

# 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. Most venues have changing rooms and showers. There will be plenty of standing around before the race starts and afterwards, so make sure you are warmly dressed in winter. 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 – check with other paddlers whether this is likely.

### **1.4 Getting there**

Other members can often offer lifts between the clubhouse and the race. 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 (there is an equipment borrowing book for this purpose). Do make sure that you know the start time and location of the race!



## **1.6 Spectating**

Paddlers' families are encouraged to attend races and cheer us on. Many venues offer the opportunity of a pleasant walk along the tow path while the race is in progress, and in the summertime you can take a picnic.



## **1.7 At the end of the event**

When you have finished, get off the water and 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 there will usually be free food for the competitors directly after the race.

Almost all races now issue you with a number board to put on your boat, and it should be secured with a pin. The 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 can leave if you wish. As the results are worked out they will be put up on display – ideally you should stay long enough to check these and tell your Team Leader straight away if you think there has been any mistake. Most club members stay until the prize-giving, which may be some while after the races have finished. There are usually trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each race, depending on the number of competitors – if you have won a trophy but cannot stay to collect it, another club member will usually bring it back for you.

Members who have used club equipment should return to the clubhouse 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. Summer Series Regattas
- b. Hasler & Lightning Marathon Races
- c. Winter Series Marathons

For Nottingham Regattas, see section 3.

### **a. Summer Series Regattas**

A short series of local informal sprint regattas are run by the Flatwater Racing Association during the summer months. These events are particularly suitable for juniors and novices.

There are 16 classes: male and female in each of u10, u12, u14, u16, u18, u23, 23+ and veteran (35+). Racing is done in small groups of about 4 to 6 boats, determined by speed so that paddlers compete directly against those of similar ability. During each regatta paddlers will usually race about six times, over distances between 200m and 1000m. At least one of these is usually a crew race, and for these the more experienced paddlers are encouraged to partner the less experienced ones.



Paddlers score points for their performance in the singles races – these are added together to determine their position within their class on the day, and the regatta ends with the presentation of the medals. Trophies for each class are also given out at the last regatta of the year for performance across the series.

**Venues:** The usual venues for all of these events are Chelmsford, Hackney (Leaside), Cheshunt (Herts Young Mariners Base) and Bishop's Stortford.

**Cost and booking in:** A single seat fee of £5 covers all the day's races. Paddlers pay individually at the booking in desk at the start of the day and will be handed a number board. Although there is no late fee, we still need to know you are coming if at all possible, in order to plan boat transport and prepare number boards. If you don't manage to get your name on the board at the club by the previous Sunday, please contact club Sec Angela Aldam.

### **b. Hasler & Lightning Marathon Races**

The Hasler series is organised by British Canoeing on a regional basis – Stortford is in the Eastern Region. Paddlers (12yrs+) are ranked by past performance into 9 divisions. There is now also a Division 10 for younger paddlers. New paddlers start in Division 9/10 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.

Taking place alongside the marathons are a separate series of races in Lightning boats for under 12s (2 miles, no portages). To take part in this, you must be under 12 on the 1st January.

**Venues** – The venues for Hasler 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** – Hasler race fees are set by the organiser and vary from race to race. Typical prices are £8 for seniors, £6 for juniors and £3 for Lightnings. For Hasler races, adult paddlers need to join British Canoeing, otherwise an "Event Ticket" (£5) can be paid, but this can only be done once. BSCC members under age 18 can race without joining British Canoeing until they reach a high standard (Div 6).

**Entries** - Race entries are made by the Team Leader - this will usually be Ken Duncan for in-region races. 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. Entries can usually be made on the day, but cost more (usually an extra £5 "late fee"). 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 (usually Ken Duncan) who will give you your race number – it will be a different number for each race. Someone from BSCC (usually Treasurer Eddie Cooley at in-region races) will collect your seat fee. Do not go to the booking in desk yourself unless asked to do so by your Team Leader.

### **c. Winter Series Marathons**

From November to March, BSCC participates in the six races of the Winter Series organised by the Flatwater Racing Association. Instead of divisions, paddlers race in classes based on age (at the start of the series), sex and type of boat. As well as racing kayaks, there are classes specifically for canoes and GPs (General Purpose boats). Distances vary from 3 to 9 miles. Competitors can win trophies for individual performances at each race, and also score points for themselves and for the club. Within any one class, each paddler's best 5 results will be used to calculate their total score, so for maximum points it's best to race in the same class and the same doubles pairing for the whole series. At the last race, trophies are awarded for the entire series, and the overall positions of the clubs are announced.



