# VENUE: Maidstone Canoe Club

This risk assessment considers hazards and risks arising from the participation in racing paddle sports.

This risk assessment must be read in conjunction to the Risk Assessment compiled and circulated by the Maidstone Canoe Club (MCC).

Notes

1. In ‘person at risk’ column, ‘all’ may include coaches, other paddlers, students, on-shore helpers, members and non-members etc.
2. The term ‘leader’ refers to qualified river leaders and coaches as well as experienced paddlers whom the committee have deemed competent to lead the session/trip.
3. All leaders should operate with the British Canoeing environmental and deployment guidance referenced above. Experienced but unqualified leaders should operate within the same constraints as an equivalent qualified river leader. Suitably-experienced paddlers may be excluded from the leader:participant ratio guidance at the discretion of the session/trip leader. These paddlers will effectively be acting as a “peer paddle” subgroup within the main session/trip. This “peer paddle” status must be made clear to them by the session/trip leader.

# On or near the water

| What are the hazards? | Person at risk of harm, and how? | Risk already controlled by? | What further action is necessary? | Action by whom, and by when / Completed |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Drowning | All paddlers at risk of drowning following a capsize | * Suitable buoyancy aids worn (div 7 and above and all under 18’s regardless of division as required by British Canoeing) * Check buoyancy aids are worn correctly * Check all boats are fitted with buoyancy to enable them to float when capsized * Paddler to be familiar with suitable rescue techniques | * Dynamic risk assessments to be made on river conditions and paddlers to consider appropriate clothing for the conditions | Paddlers/leaders |
| Slips, trips & falls | All at risk of slips on wet, icy or muddy river banks / slipways from falling injuries or falling into water | * Paddler to be aware of their environment * Wear appropriate footwear * Wear buoyancy aid (as above, as per British Canoeing Guide Lines) * Take care |  |  |
| Injuries including strains or sprains sustained during removing or re-placing boats | All | * Boats in racks higher than arm’s reach must be removed from their rack with the help of one other person |  |  |
| Danger of injuries from traffic in the car park | All | * Care must be taken when crossing the car park * Even though the pedestrians have right of way, all persons must take care of the fact that moving racing boats is not always easy and turning to avoid traffic involves a wide turning-circle |  |  |
| Paddling alone  Eg: individual training/ time trials | Lone Paddler at risk of capsize, inability to rescue, cold, unable to get back | * Recommend wearing a BA if paddling alone. * Take a means of communication to summon help. * Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back. | Paddler to conduct a personal dynamic RA for the conditions that they are going out in. They must consider (this is not an exhaustive list):   * River condition * Weather * stability of boat being used * Ability in a racing boat * clothing * Could they self-rescue in the conditions they are going out * Need to carry extra clothing/first aid kit/mobile phone |  |
| Paddling at night | Paddlers, capsize, cold, separated from boat, invisible | * Advised to wear lights on the paddler and/or the boat, unless remaining in lit areas * Advised not to paddle alone * Take a means of communication to summon help * Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back | Paddler to conduct a personal RA  (as above) |  |
| Inexperienced Paddlers causing problems for themselves / group | All. Multiple risks exacerbated by inexperienced paddlers forming the group. | * Ratio of 1:2 maximum in racing boats * Inexperienced paddlers to racing boats to be taken only on normal river conditions * Min level 1 coach/ PI or relevant knowledge and experience in a racing boat, as approved by CDG /Committee to run sessions (e.g. racing paddlers that have relevant racing experience) * Inexperienced paddlers to racing boats must follow all instructions from the coach/PI/leader and if their decision is that they cannot paddle due to it being deemed too dangerous the coach/PI/leader will have the backing of the committee | Racing coaches/PIs and PAAs with racing boat experience to write guidance on:  1) what is normal river conditions  2) a procedure to consider who is an experienced racing boat paddler that can lead a session  3) how to define an inexperienced race boat paddler | CDG/Committee with the racing team to come up with a way of having a record of what makes an experienced racing boat paddler and communicate this to the whole club |
| Hypothermia | All paddlers at risk, particularly following immersion, rain, wind, etc | * Paddler to be aware of conditions * Wear appropriate clothing * Warm up facility to be in place and should include the accessibility to the changing rooms * Warm dry clothing or blankets | Paddler to conduct a dynamic personal RA as above |  |
| Hyperthermia / Sunburn | All paddlers at risk | * Paddler to be aware of conditions * Wear appropriate clothing e.g. hat, sunglasses. * Wear suncream * Carry extra fluidsPaddler to conduct a dynamic personal RA as above | * Paddler to conduct a dynamic personal RA as above |  |
| Exhaustion | All paddlers at risk , particularly following long days / adverse conditions | * Paddlers to have trained for the appropriate distance of race * Have emergency food available with them if possible and available at the end of the paddle * Training session tailored to the level of the paddlers involved, encourage to take emergency food / drink as appropriate |  |  |
| Other river users | All paddlers could suffer injury colliding with other river users or obstructions; e.g. other craft (including powered & non-powered), anglers, overhanging trees, underwater obstructions | * Paddlers be aware of surroundings * Paddlers to look out for other crafts e.g. rowers and consider speed and positioning on the river * Paddler to check for events which may be happening on the river * Treat anglers with courtesy and try to avoid lines |  |  |
| Tow path , portages and locks | Members of the public walking other paddlers | * Give way to members of the public * Be aware of possible cyclists * Wear appropriate footwear * Be aware of the conditions and slow down if slippery etc |  |  |
| Weather/river levels | All paddlers at risk; multiple risks exacerbated by difficult environmental conditions. | * Inexperienced racing boat paddlers must not be taken out if the river is flowing above normal level/ speed | * Cancel/alter session/ trip as appropriate |  |
| General injury | All at risk of suffering blisters, joint / muscle injuries | * Do appropriate warm-up exercises * Do appropriate warm-down stretches |  |  |
| Lifting / handling injury | Anyone lifting or moving boats could suffer back or muscle injury through mishandling or lifting excessive weight | * Use correct manual handling techniques * Lift boats in pairs where appropriate |  |  |
| Overtaken by darkness | All at risk. Multiple risks exacerbated by darkness. | * Trips/sessions planned to minimise risk of hazard occurring |  |  |
| Environmental | All paddlers at risk from pollution, toxic plants, water borne diseases | * Web site includes information about Weil’s Disease and Giant Hogweed * Wash hands before eating * Cover wounds before paddling * Shower as soon as possible after paddling |  |  |
| Strains or Sprains from incorrect use of the paddling machines and Gym Equipment | All users | * Users only allowed to use the equipment if shown how to | Paddlers using the gym equipment must carry out their own risk assessment and if not used to the equipment Must seek help from an experienced user. |  |

This risk assessment was adopted at the Maidstone Canoe Club Committee Meeting held on . . 16 November 2022

Signed by: . . . . . . . . ………….. . . . . . . . . . . . for and on behalf of Maidstone Canoe Club on

Name: John Simmonds

Position: Chairman

Date: 16 November 2022

Risk assessments to be carried out in September of each year, with reporting of hazards to the club secretary, as and when they occur.