

BRITISH CANOE UNION

FLATWATER NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2007

Many apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter. Christine's steam driven computer needed to go away for a rest and is now in the process of retirement and replacement.

The Marathon and Sprint Committees have both met since the last edition of the newsletter and a number of items could well still be news for you.

One of the prime aims of both committees has been how we increase the numbers of active canoeists. There are many other features around this subject, keeping youngsters, how they are treated and trained and how paddlers of all levels and abilities, including the disabled, can be helped.

The purpose of the current discussion is centered upon how to help as many paddlers as possible and advertise just what flatwater canoeing is all about.

Dave Brown has come up with the idea of a pack, which will be a folder with bright clear inserts. This aspect is very strongly backed up by a special DVD which will show flatwater canoeing in simple and exciting terms. Some of the jaundiced will find this hard to believe but those of us who have seen the DVD as well as lots of other ideas over the past years sat up and took notice, as this IS the real thing.

The intention is that this pack including the DVD will be available to clubs and individual paddlers to use to increase their membership, their activity levels, stimulate sponsorship and just so Grandma will know what Johnny really does when he goes to the canoe club.

The costs of the initial production run of 10,000 are being totally provided by the two committees on an equal basis. These will be given to Flatwater clubs free of charge. Further copies will be made available and the cost is to be kept as low as possible. The initial supply should be available early in the New Year so watch this space and the Marathon website.

Which neatly leads on the fact that there is a new website up and running now created and operated by Tamsin Phipps. The address is www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk

This should be live by now as the projected date to start was 1.1.07.

Tamsin would like information and items for the web site of any kind that relate to Marathon Racing.

The web site should have more up to date information than can be contained in a newsletter of this type but the intention is that both should continue.

So, here we go again in the big *please* for you to put finger to keyboard. Christine and I have made this request for the last few years since we started to produce the newsletter and I know that Heather Brough used to issue the same plea for the years that she ran it. Not much comes in however and it seems to be the same old stalwarts who do help.

You may or may not recall that I offered a bottle of wine as a prize for the best article of last year. None of the articles received would have won a Pulitzer prize but both Alan Williams and Dave Enoch excelled in quantity with good informative articles so I have decided to give them both a bottle.

I repeat the offer for this year. This will not be plonk but a really nice claret, unless the winner would prefer the equivalent in some other beverage or indeed a donation to the charity or club of their choice.

You may have noticed that the Three Musketeers in the form of James Smythe, Steve Harris and Dyson Pendle are back in action and indeed have been since the end of the season with their training days despite the best efforts of too much water in some places. If you do not know about these and want to be involved and think you should be, contact any of these three and talk to them. Already some 87 paddlers have been involved and Ian Wynne has given the first of a series of talks.

Anyone seen D'Artagnan?

The following dates/races have been agreed as assessment races for GB team selection;

Royal K1	18 th March	
Worcester K2	29 th April	
Elmbridge, a special race,	6 th May	
Nottingham K2	20 th May	selection for World Cup One
Venue to be decided	17 th June	selection for European Championships, Sanabria, And Pontevedra

Wokingham Nationals K1 and K2. Aug. 18/19 Selection for Worlds

The selection policy for both the committees will appear in the new Racing Handbook which is due out shortly.

Each of the Marathon committee members is allocated a specific responsibility to try and ensure that all aspects of the committee remit are covered.

*Brian Gandy as chairman will try and keep order.

Di Bates takes over from Dave Enoch as secretary

*Dave Enoch takes over from Tamsin Phipps as treasurer/Nationals co-ordinator.

Mike Head remains as ranking officer

Peter Jones is the Lightnings Development officer

*Alan Laws will continue to edit the newsletter

Andy Rawson is the Hasler final co-ordinator

*Jim Rossiter remains as GB Team Manager

*James Smythe will compile the calendar and act as athlete development officer

*Dyson Pendle and *Steve Harris will act as development coaches.

*Denotes a GB team selector.

One of the main debates at the Marathon meeting was that of day tickets and the surrounding aspects. On the face of it the subject is disarmingly simple. Lets enable non-members to sample the joys of marathon racing before committing themselves. To enable the "come and try it" facility the day ticket was born.

This where the waters start to become muddied.

One of the corner stones of the whole BCU set up is that it is a members organisation.

Flatwater racing is organised on the basis that all competitors are members at the time of competing. There are various avenues to membership but the overall requirement is there.

The main reasons are that members pay for the costs of the organisation as a whole and that in the event of an incident the Public Liability insurance that comes as part of the membership package is there to protect.

The basis of the first reason is obvious. It is unfair for non-members to receive the benefits that the members subscriptions provide. The second in today's litigious world is equally clear.

The current rules of the MRC require Hasler race organisers to check on the day that the competitor is a member. This requirement is observed in the full spectrum of ways by organisers varying from the complete and full checking to completely ignoring it. There are various views on how to deal with the problem, as there is some sympathy with organisers who are volunteers and have enough to do without this additional bureaucracy being imposed on them. But is this requirement any different to all the others that are implicit in the organisation of such an event? Many believe not.

