT AT ALL TIMES.

General Information for Support Crews

1. The original concept of the DW race is that is a journey – from the start line, racing until the finish line under Westminster Bridge.
2. It is a race against the clock. The clock starts when they cross the start line. Only Race Officials can pause the clock. They are racing against the clock, and the weather.
3. Read the rules on the website and keep a look for any updates (locks, access, etc).
4. Race Marshalls & Officials–Please treat them with the utmost respect. Log any incident and take down times. The team will be penalised for support crew misdemeanours.
5. Portaging – Support crews to coordinate who goes to which one. Take note of those blocked to support crews.
6. DW Compulsory Kit – Paddlers must be prepared to be checked on any item at any time during the race. They must have every item on the list (see website) at all times in the boat packed away.
7. Support Teams' role in Portages – See the etiquette on DW and race websites. Your support crews need to be proficient in the process and need to practise on long Watersides B & C, Thameside 2. Some portages will be very congested, be patient, have a plan that one person jumps out while the car gets parked. Parking maybe some distance away.
8. It is critical that the support teams follow the race rules, no illegal parking, follow race marshal's directions, no arguing! Or the crew will be heavily penalised or disqualified – it happened last year to schools' crews!
9. Support team to keep the each other informed of crews' progress and status. Any problems call the each other for assistance.
10. Be aware of other boats coming through at speed – do not have your back to the traffic / flow. Always watch out. The river banks are narrow, busy, slippery and can be chaotic. Paddlers have priority and it has been known for support team members to end up in the water or knocked on the head by a faster boat/paddle.
Refilling water in the portages – Every portage. The easiest way to refill a camelback is to keep it on the paddler, stand behind them, while they kneel down, unscrew the camelback lid, use a 2lt bottle (e.g. Robinsons empty squash containers work well for fast pouring) to refill the camelback. The water should be made up with the correct powder/nutrition too. The paddler is eating at this opportunity. The other support team should be checking the boat / kit.
11. Food at portages – Try not to let paddlers touch food as their hands will be dirty. On that note do please read the advice on Weil's disease on the Waterside website.
<http://www.watersideseries.org.uk/weils.htm> If a paddler becomes sick during or after the race you should inform a Doctor you have been on the river.
12. Change of clothes – A recommendation is that support crews have plastic boxes in the backs of cars for all eventualities – woolly hats, sunhats, sunglasses, spare Cags, shoes etc. Be prepared

for paddlers to fall in the water (you need to advise them if they are losing body temperature and need a whole new change of clothes), for dropping temperatures, low energy levels etc. Equally be prepared for a heatwave!

13. Boat Repair / change equipment – Spares should be carried on the boat. Support crews need to know and are allowed to carry out basic repairs (Thumb nuts/ bolts / rudder). Support Teams should carry tools in their cars, spare paddles, spare seats & rudder, spare parts, repair kit, tape etc.
14. Kit inspections - can be carried out at any time during the race by Race Marshalls. It is part of the race – don't fight it! Be ready. Time the stoppage, request name of Marshall, document and inform support team of stoppage.
15. **Emotions – support teams need to be aware that paddlers will go through a range of emotions in the race – at portages they will be “in the zone” and may be moody / non-communicative / elated / angry / etc. They are likely to take it out on you rather than their partner. Be ready for it. Be clear if you have instructions / questions and be firm – talk at end of the portage, listen during portage. If a paddler asks for something during the portage and you do not understand make sure at the end of the portage before they paddle off that you know what they want, so you have it ready next time you see them. If (when) the paddlers yell, don't take it personally!**
16. Fuss and worry – you will, please try not to. Do not get in the way. Allow the momentum of the race to keep going in portages, they are not rest stops. Calmness, motivation, reassurance and being positive are important to the crews.
17. There will be problems, kit issues etc. Be as prepared as you can, if possible, put off to next portage when you are ready to deal with the issue.
18. At the next portage - Prepare an area for your crew – out of the way / off the race line – support crews work out where things are and when ready lead the boat / paddlers to area. Put boat down. Refill / kit change etc. Check the boat, fix the problem.
19. Call the other support teams if you require additional support, spare parts for the boats etc. They can support you, you support the crew.
20. Be prepared to be as tired as the paddlers – this is your race too! And it can be big stress, big effort, etc. You will get tired, driving & portaging is difficult, get help. Make sure you have lots of good rest before the weekend. Make sure you eat well, as well as your crew! Things will go wrong, it is all a bit mad....
21. Your vehicle – prepare your car – fuel, maps, phone chargers, satnav etc. Have boxes inside for wet kit / dry kits and an empty one that can be used to take items onto the portages. Rucksacks won't be fast enough to access. It can be quite a way from the car park with a fair bit to carry.
22. Support teams are advised to wear clothes they can run in on muddy river banks (sturdy trainers), stay warm, be prepared for different weather. Have spare kit for yourself. Make sure mobiles are charged. Do not drop expensive Mobile phones in river!
23. Trackers – The race will provide trackers for DW.
24. End of the race at Westminster Bridge – see website for parking details – it's good for crews to see you on the bridges for updates on distance left, know your bridges and distance to the finish! The tidal section is relatively short, and paddlers are unlikely to need support as there is no portages. Once your crew has finished you can carry their boat and take your paddler home! There is no medal ceremony as it will take a few days for results to be finalised. All results will be published on the website.

Any questions – just ask!