

GB Wild Water Racing – Derwent Dash Races

Site Specific Risk Assessment: River Derwent – Matlock Bath

Risk Assessment completed by: Peter Montgomery

Date: 2nd July 2025

Reviewed and updated before race – Next Assessment before the next race

RISK ASSESSMENT

L=LOW RISK (IF ADVICE FOLLOWED); M=MEDIUM RISK AND H=HIGH RISK (IF ANY RACE RISK DEEMED HIGH THEN RACE TO BE MOVED OR CANCELLED DUE TO BEING ADVERTISED AS SUITABLE FOR NOVICES)

HAZARDS	RISK TO WHOM	RISK AVOIDANCE, ACTIONS AND ADVICE	RATING IF PRECAUTIONS ETC FOLLOWED
PADDLER CONTROL	Paddlers	Paddlers and parents etc. to follow instructions and safety, site etc. plans and directions from the organisers. It is their responsibility to acquaint themselves with this.	L
RACE ORGANISER	Organisation	Matlock Canoe Club on behalf of Wild Water Racing Committee as part of Paddle UK either individual or as a member of a Paddle UK affiliated club: Hold a 10 million pound third party liability insurance. It is a P. UK requirement that the event has a designated safety officer who has completed the “BC event safety course”. Peter Montgomery and Jamie Christie have met the requirements and will be designated safety officers.	L
INSURANCE COVER CHECKS	Organisation and Paddlers	All competitors will be checked for insurance cover at race entry as either having: ☐ British Canoeing membership. ☐ Affiliated club British Canoeing membership.	L
COMPETENCE	Paddlers	Paddlers are solely responsible for their own competence, medical fitness, endurance to complete the race and issues and welfare undertaking the race in the conditions present on the day. However, it is anticipated that some inexperienced Matlock and Paddle Peak paddlers will be racing. We will be organising safety cover sited at key locations and have sight of those paddlers on all sections of this short course to ensure they can safely attempt the race.	L
START AND FINISH	Organisation and	All paddlers will have a start number.	L

NUMBERS MATCHING	Paddlers	Start and finish numbers will be compared. Paddlers will be briefed on ensuring they do not leave the race area without first reporting their withdrawal. Contact details will be held on entry forms if needed.	
SITE SPECIFIC			
NON PADDLERS & MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC		The location is popular in a local tourist hotspot, so there can be plenty of people in the vicinity of the race although evenings are generally quieter. Paddlers should watch when they move boats around, paddles etc. Also it is suggested no paddler under 16 should be allowed to move around the centre for any reason e.g. taking canoes to river, going to the toilets etc., on their own (nor be left on their own). The Road adjacent to the river is also very busy at times and paddlers should take care when crossing and walking alongside the road.	L
PROTECTED LAND AND PRIVATELY OWNED LAND		Much of the race course has a public path along the bank on the A6 side of the course	L
WATER GETTING IN AND OUT			
GETTING IN AND OUT	Paddlers and spectators	All WWR paddlers and spectators or officials getting on the water MUST wear a buoyancy aid. Spray decks are highly recommended It is recommended officials doing start and finish and parents, etc., if on the bank and potentially prepared to intervene in a rescue wear a buoyancy aid. Paddlers to be careful getting in and out and request assistance if required.	L
ROCKY AND MUDDY BANKS	Paddlers and Spectators	The banks can be very slippery and the mud much deeper than you think, ensure you get in and out on firm ground/banks. The bank at the start is quite steep and if used, the steps at the finish have quite a high bottom step, Care needs to be taken entering and exiting the site. It is hoped that we will have permission to get out on the left bank below the slalom site, this has a shallow gravel bed with a gently sloping exit track care is needed as there can be broken glass and pottery	L