There are many and relatively easy ways of completing the checking especially with today's e-mail and photocopying facilities that exist as has been shown by those that do observe the rule.

Any views on this would be welcomed.

The HRM computer system has been updated and there is the suggestion that it should be compulsory for all Hasler events. Whilst this might cause some organisers a review of their arrangements it will make the overall upkeep of the race records and divisional operation very much easier. The MRC are still deliberating on this and as ever views are welcome.

To aid race organisers there are to be more seminars on this to be arranged. One has already been held with some success in the Southern Region. (Please also read the 6 point check list on a later page).

At Sprint regattas it is compulsory to wear club colours The MRC considered this for all Hasler events but concluded that whilst it was desirable it might not be easy to put into place effectively. So as a compromise it will be a requirement for paddlers at the National Championships and Hasler Final from 2007 onwards.

The Hasler final in 2007 is to be run by Pangbourne at Beale Park.

The venue for 2008 is still vacant. Any offers?

2007 National Championships is to be at Wokingham with 2008 at Worcester.

For the Annual Consultative Meeting the time before the meeting to send in proposals has been extended to 42 days before the meeting instead of 30. Please note this for the summer meeting.

As an adjunct to this meeting the committee are always looking at the development plan that they have in place. Indeed this has been in place for some years and is not just a paper exercise. The ideas that are there are put into place as quickly and effectively as time and money allow. The plan itself is in this newsletter for your information. If there is anything that you want to do to help to move any of these plans forward then that would be very welcome.

Similarly if there are constructive comments then equally the committee want to hear them.

The Sprint committee have confirmed that when races are cancelled due to circumstances outside of the organiser's control, such as bad weather, then race fees will not be refunded. There was a suggestion that regatta team leaders meetings be held on the Friday evening to make the organisers job a little less fraught and this was mulled over with the obvious argument of traffic on a Friday evening coming forward. The regatta committee have been asked to take soundings. No doubt you have a view?

Most of the committee members also have a specific job

Pete Moule Chairman

Mo Moule Treasurer

Cathy Wynne Secretary

Dave Brown and Chris Jones as Talent ID

Publicity and promotional Anne Hoile and Dave Brown

Alan Laws Newsletter

Regatta committee chairman Stan Cox

The other committee members continue with their coach and general duties roles

Viz; Laurence Oliver, Roland Lawler, Gordon Wycherley,

You will see in the forthcoming events schedule that there is a regatta scheduled for Eton although making the arrangements have been quite difficult. Watch the web sites and this newsletter for confirmation of the event. You will know that Holme Pierpont is scheduled for a change of funding situation in 2009. What this change will bring is as yet uncertain as there are many rumours from a to marina being built to it being turned into a swimming pool. After all how can we have had a National Watersports Centre without a swimming pool for all these years?

Alan Laws

Marathon racing standards

There is a view held amongst paddlers of a certain age who have been knocking around in the lower divisions of marathon racing for some time that the standards for racing have got faster. I decided to look at some of the figures to see if there is any truth in the matter, or whether this was just sour grapes from some grumpy old men and women who had just been beaten by a pair of 12 year old girls!

First port of call was the results of my own club marathon, Basingstoke Canal. I looked at the winning times and the median (Middle placed boat or arithmetic mean of the two) times of each division. See attached spreadsheet. A number of things stick out,

- 1) There is a general downward trend in both winning and median times for each division.
- 2) Division 6 and 7 singles are paddling at the same speed, and the top end of Div 8 wouldn't be disgraced in Div 6 either.
- 3) The top end of Div 7/8 has got very quick. (grumpy old paddlers notice these things because that's where they tend to hang out!)
- 4) Fields have got huge, necessitating splits starts (although these aren't shown in the results)

The Marathon Racing committee changed the rules last winter. Basingstoke Canal CC race was the first in the Southern Region under the new rules with automatic promotion to Div 6

on the day. So it was too early to see if these rules have any effect. I looked then at the results of Banbury Marathon. It is another canal based marathon, so not affected by vagaries of flow on the Thames. It also was the last race in the Southern region this year and so a chance to see what effect the new rules have had.

Looking at only 2 years results it is not possible to comment on any trends in speed, but again the singles in 7 and 8 are going faster than those in Div 6. As for the doubles, it wasn't just the first 7/8 boat which produced a blistering time! However, for all divisions except 9K1 and 7/8 K2 the gap between winner and median paddler has closed, the new rules are making for closer racing which is a good thing!

So, some suggestions.

Promote the top half of Div 7 to Div 6. That is anyone who achieved a better than median placing in singles in 2006.

Split Div 9, anyone who achieved a better than median placing in singles in 2006 can stay in Div 9 and the rest go to a newly formed Div 10.

Limit the range of division combinations which can paddle in doubles. A new Div 10 would enable Div 4 paddlers to race 7/8 K2.

Since it is now possible to get demoted after just one race, and there may be benefits for K2 paddlers to do that, anyone demoted from a higher division to complete a singles race in their new division before racing doubles in their new division.

