

Abbey Rapids WWR Sprint Risk Assessment



Activity: WWR Sprint Events at Abbey Rapids
Review / re-assessment due: Dec 2026

Assessment by: Andrew Crowhurst **Date:** 05 Jan 2026

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Likelihood (1=Low, 5=High)	Severity (1=Low, 5=High)	Control measures
Rising water during event	Paddlers, spectators, public	3	3	Organiser will: Inspect and continue to monitor how fast the water levels are rising. The starter and finisher should be able to notify of any sudden increase in water levels since as they are on the waters edge so would have to move in the event of sudden water level rises.
Being struck by moving vehicles in the car park / campsite	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators, public	2	3	Traffic moving around the site to be at low speed. Parking to be arranged to ensure emergency vehicles can access the steps if needed.
Slips, Trips, Falls	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators	3	4	Event information to advise paddlers to beware of uneven surfaces and wet steps. All attendees will be reminded of these risks at the event briefing. Ensure paths are kept clear of boats and equipment, boats are not to be left at the top or bottom of the steps leading to/from the riverbank. Event officials to enforce or move boats as appropriate.

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First Aid Provision	All	3	3	<p>At least one qualified event First Aider will be appointed for the event.</p> <p>First Aid Kit kept in control and checked prior to the event. Organiser to advise of any equipment used.</p> <p>First aid to be summoned via event organiser or delegate - First Aid information to be included in event information and mentioned at the event briefing.</p> <p>Emergency Plan covers summoning emergency services and/or directing people to local hospitals.</p>
Advising Paddlers of Hazards	All	1	2	Any notable hazards along the length of the course will be highlighted at the event briefing.
Liability Insurance	All	1	5	<p>Kayak Northumbria, on behalf of the PUK Wild Water Racing Committee, as a Paddle UK affiliated club hold a £10 million third public liability insurance.</p> <p>All entrants must be members of a home nation association and this will be checked at the point of entry.</p>
Canoeing / Water Related Activity				
Carrying kayaks / canoes	Paddlers, Spectators, Officials	2	2	Paddlers are familiar with appropriate manual handling for carrying their equipment. Juniors to be assisted as appropriate by coaches / parents.

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Paddling – capsize during race runs	Paddlers, Safety Team	3	2	<p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an ‘assumed risk sport’ both on completing entry and at the event briefing.</p> <p>All paddlers to wear appropriate protective equipment including Buoyancy Aid and helmet as per WWR rules.</p> <p>Paddlers to be reminded of the requirement to stay on the water and provide safety after their runs until the next two boats are finished in event briefing.</p> <p>Race runs to be organised so there are adequate gaps between paddlers.</p> <p>Paddlers will be reminded at the briefing that it is a requirement to help any other paddler who is in distress during the race.</p> <p>Paddlers will be reminded at the briefing that it is their responsibility to decide they are competent to race.</p>
Paddling – capsize during ‘free’ practice	Paddlers	3	3	<p>Paddlers / parents / coaches to be made aware in event information that they are responsible for their own safety during free practice.</p>
Being struck by other paddlers equipment on the water (Boat / Paddle)	Paddlers	2	3	<p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an ‘assumed risk sport’ both on completing entry and at the briefing</p> <p>All paddlers to wear appropriate protective equipment including Buoyancy Aid and helmet.</p> <p>Start intervals as per WWR rules to minimise the possibility of paddlers colliding.</p>

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Pinning on rocks, trees or bank	Paddlers	2	4	<p>Course to be planned to minimise potential of pinning.</p> <p>Tree branches that have fallen into the race course to be removed before racing.</p> <p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an ‘assumed risk sport’ both on completing entry and at the briefing.</p> <p>Any specific hazards above and beyond those normal for the sport will be highlighted at the briefing.</p>
Hypothermia	Paddlers	2	4	<p>All paddlers to wear usual protective clothing / equipment for paddling appropriate to the conditions / weather. To include Buoyancy Aid and helmet.</p> <p>First Aid kit to include suitable equipment to treat condition. Qualified First Aider(s) at the event.</p>
Leptospirosis (Weil’s Disease)	Paddlers	2	4	<p>All paddlers to be aware of the risk and follow standard practice of covering cuts etc, and that Canoeing is an ‘assumed risk sport’ on event information and at the briefing</p> <p>As this is a natural river it is advised that all paddlers wash hands / face between paddling & eating.</p> <p>As per WWR rules, all paddlers must wear closed-toe footwear. This will reduce the likelihood of any small cuts to feet.</p>