

Risk Assessment Llangollen

Originated Date:	23 rd July 2025
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Assessors Name:	Rob Guest	Review Date:	Reviewed 26/02/2026 by Jamie Christie
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//Description of assessment	Wild Water Event Specific Risk Assessment: Llangollen, Serpents Tail & Classic Course – ECA Cup Classic & Sprint Events – 21 & 22 Nov 2026
/Organisers and Experience	<p>The event is organised by the WWR Committee. The lead organiser on behalf of the WWRC is Jamie Christie.</p> <p>The event organising team comprises, Jamie Christie, Current White-Water Coach with 40 years paddling experience and 20 years' experience running canoeing competitions, Simon Wright, WWRC Chair, Dan Marsland, Lincoln Canoe Club Chair & ex Fire Service</p>
Event Safety Officer(s)	Jamie Christie, last event Safety course completed January 2025, Dan Marsland. Rtd Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue incident commander.
Safeguarding	Helen Christie, is a retired primary school teacher and has completed the PUK Safeguarding training courses as identified and a Scouting Safeguarding course that is accepted by Paddle UK.

Location Details	<p>Llangollen Serpents Tail White Water Course, Adjacent to the Chain Bridge Hotel, Llangollen.</p> <p>The Sprint Race involves paddling first through flat but moving, sometimes turbulent (grade 2/3) water from the start under the Chainbridge and through the Serpents Tail Section to the finish on exiting the Serpents Tail section. The serpents tail section is a small low level gorge where water is channelled through an open passage in the rocks to create the moving water course.</p> <p>The Classic course starts below the Horseshoe falls above the Chain Bridge, passes through the Serpents tail and continues downstream to the finish, the steps on river right immediately before the weir above Town Falls. Access to the bank after the serpents tail is difficult due to land ownership and access.</p> <p>The river will be open to other paddlers who are not participating in this event.</p>
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	<p>There is parking in the National Park car park and restricted public access to the course. Access to the serpent's tail section is via fixed ladders and onto rocks and traverse across these to the water section.</p> <p>The location is part of an area of natural beauty, and it is foreseeable that members of the public will be in a vicinity during the race.</p>
Safety Plan	<p>Safety cover will be provided. It is planned to have on the bank safety cover with people that have completed the Stadium Safety course at the Serpents Tail. It is also a requirement in the WWR racing rules that at least 2 racers remain at the finish until the next paddler completes the course.</p> <p>A minimum of 2 water safety personnel that have completed the Stadium Safety course will be on bankside; they will be named in the Event Plan. BA/Life jackets will be worn. Each person will have a throwline and a knife. In addition to the dedicated bank-side team, there will be a coaches and supporters within view of the course who have competence and experience in water safety and rescue. In the event of a serious incident they would be available to support as required.</p> <p>The bank side safety will be located downstream of the highest risk areas for WWR racers. 1) Below the initial drop into Serpents tail and on the exist to Serpents Tail.</p> <p>The nominated first aider is Jamie Christie</p>
Emergency Plan	The event emergency plan is available with this document.
Welfare and Safeguarding Plan	The event adopts the Paddle UK policy for welfare and safeguarding, in the event of a suspected incident the organisers should be notified, and the emergency services will be contacted if required.
Evacuation Plan	The event emergency plan is available with this document.
Incident reporting	Following any Safety, Emergency, Safeguarding or evacuation incident a Paddle UK incident form shall be submitted as a record of the situation.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Lack of Paddler Competence	Paddlers	All entrants or person in "loco Parentis" must complete a separate WWR entry form stating	Any new competitors to the race are asked to come and speak to the	Event Organiser and competitor	At the briefing	

