

# GET RACING

## **A quick guide to everything you need to know to take part in your first marathon or sprint race.**

There are two types of competition event – sprints (short races), and marathons (long races).

Most of the races are held on Sundays – race dates can be found on the website (Events > Club Calendar) and in the events list that is sent out with each newsletter.

Paddlers usually begin by taking part in small locally-organised **Summer Series** sprint regattas and then moving on to marathon races as their confidence increases. There are two series of marathons - the **Hasler series marathons** (during the summer) and the **Winter Series marathons** (during the winter). The most committed paddlers go on to take part in the **Nottingham Sprints** run by British Canoeing.

### ***1. THINGS PADDLERS & PARENTS NEED TO KNOW***

The arrangements vary according to what type of race it is and these will be covered in section 2, but some things are common to all marathon races and local sprints:

#### ***1.1 Arranging to Take Part***

A week or two before each race, the name and date of the race will be written on the white-board in the foyer of the clubhouse. If you would like to take part, discuss with your coach which boat you should use, then add your name and boat to the list.

We will usually send out an email a week or so before the race which will include any available links to the published race details, as well as details of the boat transport arrangements. Make sure you know who the Team Leader will be on the day as they will be your main point of contact.

The club will usually be closed when there is a Winter Series race or an Eastern-Region Hasler marathon. We are usually partially or fully closed for Summer Series races. We do not generally close for Nottingham Sprints or Hasler marathons in other regions. To be certain in any particular case, check the events list circulated with the newsletters and which can also be downloaded from the Events page of the website.

#### ***1.2 Costs***

There will be a seat fee (see sections for specific races). For all races a contribution of £1 is also asked from those whose boats are transported on the club trailer or by other members. You should ideally wear a vest in club colours (£15), though you may be able to borrow one for your first race - while you can race without a vest, you may not score any points without one!

### **1.3 What to Take with You**

Bring all the things that you would normally bring for canoeing – including a towel and dry clothes. Make sure in winter that you are dressed warmly enough up to the time you get on the water and have warm clothes to put on afterwards. Most venues have changing rooms and showers, but these may be out of use or restricted as a Covid precaution. You may want to consider purchasing a dry-robe. Bring water to drink and maybe a snack for before the race. You will not get home again until mid afternoon, so you might want to bring a packed lunch for after the race. Food (often BBQ and cakes) may be on sale at the race – refreshments may be very restricted at some venues due to Covid.

### **1.4 Getting there**

Children will normally be taken by their parents - there is a consent form for parents to complete if under-16s will be going to races without their family – download from the Document Library in the Members' section of the website.

Parents who are not accompanying their child to the race should ensure that they have the telephone number of the Team Leader. They should also make sure that the Team Leader has their contact details, if different to the details on the consent form.



### **1.5 Transporting the boats**

We meet at the clubhouse early in the morning to load the boats onto the trailer or car roof racks before travelling to the race. The time we need to meet depends on the start time of the race and how far away it is. The time you need to be at the club will be announced on the whiteboard and by email.

It is each paddler's own responsibility to make sure that the equipment they need (boat, paddle, buoyancy aid) is transported to race and brought back safely. Most boats travel on the club trailer, but you still need to be there to ensure that it is loaded, and to select your paddle and buoyancy aid, and then to help put it all away again afterwards.

If it really is not practical for you to come to the club on occasion, make sure that another member knows exactly what equipment and boat you need and is willing to see to it on your behalf. In some cases it may be possible to collect equipment from the club beforehand, but you will need to get a committee member to sign it out for you in the equipment borrowing book.



## 1.6 Spectating

While there are still concerns about Covid it has become usual to firmly discourage spectating. Junior participants can usually be accompanied by one family member.

## 1.7 Before and after your race

Normally, a briefing would be held for competitors on the day. During Covid, this information is being distributed by email - make sure you read it and ask your Team Leader about anything you don't understand.

