

Tame the Trent Descent

Risk Assessment

Organisation Name:	Burton Phoenix Canoe Club	Location	River Trent, Burton on Trent
Assessment Date:	14/11/2025	Review Date:	13/11/26 (or before if required)
Assessors Name:	Rich Astridge	Job Title:	Club Safety Officer
Task: Risk assessment for the activities associated surrounding the Burton Phoenix Canoe Club Trent Descent.			

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are the risks	Are the following control measures in place to eliminate or reduce the risks?	Yes/ No	Corrective actions required	Risk Evaluation			Risk Rating
						Consequence (1 – 3)	Likelihood (1 – 3)	Overall risk (C x L)	Low, Medium, or High
Slips, trips, and falls - Launch point	All participants, event organisers and spectators	May be injured if they trip over objects or slip on wet surfaces particularly when entering the water.	<p>Advice given to everyone on the initial race brief.</p> <p>Launch areas cleared of debris by event organisers prior to the first start.</p> <p>Participants requested to leave the launch area as soon as possible and move to the holding area. Priority given to the doubles who will be starting first.</p>	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Slips, trips, and falls – General Area	All participants, event organisers and spectators	May be injured if they trip over objects or slip on wet grass.	<p>Advice given to everyone on the initial race brief.</p> <p>All participants and spectators advised to keep their own preparation area free of obstruction, in particular around the car parking area.</p>	Yes	None	1	1	1	L

<p>Inclement weather</p> <p>During Event</p>	All participants	<p>Strong winds, heavy rain, thunderstorm can affect all participants on the water.</p>	<p>Met office forecast to be obtained and monitored throughout the event. If conditions are deemed to be too dangerous, event to be changed or cancelled.</p> <p>If event is cancelled whilst event is running, all participants to be immediately accounted for. Safety boats to be launched to help participants in who may get into difficulties.</p> <p>Communication with start, finish and checkpoint marshals plus safety boats to ensure all participants exit the water safely.</p>	No	<p>Suggest communication to participants prior to event (social media and emails to Team Leaders, plus Regional Organiser), all participants to wear BA. Both turn marshals have mobile phones for communication.</p>	2	1	2	L
<p>Inclement weather</p> <p>During Event</p> <p>*Cold</p>	All participants, event organisers and spectators	<p>Possibility of hypothermia in the event of water immersion</p>	<p>All personnel attending the event to be dressed appropriately and to understand the signs and symptoms of hypothermia resulting from immersion in the river and the effect that wind can have on the ambient temperature.</p> <p>Sweeper boat and all bank support will carry relevant extra clothing and warm wraps in the event of attending an emergency</p>	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
<p>Inclement weather</p> <p>During Event</p> <p>*Hot</p>	All participants, event organisers and spectators	<p>Possibility of heat related injuries</p>	<p>All personnel attending the event to be dressed appropriately. They should understand the signs and symptoms of heat related injuries, use sun cream and keep hydrated.</p>	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
<p>Manual Handling</p>	All participants, event organisers and spectators	<p>Could suffer from back pain and work-related upper limb disorder (WRULD) due to using incorrect handling techniques when handling canoes (in particular during a rescue).</p>	<p>Any person attending the event should be aware of correct lifting and carrying techniques and ask for assistance if required.</p> <p>Any personnel involved in a rescue must be aware of the additional weight.</p>	Yes	None	2	1	2	L

		Event organisers setting up the event area to be aware of their own limitations.							
River Conditions	All participants and event organisers	<p>Low water Beaching on inside of some bends; weeds may cause entrapment.</p> <p>High water Overhanging trees can cause entrapment and/or entanglement, speed of flow.</p> <p>Very high water In addition to above, the height of the water level may cause problems through bridges; debris may be brought downstream in the guise of trees etc.</p>	<p>Prior to the race, the organisers will observe the height and flow of the river, in conjunction with the weather forecast. This will assist in predicting the conditions on the event day. The organisers will also check the route during the week prior to the event to assess the route and access/egress.</p> <p><u>Buoyancy aids are compulsory for all participants, regardless of water levels.</u></p> <p>During the safety brief, the organiser will brief the participants on the height of the water level and any possible obstacles.</p> <p>If the organiser deems it suitable, the following controls can be put in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The course can be shortened to bypass any serious obstacles and for full visibility of the participants. 2. More safety crews can be launched to provide eyes-on coverage. 3. Lower divisions or participants not able to deal with the river conditions may be deemed not fit to race. 	Yes	None	2	1	2	L