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		<p>the paddler is competent and fit to race the WWR race on the conditions and distance etc. on the day.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>All Paddlers and parents must follow instructions and comply with any safety, plans and directions from the organisers. It is their responsibility to acquaint themselves with this.</p> <p>Event description clearly describes the severity of course, and the fact that paddlers need to be self-supporting on the river section.</p> <p>Due to the grade of water at the Serpents Tail the advertising and Web Site explicitly states that this event is not for novice paddlers</p>	<p>organisers immediately after the briefing</p> <p>A briefing will take place</p> <p>The Serpents Tail section of the course will be covered by qualified white water safety personnel.</p> <p>WWR committee to verify the competency of paddlers who have entered the event. Late entries or entries on the day are not permitted for this event.</p>	<p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Safety lead</p>	<p>Before start</p> <p>During event</p>	
Other water users	Paddlers	<p>The river is open to other rivers users such as fishermen, and other recreational paddlers, Competitors should be aware of this and treat anyone they interact with politely and assist if they come across anyone in difficulty.</p>	<p>Paddlers to be made aware during briefing and event literature.</p> <p>Other groups including the Welsh Dee Partnership will be notified in advance of the event</p>	Organiser	Before start	
Missing Paddler(s) & or Children	Paddlers	<p>All paddlers will have a start number and start time allocated. Start and finish numbers will be compared.</p> <p>Start list is organised as per the current rolling ranking system so those without a ranking start before more experience paddles who have a ranking and competed in other races.</p> <p>Paddlers will be briefed on ensuring they do not leave the race area without first reporting their withdrawal.</p>	<p>Event team to be in contact throughout the event to ensure that all expected paddlers are accounted for.</p> <p>Paddlers briefed as to their responsibility to others throughout the event.</p> <p>Paddlers/parents briefed on recommendation that no paddler under 16 should be allowed to move around the Venue for any reason e.g. taking canoes to the river, going to the toilets</p>	<p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Start and Finish Team</p>	<p>On the day</p> <p>During event</p>	

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		As per WWR rules, each competitor must wait on the water at the finish for the next 2 competitors to finish before leaving the water. The final 2 competitors must wait until the finisher tells them they can get off the water.	etc., on their own (nor be left on their own).			
Injury to Non-Paddlers and Members of the Public	Public Event Team Spectators	First Aider is available	<p>Paddlers briefed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not to block roads & footpaths - take care when they move boats and equipment around the access road. - boats to be secured in windy weather. <p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event</p> <p>Members of the Public:</p> <p>A3 advisory sign posted at the access to the Serpents Tail Steps advising of hazardous conditions.</p> <p>Parent volunteers will advise of any specific safety hazards to members of the public who wish to watch the race at the water edge.</p>	Event Organiser Paddlers	On the day	
Moving Water	Paddlers Event Safety Team Starter Spectators	<p>All WWR paddlers getting on the water MUST wear a buoyancy aid and helmet.</p> <p>Officials in the start and finish tents on the bank must wear buoyancy aids and be prepared to intervene in a rescue.</p> <p>Any parent or volunteers nominated to support and intervene in a rescue must wear a buoyancy aid.</p>	<p>Paddler safety to be discussed at the briefing</p> <p>Only paddlers, officials, water safety personnel and designated photographers are permitted over the rocks at the Serpents tail. Anyone else is encouraged to vacate the area.</p> <p>Anyone acting as an official for the event at the Serpents Tail and at the start/finish must wear a Buoyancy</p>	<p>Safety Lead</p> <p>Safety Lead</p> <p>Safety Lead</p>	<p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p>	