When you arrive, seek out your Team Leader to let them know you have arrived. They may have your race number board for you, or will tell you what you need to do to get it. Get your equipment ready, put your number board on the boat and secure it with a pin.



When you get off the water after your race, make sure you move your boat out of the way. Ideally, get someone to help you load your boat on the trailer/car or at least put it near to the trailer with the other Stortford boats. Take any of your own items but leave club equipment (buoyancy aid, paddles) in the boat. You will probably want to go and get dry and changed as soon as possible. At marathon races it is traditional to supply free food for the competitors directly after the race - this may be suspended during Covid.

Your race number board will usually be collected from you as you finish the race. If not, make sure you give it to your Team Leader as soon as possible - if it is not handed in at the end of the race there will be a **£5 fine** which the club will pass on to you!

Once you have made sure that your board is handed back and any club equipment is safely loaded for the return journey, you should leave. As a Covid precaution, results are typically being posted online only and not displayed at the event. Try to check them as soon as you can, and contact your Team Leader promptly if you think there has been any mistake. There are usually trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each race, depending on the number of competitors. These would normally be given out at a prize-giving before going home, but this is not happening at the moment because of Covid. If you have won something it will probably be given to your Team Leader to pass on to you later.

All members who have used club equipment should arrange to meet at the clubhouse after to race to help with the unloading before going home, by which time it is usually mid to late afternoon.

## **2. SPECIFIC RACE INFORMATION**

This section covers the things which vary from race to race -

- a. Hasler & Geoff Sanders Marathon Races
- b. Winter Series Marathons - *to follow*
- c. Summer Series Regattas - *to follow*
- d. Nottingham Sprint Regattas - *to follow*

### **a. Hasler & Geoff Sanders Marathon Races**

The Hasler series is organised by British Canoeing on a regional basis – Stortford is in the Eastern Region. Paddlers are ranked by past performance into 9 divisions. New paddlers start in Division 9 and are promoted/demoted as necessary following each race. Most paddlers use racing kayaks, though a few use racing canoes. There are separate races for singles and doubles, arranged by division. Typical distances are 4 miles (Div 7-9), 8 miles (Div 4-6) and 12 miles (Div 1-3), and courses may involve one or more portages. As well as individual trophies for race winners, points are awarded to each paddler within each race and the best scores are added to give the overall score for the club. The placings at each event in the series determine the club's position in the Eastern Region Hasler league. Only the top few clubs from the region qualify to go to the national final in the autumn. (Club points and the Hasler final have been suspended for 2021 due to Covid).



Taking place alongside the Hasler marathons are the Geoff Sanders races – a separate series of shorter races for under 14s (typically 2 miles, no portages). Age is determined on 1st January. The Geoff Sanders races replace the former "Lightning" classes. There are now three classes: A, B and C, based on performance, with A being the fastest. Only under-12s can enter B and C.

**Venues** – The venues for Hasler/GS races in our region are Chelmsford, Cambridge, Bedford, Norwich, Leighton Buzzard, and Bishop's Stortford. Sometimes we send teams to out-of-region races too.

**Costs** – Race fees are set by the organiser and vary from race to race. Typical prices are £9 for seniors, £7 for juniors and £3 for Geoff Sanders. BSCC members can race using their Club Associate British Canoeing membership until they reach a high standard (Div 6+).

**Entries** - Race entries are made by the Team Leader. You can check who it is for any particular race by checking the Events list on the website or the one circulated with the newsletters. Entries need to go in on the Wednesday/Thursday before the race. If you can't get down to the club to add your name to the board, or if you were on the list but need to pull out, please contact the Team Leader as soon as possible via phone or email. During Covid, late entries are generally not possible. Once the club has entered you, the

Organisers will probably charge for the seat, and if this happens the cost will be passed on to you.

**At the race** – When you arrive, find the Team Leader will give you your race number – it will be a different number for each race. Do not go to the booking in desk yourself unless asked to do so by your Team Leader.