

Running a Local Sprint Regatta

This is a simple guide to help you to run a local Sprint Regatta.

Building your Committee

- Find a motivated group of people to help you make the big decisions and see the event through to its completion.
- Key roles will include: Chair, Entry Secretary, Treasurer, Safety Officer, Welfare Officer, Refreshments Officer, Chief Technical Official, Social Media Person and a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- If it is a smaller event, one person could cover more than one role.

General Administration

Having decided that you have a suitable piece of water, i.e. fairly straight, not too much traffic, reasonable access and car parking space, approach the owners or administrative body for permission to use it.

Fixing a Date

- When negotiating with the water owners try to get a selection of possible dates that are acceptable to them.
- Obtain all the information you can about the dates of other events in your area, and approach them about any help you think you might need.
- Make sure that you don't clash with another local canoeing event.
- Check with other local water users, sailing clubs, angling societies, etc, rather than risk conflict on the day of the event.
- A one day event is recommended for anything other than a National scale event. The entry is most unlikely to warrant a longer programme.

Advertising your Event

- Use the Racing Handbook, British Canoeing publications/newsletters/website, Regional Development Teams, Club News and also any other independent canoeing magazines to promote your event.
- Create an online poster to share.
- Register your event online with British Canoeing via the link: www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/competition/event-promotion
- Advertise on Social Media. Create a social media event for your event and share with the community. Post the event on the Sprint Racing Committee Website and the 'Racing Canoe Clubs' Facebook page.

When compiling your information poster or posts, make sure you include the following:

1. Date
2. Instructions on how to reach the location – map of the location.
3. A list of the events to be held e.g. Classes, Distances.
4. Instructions on how to enter and the entry deadline.
5. State what the entry fees will be (BC members and non-members) and how to pay them.
6. Whether or not refreshments will be available.
7. Any special information that competitors and spectators may need to know about car parking etc.
8. The time at which you intend to hold the Team Leader's Meeting (and where).

Finance

The areas where you are likely to have to spend money are:

1. Costs associated with use of waterway.
2. Hiring equipment. Buoys, radios and a megaphone etc. Try your local Youth Office or Sports Council. Scout Groups will often be willing to hire their marquee.
3. Prizes. It is wise when obtaining these to use something which will be useable on other occasions. (avoid printed or engraved dates)
4. General Administration, paper, printing etc.

The only areas where you can raise money are through your entry fees, the sales of refreshments, parking and possibly through getting help from a sponsor. Sponsorship can be a great help, especially in the provision of prizes, but before getting too involved with any such arrangement, it may be better to 'prove' your organisation before going 'on show'.

As far as prizes are concerned it is as well to be very conservative, especially the first time you hold an event. You can never be sure that you will take enough money to cover the expense.

Entry Fees

There is a balance in getting the entry fees right, in making sure you're not too expensive and competitors don't enter, versus providing a great experience for them.

The easiest way is to make a standard charge for the day e.g. for as many races as you like to enter. You may however prefer the more usual way of charging a set fee for each entry.

Make sure you have included provision for competitors insurance either through being a British Canoeing 'On the Water' member, a 'Club Associate' member or having a British Canoeing day membership. The day membership form can be downloaded [here](#).

Checklist of Essential Equipment

This is a basic list to get you started:

1. Loudhailer for the starter.
2. Paper forms, or laptops on which to record the results.
3. Noticeboard... to publish the results and draws to competitors.
4. Drawing pins, stapler or tape for use with noticeboard.
5. Some method of communication between start and finish:
 - a) Radios.
 - b) Mobile phone.
 - c) A "runner", on foot, bike or in a boat.
6. A large clock, so that everybody knows the time all the time.
7. Some form of shelter at the finish for the secretary. (Building, tent or caravan).
8. At least four marker buoys for the course, two at the start and two at the finish, and some 'surveyor' type poles if possible, in the bank either side of the course to mark the start/finish line.