**Venues** – The usual venues for all of these events are Bishop’s Stortford, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Cheshunt (Herts Young Mariners Base), Leighton Buzzard, Barking and Hackney (Leaside).

**Costs** – Winter Series Races cost £5 per person. Personal British Canoeing membership is not required - just club membership. There are no late fees.

**Arranging to Take Part in a Race** - Put your name on the board at the club by the previous Sunday - this is especially important if you want to use a club boat or put a boat on the trailer. If you make a late decision to race (or not to race), let Angela know.

**Booking in** - On arrival at the race, go and book yourself in at the desk, where you can pay your seat fee and (if relevant) trailer fee and be handed your board. If the board is not collected from you at the race finish, you must return it to the Stortford Team Leader before you leave, or you will be charged a £5 fine.

### **3. NOTTINGHAM SPRINT REGATTAS**

Nottingham sprint regattas are organised by the British Canoeing Sprint Racing Committee, with all classes of athletes competing from the lightening class right up to Olympic standard. Clubs from all over the UK attend.

There are five regattas a year April, May, June, July & September. The July regatta is an Inter Club event. The September regatta is the National Sprint Racing Championships.

They are held at the National Water Sports Centre at West Bridgeford, Nottingham.

Races are over 200m, 500m, 1000m & 2.5k; they are based on age and ability. Men’s, Men’s Veteran (over 35), Ladies, & juniors with four groups in each, A – D classes with A being the fastest and D being the slowest in group. For each class there are races in K1, K2 & K4’s depending on amount entered in each there is a heat and a final, over the weekend there are on average 220 races. There is one race of each distance normally for each class.

### 3.1 Booking your place

All entries have to be in two and a half weeks before each regatta, late entries can only be entered by the team leader at the team leaders meeting before the regatta starts on the Saturday, and then only if a lane is available late entries also cost more! The only exception to this is the long distance races these can be entered on the day.



Before you can enter for any of these events you need to be registered, this can be done by the team leader once you have a confirmed time under 3 minutes for males and 3 mins 15 for females over a 500m course. Adults and (juniors once in C or above) must be personal BCU members.

### 3.2 Race Costs (correct at April 2013)

all mini (u12) races	£5.25 per seat	Late entry	£1.00 extra, except K4
K1/C1 Jun/Sen	£5.25 per race	Late entry	£1.00 extra
K2/C2 Jun/Sen	£10.50 per boat, per race	Late entry	£2.00 extra
K4/C4 Jun/Sen	£21.00 per boat, per race	No late entry fee, incl hire of boat	

On crew boats you will be charged for the whole boat and you will be responsible for collecting any race entries from paddlers from other clubs who share your boat. If all paddlers are from BSF, the fee will be split on your invoice.



Race entry fees are payable at the regatta to the treasurer Eddie Cooley (or his stand-in if he is not available). You will get a detailed bill of the fees payable. Please be aware that, because the club pre-pays your entry, you will still be liable to pay the fee even if you don't come to the regatta or you miss your race. Late entry fees should be paid to Ken or Wendy immediately on the day.

### 3.3 Transport

Paddlers are responsible for arranging to get their own boat to the regatta. The club tries to arrange to take at least two K2s up there and these have to be shared.

### **3.4 Camping**

We camp on the water sport campsite as a club close to the regatta lake (although some members stay at various local hotels). The site is normally taken over by canoeists with each club having their own 'encampment'.

After the racing has finished on Saturday we all get back to the campsite to start the BBQ's, whatever the weather!!! It was snowing one April!! This is a chill-out time after the stress of the days racing. Some of us go up on the Friday prior to the regatta so we have two nights on the site the only difference being its fish and chips as opposed to a BBQ.

If electric hook ups are needed, it is essential to book well in advance. Fees for camping are paid direct to the site on entry.

The Nottingham Regattas give all paddlers a chance to meet their peers from clubs all over the county and watch the Olympic hopefuls of the future. The whole weekend is a sociable weekend and with races every three minutes there is always something to watch.