

Pointers to those new to Royal Canoe Club - from a parents perspective. 2018

General notes:

Royal Canoe Club (RCC) is run by volunteers. Club members and parents will often be asked to help out from time to time. Communication with the coaches is currently done through email groups.

Being in good time for training is essential for setting up boats and getting on the water together. Please make sure your child meets their coach before you leave the site.

During the summer months there will be capsized drills and skills which will mean that your child will get wet! Please ensure that they have enough spare clothing.

There are various socials through the year, details of which are posted on the RCC Members Facebook page - **see under **Communication*** - and an annual junior awards evening at the beginning of December.

Every Wednesday is clubnight. Weather and light permitting, there is a time trial on the water for all members. Afterwards, the bar is open in the clubhouse and food served at a price of £3. It's a great time to catch up with all those at the club. Club kit including racing vests are also for sale. Please ask Jackie Williams or Sue Bovington about this.

Communication

The club has tried various methods in past and present with varying degrees of success. Currently the **Facebook* page for Royal Canoe Club members is your main source of information. We know it doesn't suit everyone but please keep checking it regularly for updates.

As mentioned earlier, all direct communication for groups regarding sessions, races or events is via email. Your first point of contact for any specific paddling enquiries is with the coach, who can be contacted via the general coaches email: coaching@royalcanoeclub.com. You can find out more about the club by talking to other members, fellow parents and coaches on at club night on a Wednesday evening or on Saturday mornings at training where upstairs in the lounge, cake and fresh coffee is served.

Sue Bovington and **Kathy Ruff** are the Welfare officers and their contact details are on the notice board in the mainland clubhouse.

You will find that at Royal there tend to be 2 types of racing events for suitable for Juniors. The info below is not totally comprehensive but will give an overview and a starting point. Age of a paddler is taken as your age on 1st January that race year.

Marathon races (The Hasler series)

Hasler racing is organised on a regional basis so you should have up to ten races a year, within your locality. Hasler racing is set up to encourage novice paddlers to race in the sport, over 6.5km in a safe environment without any portages. Portaging involves paddlers getting out of their boats, running a short distance with the boat (originally to get over lock gates in canals) and getting back onto the water. This is only part of a race in Division 6 and above.

For juniors under 10 to 12 years old, there are Lightning classes where they race over 2000m in the same design of boat called a Lightning!

Juniors can also race in the next level known as Divisions (Div). These start at Div 9 to the fastest Div 1. Div 9 starts are notoriously busy with all ages racing. It's fun to watch the mass start but can be bumpy for the novice paddler. This settles once the race gets going!

Depending on your finish time in the race, you will stay in your division, you could be 'promoted' up to the next level or you may be given a 'demotion mark'. This is an optional situation. If you want to be put down a division – talk to coaches.

Once promoted above Div 9, paddlers are deemed to be competent racers and can not race in the Lightning classes again. NOTE: All paddlers ranked division 7 or below MUST wear a buoyancy aid.

Final results will be posted a few days later on the race venues club web sites and through www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk.

Then there's the **Hare and Hounds** series run by Wey Kayak Club in Guildford. These are Winter Marathon races held each month from October through to January on Sundays. There is an overall Improvers trophy awarded at the end of the series.

Hare and Hounds is a time trial start for a 10km course but there is a shorter race called **Dash Hounds** which is 6km and aimed at the younger/more novice paddlers.

Local Sprint races:

- Coaches will also let you know when races are coming up and they will be listed on Facebook
- Races over most commonly 200m, 500m, and 1000m
- Your time trial at the start of the day will determine the group in which you'll be racing. The number of races will depend on the overall number of competitors on the day. Finishing times are then translated into age related results for prizes. This means a fast U14 could be racing a U16 but will still be competing in their age group overall

National sprints:

Nottingham, Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre. April - September. Weekend event

You will need to sort out accommodation. There is a campsite at the race ground but the less hardy tend to B & B it at various places. There are a few Premier Inns and Travelodge hotels too but these tend to get booked up quite a few months beforehand. Parking at the venue is £5 a day. The club try to book a pub meal in the evening for all to catch up – a message will put up on the RCC Facebook page.

Note: There are no U10/12 races in the April regatta.

- At Nottingham, there are Lightning races for U10 and U12 the rest are categorised according to speed - like Divisions - but called Girls D to A (or Women's) or Boys D to A (Men's).
- D is entry level. The national championship (July) is divided into age groups with U14, U16, U18 events.
- There are 9 racing lanes at Nottingham and can be as many as 8 heats for up to 3 finals.
- All paddlers MUST be entered 2 weeks before the event at the latest. Again please ask your coach for advice if you have any queries. This entry process is usually undertaken by the club.
- Current cost is £7 per seat, per race which you must transfer to the RCC Sprint account prior to the regatta (20-90-56. No.03503356).
- K1's need to be transported by parents and there will be co-ordination via paddlers on getting the K2's there. K4's are provided by the venue.

Entering races:

To pre enter; you'll need to give name, race category (Lightning or Division) and ROY junior membership number which will be something like ROY/225 or your BCU membership number. Currently Sue Bovington issues these ROY cards once you are a fully paid up member. This is usually organised on Facebook or you can talk to the Team Leader.