Extra Equipment – Optional but very helpful

1. Some form of shelter for the starter.

2. Extra loudhailer or PA System for use at the finish for general announcements and commentary.
3. Extra buoys (polythene drums) to mark out turns for long distance events, and also to give a complete row on the finish.
Turns – 3 or 5 buoys on each.
Finish – to buoy 6 lanes use 7 buoys.
4. Safety boat.
5. Stopwatch or other timing equipment (if using timing).
6. Marquee or building in which Team Leaders Meeting can be held prior to racing, which can also be used for shelter and refreshments during the day.
7. Toilet facilities.
8. Prizes.
9. Laptops and printer or method of producing result sheet on the spot.

Programming a Regatta – Guidelines

The minimum time spacing of races:

- 3 minutes for 200m
- 3 minutes for 500m
- 5 minutes for 1000m
- 35 minutes for 5000m

You don't need to run these exact distances but these times will give you an indication of how to space your races.

Allow longer if you like, but no less, bad weather can make a tight programme impossible to run.

Resting Time for Competitors

On a major regatta, paddlers need to have about 1 hours rest between races (the longer the race the greater the need). At a lower key event where the entry may be lower and there is not so much at stake, the rest time might need to be reduced. If you can programme the rest time to be the practical maximum it helps both organisers and competitors, giving time to do draws, settle disputes etc.

Order of Events for Individuals

You can't please everyone all the time... BUT TRY.

Consider:

1. It is best for any competitor to have completed all his events for the day, before doing longer distance races.
2. It is best to complete the cycle of heat, semi-final, and final in any event, before starting on the next event.

Fitting the Races into the Programme

From the entry sheets, letter, phone-calls etc., sort out the individual entries into separate lists for each race. (e.g. U18 Boys K1 500m). Start off with a page for every event you want to run, then sift through the entries, marking each one up on its appropriate sheet. You will then know how many entries you have for each event.

From your entries decide which group of paddlers (Senior Men, Senior Women, U14 Boys etc.) has the greatest number of entries. They are the ones who will have the most races to do in the day. Their races will most probably have heats, semi-finals and finals, whereas other classes may only run to heats and finals. **START THE PROGRAMME WITH THIS GROUP.** Follow this with the next largest group etc (but use a different boat). Below is an example of how this might work.

Different Distances

You will find that on any one day you may need to run races of different distances (e.g. 200m, 500m, 1000m etc.). Consider the starter, try to programme the races so that they do not have to move about unnecessarily. Too much moving about causes the starts to run late, which in turn can destroy the whole organisation of the event.

EXAMPLE OF PART OF A PROGRAMME

Race No:

1.	10.00	SENIOR MEN	K1	1000m H1
2.	10.05			H2
3.	10.10			H3
4.	10.15	U16 BOYS	K2	1000m H1
5.	10.20			H2
6.	10.25	SENIOR WOMENS	K4	1000m F
		15 minute time gap to change distance		
7.	10.40	U18 BOYS	K1	250m H1
8.	10.43			H2
9.	10.46			H3
10.	10.49	U18 GIRLS	K2	250m H1
11.	10.52			H2
		13 minute time gap to change distance		
12.	11.05	U16 GIRLS	K4	1000m F
13.	11.10	SENIOR MEN	K4	1000m F
14.	11.15	SENIOR MEN	K1	1000m F
15.	11.20	MASTERS	K4	1000m F
16.	11.25	U16 BOYS	K2	1000m F

This system makes a good start, or draft copy, but will need adjusting as you go through. Races such as Masters K14, U16 Girls K4 or Womens K4, which are usually a straight final, are usually best kept as 'spacers'. By a 'spacer' we mean a race which is used to stretch a space between races. Try to leave an hour's rest... so two or three 'spacers' can be used to fill out the time.

Drawing the Heats

First you must decide how many heats are necessary. You will need to consider:

1. How many lanes on the course?
2. How many entries?
3. How many late entries are expected?

Example 1: Assuming you can run six lanes, and are dealing with 18 competitors, 3 heats of 6 boats would be a minimum. In order to end up with 6 finalists, only the first 2 boats in each heat would go through to the final.