Some clear guidelines on how the system for promotion from doubles works.

Hasler Race Management Programme to compare speeds of median paddlers for each Division.

Light blue touch paper and stand well back!

Liz Murnaghan

Top six tips for running a Hasler Marathon race:

1) Email wiki.daniels@googlemail.com to download the Hasler Race Management (HRM) program, which will include the latest promotions and demotions.

2) **Have a trial run to familiarise yourself/colleagues with the program before race day**, this shouldn't take long:

- a) enter, say, five K1's and five K2's;
- b) amend an entry (HRM amend button);
- c) delete an entry (HRM amend button);
- d) amend a number (HRM amend button);
- e) add some start times, try out the split starts;
- f) add some finish times;
- g) delete a finish time on the "Finishes" worksheet (HRM amend button);
- h) calculate times, calculate positions, promotions and points;
- i) add a time penalty;
- j) use the HRM printout button to print out some results (not the Excel printout button);

k) look at the html file that has been generated in the same location as your race file.

If you get stuck at any time, then look at the help (press the “?” on any dialog, or the “?” toolbar button).

3) On race day, remember that the most important thing for the paddlers is to see their time and result. Print off a set of results as soon as most of the data is entered and put it on your notice board. Remember, you can print off each division at a time and it doesn't matter if there are outstanding issues e.g. duplicate or missing numbers, more often than not, the paddlers will see this on the print outs and come and resolve the problem for you!

4) The html file for web pages, and the scrolling html file, are produced every time the positions, promotions and points button is pressed. You could link a second screen to the scrolling html file so that paddlers can see their times and positions as soon as you have entered the data and pressed the button. **However**, remember that computer monitors aren't easily seen in sunlight, so once most of the data is in print out the results as well. This will prevent crowding around the screen and allow paddlers to compare their times with others more easily.

5) Put the html file on your canoe club website as soon as possible, paddlers will want to check their times, and also their promotions and demotions.

6) Email the race .xls file to wiki.daniels@googlemail.com as well. We hope to have a new website up and running soon, the file will be used to keep the promotion and demotion list up to date, and to display all race results in one location.

TOP SIX TIPS FOR RUNNING A HASLER MARATHON RACE:

Race Organisers please read and keep this, it could save you time and stress. Wikki is there to help you, do not be afraid to ask for help.

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ROYAL CANOE CLUB

K1/K2 MARATHON - SUNDAY 26th MARCH 2006

We wish all the competitors a safe and successful race.

THIS IS ALSO A K1 ASSESSMENT RACE

For full details as to where the race will start see attached sheet.

- SIGN IN:** From **11.30 am** at Brunnel University Boathouse, Runnymede by French Brothers Boatyard.
- BRIEFING:** **12.15 pm**
- START:** **12.45pm**
- DISTANCE:** Runnymede: Approx 19 miles (including SIX PORTAGES)
- CLASSES:** **Runnymede**
Senior Men and Senior Women - K1 Open and Assessment
Senior Men and Senior Women - K2 Open
Mixed K2 Open
Junior Men and Junior Women K2 Open
(Separate prizes for Vets in K1, K2 and Mixed Open)
PLEASE NOTE THERE IS NOT A JUNIOR K1 RACE IN THIS EVENT.
- COST:** **£5.00** per seat for BCU Members . BCU Members should remember to have with them their current BCU Thames Licence, issued as part of your BCU Membership. If you have not received your Licence then you must make sure you carry with you, during the race, your current Membership Card. ALL ENTRY FEES PAYABLE ON THE DAY.

There will be an additional charge of **£3** for non-BCU Members or if a current BCU Membership Card is not produced. This additional charge includes a Thames Licence.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Instructions given by Environment Agency Officers must be followed. Safety must override any other consideration. Failure to give assistance to any competitor in need of help will result in disqualification. Consideration must also be given to other towpath users at locks; **running at the locks is not permitted by the Environment Agency, please be aware that racing could be stopped if this ruling is not observed.**
- The organisers will be in contact with the Environment Agency prior to the event to check on river conditions. The organisers will take a final decision on THURSDAY 15th March as to whether the race has to be cancelled or not; this is relevant if the river has been on **RED ALERT** during the previous week and flood warnings have been issued by the Environment Agency. **PLEASE TELEPHONE 020 8397 4675 ON FRIDAY 16th MARCH TO CONFIRM WHETHER OR NOT THE RACE IS TO TAKE PLACE OR CHECK THE WEBSITE - <www.royalcanoeclub.com>**
- When entering Juniors K2's please take into consideration the distance. All boats must either have finished or pulled out before 4.30pm. This cut off point is due to the late start of this race.
- There is no 'late booking charge; but it would help if entries were notified prior to the event. Full details of the entry form attached.

MARATHON RACING STANDARDS

There is a view held amongst paddlers of a certain age who have been knocking around in the lower divisions of marathon racing for some time that the standards for racing have become faster. I decided to look at some of the figures to see if there is any truth in the matter, or whether it was just sour grapes from some grumpy old men and women who had just been beaten by a pair of 12 year old girls!

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