NOTE: You don't need to be registered with BCU (British Canoe Union) to race until you are 18+ or in Div 6 or above.

At any event, because of safeguarding rules, coaches are not allowed to take unaccompanied juniors. Out of normal coaching times all juniors are their parent's responsibility. Coaches may not necessarily be at race events. Be aware this is a water sport.

All Races - Tips for the day:

- Collect boat early on the day or the night before - but only if you're confident that the boat will be secure overnight.
- Coaches or Team Leaders at these events are your first point of contact. It's important to turn up if you've committed to racing, even verbally, but if there are unforeseen circumstances, please let the team leader or coach know beforehand or post on Facebook ASAP.
- Check in – Confirm attendance and pay any race fees owed. Remember to bring your ROY card or BCU card. If you have not pre-entered online or via the club, you will usually have to pay an additional small late entry fee.

NOTE: For the **Marathon Hasler** series, names of paddlers who want to race are listed by the Hasler Team Leaders, on Facebook, and entered by the club, as a team. However individually, you will need to pay your entry fee - *price dictated by the host club* - to the Royal Sprint account (20-90-56. No.03503356) **days before** the event to guarantee your place. No refunds can be given.

- Number Boards - For the **Hare and Hounds** series you will need a white number board. At check in you'll be given a race number for the season which is written on the board with black marker. Attach this securely to the back of your boat. For Marathon Haslers, presently the clubs provide the numbered boards – these must be returned to race organisers at end of your race or there will be a charge of £5 for any lost.
- Sprint events – You'll need your own number boards for these races too however at Nottingham sprint regatta, Royal provides pre-printed number boards. The Team Leader will have these and they will be your lane numbers for each race.
- Race briefing is about half an hour before your race start. Coaches/Team Leaders will be able to advise when to get on the water. Don't rush, take your time. The starters are all very human!
- Once the race is done, collect all gear, get showered and warmed up. Stay if you can as the faster paddlers tend to race later in the day which is fun to watch and good to give them a bit of support.

At the end of the day, return boat to its rack and any other equipment to the club. Close boat house doors, using the combination lock and turn off lights etc.

What to take to races

Loads of kit, check the weather and expect the worse. Canoeing is a wet sport. Take racing kit, a separate set (except race vest) per race ideally and a warm total kit change for afterwards. You'll need a towel as there are showers at most places. Plastic bag for wet kit.

Footwear - Some of the experienced paddlers will race in bare or socked feet – but this is not advisable when portaging, in a marathon event where there could be sharp stones or glass on the ground. Neoprene (wetsuit) shoes (basic at Sports Direct or £15 upwards for a more sophisticated boot at <https://www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk> which can be used too but basically whatever your child is used to paddling in.

In cold windy weather a lightweight waterproof can be useful like the packer macs or running waterproof tops. Quite often there can be a wait on the start line.



ROYAL CANOE CLUB

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Boats - These can be transported on your car with a V bar on the roof rack. Suppliers include local company www.ultimatekayaks.co.uk in Weybridge. You can use luggage straps for your boat or on 'bungees'. These are tough elastic straps which wrap over the v bars, secured where there are designated hooks. On the motorway however, you may want to double up your bungees and/or use a strap from boat to roof rack.

Other equipment - You'll need to take a paddle and buoyancy aid. For Div 6 - Div 1 and Girls/Boys C - A, it's not compulsory. Girls /Boys D (at Nottingham National races) tend not to need them but sometimes if weather's bad, you will be advised to wear them. For U10/12, it's compulsory.

For hands, cold weather pogies are good or paddling gloves but this is a paddler preference. https://www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk/advanced_search_result.php?keywords=neoprene+gloves
There are plenty of suppliers. A local one is Suzy Sweatshop www.suzysweatshop.com

Food - Marathon events and local Sprints will have paddlers food. This is often easily assembled treats like biscuits, juice, crisps and if you're lucky, a sandwich which you are given usually when you return your number board to the organisers. A flask of a hot drink is always a good idea especially if you're warming up after capsizing! There are also kitchens at most of these events for teas, coffee, cake, bacon sandwiches etc.

Useful websites

Flatwater racing calendar can be found at:

<http://canoeracing.org.uk/sprint/racing-calendar> for Nottingham Sprint Regatta dates but please ask to see which races are relevant

Local clubs

Wey - www.weykayak.co.uk | Richmond - www.richmondcanoecub.com | Nottingham - www.nwscnotts.com
Elmbridge - www.elmbridgecanoecub.com | Tonbridge - www.tonbridgecanoecub.org.uk

Kit – There are many sites, but here's a few to start you off

www.suzysweatshop.com | www.iconsports.eu | www.marsport.co.uk | www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk

Other equipment outlets – Again there are plenty about these are just a few we can recommend:

www.ultimatekayaks.co.uk | www.gopaddling.co.uk | www.sheppertonmarina.com

And finally a funny note to new paddler

<https://www.facebook.com/ivegotkayaking/posts/1434748169887587>