Example 2: If the number of competitors did not work out so easily, e.g. 11; Two heats would be necessary (Heat 1...6 boats, Heat 2.. 5 boats) with the first 3 from each heat to the final.

Note: Always try to keep the numbers in the heats as even as possible, extra paddlers going in the earlier heats:

- 18 competitors 6 H1 6 H2 6 H3
- 17 competitors 6 H1 6 H2 5 H3
- 16 competitors 6 H1 5 H2 5 H3

When printing out each heat or semi-final in the programme, always state how many competitors go through to the next round.

The system used to allocate paddlers to a specific lane in a specific heat, is to draw names from a hat, or any other comparable random method if you are not using timing systems; similarly when doing the draw for finals or semi-finals.

If You Have Received Very Few Entries

In this situation, making a programme can be very difficult. It makes the business of receiving late entries easier if you have allowed space for fitting them in. Try to make an educated guess about the classes in which you are likely to get such entries. If by any chance you allow too much extra space (ie. You allow for 2 heats and a final, and ultimately you only need to run a final), you can always withdraw the heats again. It is easier to do it this way than to try and fit in extra races after you have made the programme.

People's roles on the day:

Recruit your Technical Officials

You will need 5-10 officials, most of whom will not be required until the day of the event, although it may be as well to meet at least once to discuss duties etc. The duties of the various officials will be discussed separately, but do not be afraid to ask for help from outside your own club. The Regatta Committee are there to help.

1. Competition Organiser

Responsible for overall organisation both before and on the day of the event. Much of the work can be delegated but it is up to the Competition Organiser to ensure that everything is done and co-ordinated.

- a) Obtain all necessary equipment.
- b) Prepare officials for their jobs.
- c) Send out advance information.
- d) Receive entries and make the programme.
- e) Preparation of the site.
- f) Negotiations for the course, organise the preparation for the setting up of the course.
- g) Conduct the Team Leaders Meeting.
- h) Co-ordinate operations throughout the event.
- i) Clear up after the event.
- j) Thank landowners, sponsors, helpers etc.
- k) Prepare a result sheet and send out to clubs and British Canoeing.
- l) Deal with any formalities such as health and safety documents etc and send these to the Sprint Racing Committee.
- m) Collect the day membership tickets and fees and send to British Canoeing.

2. Starter

Obtain a programme:

- a) Go to Team Leaders Meeting and record all changes on your programme.
- b) Make sure you know the start positions for all races.
- c) Essential equipment... Loudhailer, clipboard and waterproof pen.
- d) Helpful extra – Waterproof clothing, umbrella, radio.
- e) Check that the start-line buoys has not drifted out of place and that you know what instructions to give the competitors, e.g. line up between the two buoys.
- f) **MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO START ALL RACES ON TIME. NEVER START EARLY...**
Unless the Competition Organiser instructs you to do so.

Starting Procedure

1. Prior to each race announce the race number, and
2. How long to the start
3. Call through the list of competitors.
4. One minute before the start call the boats to the line.
5. Check that the course is clear.
6. Line the boats up until they are level.
7. Start the race by saying "Ready - Set - Go. ("Go" can be a shot or other powerful sound).
8. If the races are being timed, before you start the race you must ensure that your line of communication is open to the finish, and that they are ready to receive the race on the timing equipment.

3. Starters Assistant

Ensure that the starter receives all the draws and up-dates information necessary for him to do his job. Communicate any problems he has at the start to the Regatta Organiser, so that if possible he can do something about it. The starter cannot leave his job, so make sure he is supplied with food and drink. Stand in as a starter in an emergency.

4. Finish Line Judge (plus one assistant)

Needs good eyesight to read lane numbers on the boats.

Before racing starts, make sure that you know where the Finish line is – which two marks, buoys, poles etc have to be lined up visually. (see course diagram)

As the boats cross the Finish Line, (ie as soon as the bow crosses), call out the relevant numbers, to the assistant to write down the lane numbers in order of finishing. Use a separate record sheet for each race.