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		<p>Any competitor coming across another competitor in trouble must stop and give assistance.</p> <p>As per WWR rules, each competitor must wait on the water at the finish for the next 2 competitors to finish before leaving the water. The final 2 competitors must wait until the finisher tells them they can get off the water.</p>	<p>Aid/Life Jacket and have received a safety briefing.</p> <p>Competent water safety team* on hand on the Serpents Tail to rescue from the water where necessary.</p>	Safety Lead	On the day	
Drowning	Paddlers	<p>All paddlers are required to wear and approved buoyancy aid, each paddler is responsible for ensuring the buoyancy aid is in good condition and suitable for the event.</p> <p>Any competitor coming across another competitor in trouble must stop and give assistance.</p>	Reminder given at the race briefing	Event Organiser	On the Day	
Head Injury	Paddlers Organisers Safety Team	<p>Helmets are mandatory at this event.</p> <p>Paddle UK Head Injury Guidance to be followed</p> <p>Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed, including evacuation procedures</p>	<p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event</p> <p>Safety Team briefed on Head Injury Protocol and how to inform race control</p> <p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event</p>	Event Organiser Safety Lead	On the Day On the Day	
Injury - body, inc manual handling	Paddlers Event Team	<p>All WWR canoes and Kayaks must comply with the current WWR safety rules</p> <p>Volunteers and Safety Team briefed on Manual Handling</p>	Event First Aid Cover in place for the event	Safety Lead & First Aider	On the day	
Slips and Trips	Paddlers Event Team Spectators	<p>The Course along the River Dee is open to the public, normal care should be taken</p> <p>Public and Spectators informed via signage at the access steps to the Serpents Tail not to</p>	<p>Paddlers & Volunteers briefed to take care getting in and out of the Serpents Tail due to slippery banks</p> <p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event.</p>	Event Organiser/First Aider Paddlers & volunteers	On the day	

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		approach the edge and be aware of the slippery nature of the rocks.	Parent supported nominated for safety assistance will be asked to monitor and advise members of the public of any specific hazards when approaching the river side.			
Entrapment or injury from hazards on the course - Trees - Boats - damaged WWC - Throwlines	Paddlers Event Team	<p>The river (Classic Course) is a natural water course which is lined by trees, bushes and other plants, under normal river conditions these pose little risk.</p> <p>As the river level increases, and the flow increases, and the risk of a paddler or swimmer being inadvertently pushed into a tree or bush and becoming entrapped increases.</p> <p>White Water course designed to avoid entrapment</p> <p>Paddlers are able to exit their boat easily where straps are used (C1&C2) Paddlesafer guidance will be followed</p> <p>Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed</p>	<p>River conditions are assessed on the day, and competitors are advised of any specific risks at the briefing.</p> <p>If necessary, an alternative race course will be used.</p> <p>Course recce and course walk completed prior to event to identify additional risks</p> <p>Paddlers briefed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO NOT cut over chains or ropes from moored boats • Take care to avoid overhanging trees on the river <p>The bank-side team will be on hand to help anyone out of the water on the WWC.</p>	<p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Safety Lead</p>	<p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p> <p>On the day</p>	
Poor Water Quality	Paddlers Event Team	<p>The river is a natural fast flowing river and its conditions are not monitored.</p> <p>Local guidance is to be sought to determine if any particular conditions exist where water quality may cause harm to health.</p>	<p>Seek guidance before the event to review water quality and prepare additional mitigations if required</p> <p>Paddlers briefed to wash hands and shower after being on and around the water and if it is preferred, to drink Coke</p>	<p>Event organiser</p> <p>Event organiser</p>	<p>Before event</p> <p>At the Briefing</p>	

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ILL HEALTH and or INJURY	Paddlers Event Team	<p>Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed, including evacuation procedures.</p> <p>Paddlers will launch in numerical order and due to limited free space at the start there will be limited number of paddlers on the water at the start (typically 6).</p> <p>If the event of an emergency this smaller number will be easier to manage if they are given an instruction to leave the water.</p>	<p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event</p> <p>Paddlers briefed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pull to a safe area if possible and rest on the bank - Report to safety team/organisers or first aid - look out for each other and assist paddlers in trouble. 	Event organiser/First Aider Paddlers	On the Day	
HYPOTHERMIA	Paddlers Event Team Spectators	<p>Event Venue is using the function room at the Chainbridge hotel at the start as an control centre which will be used and an emergency centre to rewarm anyone suspected of Hypothermia, as detailed in the emergency plan.</p> <p>Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed, including evacuation procedures</p>	<p>Event First Aid Cover in place for the event</p> <p>Paddlers briefed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wear clothing appropriate to conditions and that suits your own bodily temperature control needs - pull to a safe area if possible and rest on the bank - Report to safety team/organisers or first aid - look out for each other and assist paddlers in trouble - Mini bus shuttle service provided between start and finish of the classic event with dedicated drivers 	Event Organiser First Aider	On the day	
High water levels	Paddlers Event Team	The Dee normally has consistent water levels, however during period of high rainfall this can create dangerous conditions on the river.	Experience has shown that there are local measures that can be observed to determine acceptable water levels – the event plan will describe how these are applied.	Event Organiser	In the run up and on the day	

