

**Letter from the  
MRC Chairman**

To all clubs, for distribution to membership

The Marathon Racing committee met recently and I thought it would be useful to write to all clubs to update them on various issues affecting us all.

I am aware that poor communication by the MRC has been a criticism in the past and I think that it is important that we try to ensure that, in future, all clubs are aware of what the committee is doing 'behind the scenes' to improve and promote Marathon racing for us all. A large part it plays is of course overseeing our representation at international level and the recent excellent team performance in Singapore confirms that we can produce and deliver world-class marathon results.

The National Championships and Hasler Final are also the responsibility of the committee and both events, supported and ably run by the respective host clubs, have provided high level competition with further increased competitor levels which is highly encouraging for the 2012 season and beyond.

Generally competitor numbers are up across the board with only senior men classes at the National Championships in decline; something for us all to ponder upon.

Sadly however the 2011 season saw, for the first time in our paddling memory, a death at a Marathon race. Whilst we cannot comment here on official reports from the Police and Port of London Authority, it is obvious that there will in future be many consequences for our sport, our clubs and the governance of waterways that we enjoy.

Risk Assessments.

For those organising races, whether they are large national events or small club affairs, the importance of having a proper risk assessment cannot be overlooked and the committee wants to see that all race organisers have one in place in the future. This will apply particularly to any race that is listed in the published Racing Handbook calendar of events where it will now be mandatory. Whilst this alone will not eliminate true accidents from happening, it will deal with the uncertainties of how any risk or emergency should be dealt with on the day and ensure that WRITTEN evidence exists to show that the organisers have considered the potential risks beforehand, and taken, or are able to take, the appropriate action should circumstances arise.

We have attached a template of a suitable risk assessment that can be tailored for your event. This will be updated from time to time and loaded onto the website. Remember this should be specific for your race. Perhaps the most important point is that you fully consider the water and weather conditions on the day as well and REACT ACCORDINGLY. This may mean a change of course or more drastic action.

An answer phone number on your race details or update on your website can be useful in cancelling an event up until the day before.

HOWEVER IF WORSENING CONDITIONS MEANS THAT THE EVENT HAS TO BE CANCELLED ON THE DAY, THEN DO JUST THAT, CANCEL IT TOTALLY AND MAKE SURE THAT PADDLERS WHO MIGHT TURN UP ARE NOT INVOLVED IN AN 'UNOFFICIAL EVENT' IN ITS PLACE.

The MRC are OBVIOUSLY concerned with the effects of over zealous implementation of health and safety rules, and sometimes-questionable interpretation by those not directly involved in our sport. This has already started to have a limiting effect upon competitive racing e.g.: walking through portages. We are therefore making representations accordingly.

Coach - Training days.

The MRC are promoting, in conjunction with Ivan Lawler, training days to encourage club coaches to expand upon their experience and knowledge and benefit by spending the day with a six times World Champion!

The first such day will be on the 10th December and details should have already been sent to you but are available via the links below. Subsequent dates for 2012 will be published soon. The day will see each coach bring two paddlers from their club. Those coaches and paddlers, who meet the criteria to attend the first day, will then be expected to pass on the knowledge gained at their own club and subsequent days will then be designed to build further upon that knowledge, again to be replicated back to the clubs. Numbers attending will be kept reasonably small to ensure that everyone gets maximum value from the day.

Athlete - Winter training days.

These will be the 29th January and 18th Feb 2012. These are open to all marathon paddlers and will include 5K racing as part of the day's programme. They will be used as the assessment events for Ghent (24th March 2012 provisional ) development trip. It is important that everyone is fully aware that a development trip is not designed for our top paddlers, although there may be some in the mix , but for those showing potential and for their encouragement in the future.

As with all international events/development trips for 2012 if you are an athlete who wishes to be considered then you must complete a form detailing your availability. This will be on the MRC website soon. It is your responsibility, as the Athlete, to complete and submit this form - it does not need endorsement from your club coach, but sensibly you may wish to consult him/her to assess your suitability to submit yourself for certain events.

Main Assessment races 2012.

More information to follow soon, however currently the information below is provisional

World Cup 1. (currently only one in 2012) 23/24th June

Assessment races:

K1 Worcester 29th April

K1 6th May (venue still to be agreed)

K2 Reading 27th May

World Championships Rome - probably 21st/23rd Sept but it may move to the week before, we hope to have confirmation soon

K1 Wokingham July 1st

Nationals Norwich 25th/26th August K1 and K2

Further details will be posted on the website in due course.

All assessment events or races are to assist the selectors in their role by allowing continual assessment of the overall potential and performance of an athlete for inclusion in a team for a particular event.

Website.

It is recognised that the MRC website has its shortcomings. The MRC are currently looking to improve the website in a number of ways - if you have any particular comments about what you feel you should see there please let me know.

Stan Missen  
Chairman  
Marathon Racing Committee  
November 2011

<http://gonepaddling.wufoo.com/forms/ivan-lawler-coaching-days-elmbridge/>

<http://gonepaddling.wufoo.com/forms/winter-training-and-5k-race/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/racingcanooclubs/>