5. Timekeeper – if timing the event

A Timekeeper is only necessary if you intend to time races. It can be a complicated procedure, and is not recommended to anyone running a regatta for the first time. For more information and support with timing, speak to a member of the Sprint Regatta Committee.

6. Commentator

This is not an easy job, but done reasonably well can add a lot to the atmosphere and smooth running of the event.

Commentary can serve several purposes:

1. Keep competitors and spectators in touch with what is going on.
2. General announcements and instructions.
3. Entertainment – via music or general chat relevant to the sport.

Prospective commentators must be in possession of all up to date information. They must therefore attend the Team Leaders Meeting and make sure that all the draws are forwarded to them as they become available.

A considerable amount of thought needs to go into the way in which the job is tackled. Probably the safest way to deal with the commentary for a first attempt is to just use it as an information service, just providing spectators with enough information to identify the race and people in it, and announcing results and draws when there is time.

7. **Regatta Secretary** (plus one assistant)

Needs an up to date programme and prepared form for any alterations to the entries and forms on which to record results and draws. The Regatta Secretary and assistant both need to be at the Team Leaders' Meeting, one to make up a programme with additional information, and the other to keep a record of late entries so that clubs can be charged accordingly.

Collect all the late entry fees due after the Team Leaders meeting.

During the racing day process any last minute deletions or changes to entries made by Team Leaders. Keep all officials updated on any alternations to the programme.

If late entries after the Team Leaders meeting are allowed, such as for the long distance races, process and update the programme and pass this information on to all the other officials.

8. **Results Team**

It is best to have 2 people if possible for this job, one person to keep up to date with the results. The other person can then focus on working out the draws. This process can either be done manually, using pen and paper or with laptops and a printer.

First head up a result sheet for each the race, giving the race number, event and details of heats/final or final. This can be prepared beforehand to save time on the day.

Example: Race 1 Senior Men K1 1000m Heat 1 RESULT

<u>FIN ORDER</u>	<u>NAME:</u>	<u>CLUB</u>	<u>FIN. ORDER</u>	<u>LANE:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>
1.	R.Smith	TON	6		
2.	K.Green	NOT	2		
3.			5		
4.			1		

Using the Finish Line Judge order on the finishing sheets, record these numbers in order on the result sheet (see finish order above).

The numbers you have recorded from the Finish Judge are lane numbers and by referring to your programme start list with the competitor's names for Race 1, it is possible to combine the finish order with competitor's names and clubs etc. as example above.

Doing a Draw. Wherever there is a series of heats or s/finals, as soon as these have been run and the results are available, the draw for the next round must be done and published as soon as possible.

First, make sure you have the results of all the heats. Then check how many go through from each heat. Select the names of those who have 'got through'. Record these names on a Draw Sheet, allocating lanes by means of random draw. You must also head this sheet with the race number, event title and the time at which this next race will be held.

Results and Draws should be published to Competitors as soon as they are available.

RESULTS: At least 3 copies needed (or 4 with one to commentary)

1. Filed for Competition Organiser
2. Kept for use in making draws
3. Posted on board for paddlers
4. Commentary (if you are announcing results)

DRAWS: 5 to 6 copies

1. Competition Organiser
2. Regatta Secretary
3. Finish Line
4. Start.
5. Noticeboard.
6. Commentary (if you are announcing).

General Comments:

A programme must aim to be easy to operate from the point of view of both competitors and officials. The more workable the programme the more successful the regatta. Try to produce the programme so that competitors have sufficient rest, coaches and club officials don't have 'boat problems', and regatta officials have time to do their job properly.

Don't give cause or excuse for complaints and then there won't be so much hassle to deal with. When uninterrupted by such aggravations, you can get on with the job of ensuring that everything runs smoothly.

The Course: The course should ideally be deep water throughout, and wide enough to accommodate six lanes. However, any reasonable compromise is acceptable for regattas at local level, and very successful regattas have been held on the most unlikely ponds.