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		<p>Before the event organisers will monitor and review water levels upstream at Cowen and at Dee Bridge to see the trend in the water levels.</p> <p>During the event they will review these gauges to see any increase in the rate of rise which may indicate problems further downstream at Llangollen..</p> <p>Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed, including evacuation procedures</p>	<p>If at the start point at the Chain Bridge the back channel around the bridge fills with water then racing will be suspended to allow the organisers to re-assess conditions.</p> <p>Event Emergency Plan contains suspension and cancelation protocols</p>			
Lightning Strike	Paddlers Event Team Spectators	<p>If there are concerns about potential storms. Lightning will be tracked using a site such www.lightningmaps.org. If lightning is within 10km of the event, racing will immediately stop, paddlers will be removed from the water as quickly as possible, and all will be advised to seek shelter.</p>	Monitoring of lightning in place	Event Organiser	On the day	
High Winds	Paddlers Event Team Spectators	<p>Event Infrastructure (gazebos, fencing, signage) secured as per manufacturer guidance where available</p> <p>Boats and paddlers equipment secured when not in use</p>	Review conditions on the day	Event Organiser	On the day	
WEILS DISEASE	Paddlers Event Team	<p>Washing Facilities are available on at the Chainbridge Hotel</p>	<p>Paddler and volunteer briefing on hazards and symptoms:</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash or shower after canoeing Cover minor scratches on exposed parts of the body with water-proof plaster 	<p>Event Organiser</p> <p>Paddlers</p> <p>Event Volunteers</p>	On the Day	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use foot-wear to avoid cutting feet 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 <p>Paddlers briefed to report any infection to Paddle UK incident reporting</p>			
Safeguarding or Welfare incident	Paddlers Event Team Spectators	Paddle UK Safeguarding processes to be followed Trained Event Safeguarding Officer to manage concerns during the event.	U18 or vulnerable paddlers to be the responsibility of & supervised by parent / coach / club throughout the event	Event Organiser SG Officer to be mentioned at the briefing	Monitored during the event	
Equipment Failure (Catastrophic)	Event Team Paddlers	All event equipment checked and maintained to manufacturer specifications All Competitors are responsible for ensuring their equipment is fit for purpose and meets manufacturer specifications Event has an Emergency Plan to be followed	Scrutineering checks will be carried out on the day.	Event Organiser	On the day	
Equipment Failure (Organisational Risk)	Event Team Paddle UK	Equipment maintained and regularly checked	Back-up manual system available if required			
BioSecurity BioSecurity breach, inadvertent spread of non native species	Other water locations through spread of Non – native Species	General awareness of Bio Security amongst paddling community	Competitors briefed on Bio Security and made aware of wash down stations x3 Bio Security at HP RA 2025 available for reference.	Event Organiser and competitor	At the briefing	

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Office use only (to be completed by a risk assessment sampler if selected for sampling)

Sampled by		Position:		Date:	
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Review Notes:

08/01/26
No incidents to record during the 2025 event and water levels remained within safe range for the event. At 0.8m to 0.9m at Corwen gauge it made a tricky entry to the Serpents tail section resulting in a number of capsizes, but bankside safety cover managed these satisfactorily. Control measures for Hypothermia updated with the dedicated shuttle bus drivers to transport paddlers from the classic finish to the start and during practice runs. Event plan updated to reflect this change.

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