			4. Helmets may be advised at very high-water levels						
River Wildlife	All participants, event organisers and spectators	Swans and Geese protecting their young	Participants should be aware of Swans or Geese protecting their young. Steer clear of them to ensure your own safety.	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Members of public	All participants, event organisers, spectators and members of public	Getting too close to the action	<p>All personnel attending the event should be mindful of members of public who will not understand what is happening, especially at the get in/get out point.</p> <p>Participants – Be careful not to push them out of the way or knock them with boats or paddles.</p> <p>Event organisers – If you feel they are in a vulnerable position which may end up with them being knocked or pushed, please approach, educate and ask to move if needed. If their obstruction could cause a safety issue, contact the Chief Marshal ASAP</p> <p>Spectators - Spectators following the event from the bank must be aware and respect other users. Pre-race information and briefing notes on the day will remind visitors to the site to beware off and respect other bankside users.</p>	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Other Competitors whilst racing	Other active and passive participants	Collisions	All competitors have a responsibility to avoid any collisions, with particular emphasis on the more experienced to help avoid an incident. Briefing to all team leaders and athletes to reinforce.	Yes	None.	1	1	1	L

Other River Users	All participants, event organisers and spectators, other river users	Collisions	There may be some boat traffic on the river from rowing clubs, local clubs will be informed of the event beforehand. Competitors are reminded to treat all other user with respect. Rowers move backwards and may not be aware of your presence so use a verbal warning.	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Canoe/Kayak suitability	All participants	Canoe/kayak not safe to be on the water	All canoes/kayaks must comply with the current WWR rules or Marathon Racing safety (dependant on craft used) rules including sufficient buoyancy. A spot check will be conducted prior to the craft being launched.	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Injury (minor)	All participants, event organisers and spectators	Small cuts, sprains, strains	Self-help in the first instance which can be escalated to the first aid tent (adjacent to the main tent at the finish) if required. Marshalls at 2 bridge checkpoints to have first aid and call for further assistance as necessary. Sweeper boat will also carry a first aid kit.	Yes	None	1	1	1	L
Injury (major)	All participants, event organisers and spectators	Broken bones, dislocations, drowning etc.	ENSURE YOU ARE SAFE, RAISE ALARM IMMEDIATELY (999 and RACE ORGANISER). If out of sight of marshals, competitors MUST stop and help out the injured person. Send for help, stay with casualty until relieved. Marshalls at 2 bridge checkpoints to have first aid and call for further assistance as necessary. Sweeper boat will also carry a first aid kit.	Yes	None	2	1	2	L
Weils Disease	All participants, event organisers and spectators	Contracting the disease	It can be contracted anywhere but especially around waterways in particular 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	Yes	None	2	1	2	L

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash or shower after canoeing • Cover minor scratches on exposed parts of the body with water-proof plaster • Use footwear to avoid cutting feet <p>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 may have come into contact with the Leptospirosis bacteria</p>						
Capsize	All participants, event organisers and spectators	Getting into difficulty, especially inexperienced participants.	<p>Any racer must offer help to the capsized individual with penalty of disqualification for life from competitive canoeing unless at risk/danger themselves.</p> <p>The participant takes precedence over the equipment. Swim to safety as quickly as possible and attract the attention of others.</p> <p>Bridge marshals and sweeper boat will also have throw lines to enable rescue if needed.</p>	Yes	None	2	1	2	L
River Pollution due to release by water company.	All participants	Participants falling ill	<p>A thorough washing of hands and face with antiseptic soap/wipe/gel as soon as possible after finishing the session. Be sure to have stored your boat, paddles and associated paddling equipment before washing!</p>	No	<p>Actively monitor your health over the next couple of days. If a GP or hospital appointment is required due to sudden illness, ensure you mention that you were paddling.</p>	2	1	2	L

Sign off:			
Name	Date	Agree control measures	Position
Bill Lawrenson	30/12/2024	Yes	Race Organiser

2. RISK MATRIX		Potential consequence of harm		
		1 – Minor Injury (e.g., hazard can cause illness, injury, or equipment damage but the results would not be expected to be serious)	2 – Significant Injury (e.g., hazard can result in serious injury and/or illness, over 3-day absence)	3 – Major Injury (e.g., hazard capable of causing death or serious and life-threatening injuries)
Likelihood of harm	1 – Unlikely (injury rare, though possible)	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Medium
	2 – Possible (injury could occur occasionally)	2 – Low	4 – Medium	6 – High
	3 – Probable (injury likely to occur, can be expected)	3 – Medium	6 – High	9 – Extreme

3. RISK EVALUATION

This is calculated by multiplying the likelihood against the consequence e.g., taking a likelihood of 1, which is classified as Unlikely and multiplying this against a Potential Consequence of 2, which is classified as Significant Injury, would give you and overall Risk Rating of 2, which would result in an overall evaluation as a low risk.

1 to 2 = Low risk

Low risks are largely acceptable, monitor periodically to determine situation changes which may affect the risk, or after significant changes.

3 to 4 = Medium risk

Medium risks at the upper end of this band should only be tolerated for the short-term and then only whilst further control measures to mitigate the risk are being planned and introduced, within a defined time period. Risks on the lower end should be reduced if practicable.

6 = High risk

High risks activities should cease immediately until further control measures to mitigate the risk are introduced. The continued effectiveness of control measures must be monitored periodically.

9 = Extreme Risk

Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been mitigated. Immediate action is required to reduce exposure. A detailed mitigation plan must be developed, implemented and monitored by senior management to reduce the risk before work is allowed to commence.