		in the river bed as well as some rusty metals.	
RIVER CONDITIONS	Paddlers	River Derwent is a natural river lined with trees and other hazards. At low water these present little risk, however the river can rise in wet weather and as the river rises, the risk of becoming entangled and entrapped in trees and other hazards increases quickly. Any specific hazards will be highlighted during the briefing. Younger participants may be escorted, we can sometimes help and provide escorts down the course.	L
CONDITIONS E.G. WIND,WEATHER ETC.,	Paddlers and Spectators	Review on day of race. Option includes course changes shorter or circular nearer to the start or cancellation.	L
RIVER TRAFFIC	Paddlers	There is little traffic on the river. Competitors are reminded to treat all other user with respect. Local clubs and paddlers should have been made aware of the race.	L
OVER HANGING TREES BRANCHES ETC	Paddlers and Spectators	In low water the risk is low and most trees and obstacles are above the water. As the river rises, the risk of becoming entangled and entrapped in trees and other hazards increase quickly. Occasionally and in recent years we have had old trees fall or some have been washed down and partly obstruct the water way. Any specific hazards will be highlighted during the briefing.	L
CAPSIZE			
CAPSIZE	Paddlers	IN ALL CASES THE PADDLER TAKES PRIORITY OVER SAVING BOAT AND/OR EQUIPMENT WWR code of conduct requires all paddlers to offer support to other paddlers when requested or if they see someone in potential difficulty with penalty of disqualification for life from competitive canoeing unless at risk/danger themselves. The paddler should get to the bank as quickly as possible with their canoe and paddle if they can. If they need help they MUST stop the next paddlers by calling for help from them The water current may be strong and some paddlers may have difficulty in swimming against this. The finished paddlers must be alert to the paddlers	L

		on the race course and go to help immediately. Experienced paddlers will be on the water to assist with safety in addition to the two finish paddlers on standby. NB: If a boat is lost downstream then please let the race organisation know so emergency service can be notified to prevent any unnecessary searches being started.	
BOAT SPECIFIC			
SAFETY CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT		CHECK YOUR KIT BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME Paddlers are required to ensure their safety clothing and equipment is in accordance with current safety regulations in WWR.	L
CANOE FLOTATION	Paddlers	All boat must comply with the current WWR safety rules	L
HELMETS	Paddler	The race encompasses a section of calm and flat meandering river and rocky rapids. All paddlers are expected to wear helmets in any craft.	
ILL HEALTH INJURY			
ILL HEALTH and or INJURY	Paddlers	If you can, pull to the side or safe bank area, or an area you can beach the boat or hold on safely to something. If you can, get out and rest on the bank. Call for help in any situation and report to the race organiser for any first aid or treatment on site or for wider help. Contact to race first Aider.	L
HYPOTHERMIA/HEAT STROKE	Paddlers and spectators	Paddlers can withdraw from race by attracting other paddlers' attention. Wear clothing appropriate to conditions and that suits your own bodily temperature control needs.	L
WEILS DISEASE	Paddlers	WEIL'S DISEASE Weil's Disease is a RARE but very serious illness which is caused by bacteria carried in the urine of rats (and some other animals). It can be contracted anywhere but especially around waterways. The descending scale of risk is: Stagnant water, canals and slow moving rivers (particularly after flash floods), swifter streams. Precautions: Avoid capsize drill or rolling in stagnant or slow moving water	L

		• Wash or shower after canoeing Cover minor scratches on exposed parts of the body with water-proof plaster • Use foot-wear to avoid cutting feet • Thoroughly wash hands before eating or drinking after being on the river. Should you become ill after canoeing (2-19 days) with a flu-like illness (temperature, aching limbs & joints) call your doctor and tell him/her you are a canoeist and may have come into contact with the Leptospirosis bacteria - see your Yearbook Contact the British Canoeing Office for more information – see for standard handout please.	
WATER QUALITY	All Participants	The quality of water is nowadays an ever present consideration therefore we will use data streams to assess the state of the river and make participants aware of any concerns.	L
FIRST AID	All Participants	Pete Montgomery (07979445571) is one of the qualified first aiders on site for the event.	
EMERGENCY			
EMERGENCY	Paddlers and Spectators	Call 999 or 112 and request the correct service, explain the situation and contact the race organiser as soon as possible.	L