Launching Boats

There may be a natural landing stage or launching place; if not special arrangements may need to be made. If the launching is very restricted the programme may get held up. Canoes must be able to proceed to the start without obstructing the course. Decide which route it is best for them to take, and then ensure that all Team Leaders are informed at the meeting. A notice could also be displayed at the launching place.

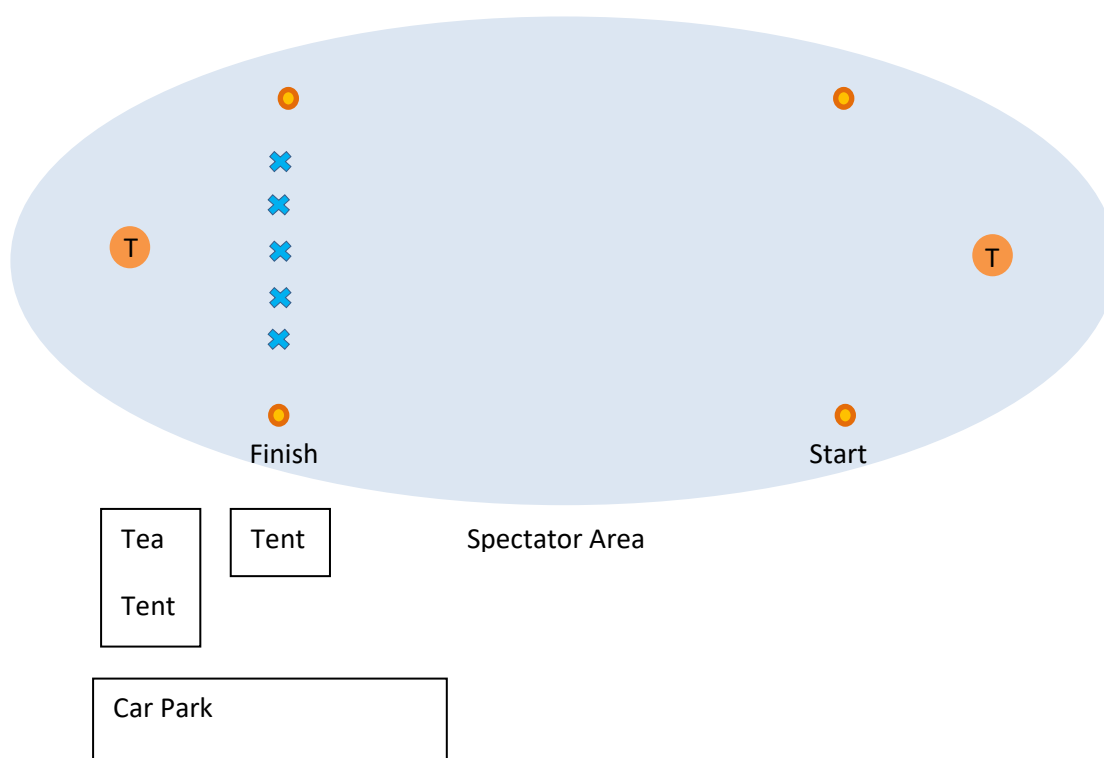
Minimum Buoying

2 buoys at the start between which the paddlers line up, and 2 buoys at the finish between which they pass at the end of the race. These in effect mark the four corners of the course.

It is also helpful to have sighting poles on either bank to mark Start and Finish...especially at the finish as the finish line judge needs to 'eye-up' the finishing line as accurately as possible.

Extra Buoying

It makes the finish judging easier if the paddlers cross the line in their correct lanes. This is made possible by buoying the finish line in to the number of lanes on your course. If running long distance events the turns need to be marked. The simplest of methods is to use the corner markers and do laps of your sprint course. An improvement to this could be to add a third buoy to each turn (see T).



Regatta Secretary. Noticeboard & Clock.

Site Layout

The way the site is organised may depend largely on the position of the car parking. The most successful arrangement is to have all the facilities at the finish. The advantages are:

- a) If everyone is located in the same area, communication is easier.
- b) Paddlers can watch as well as compete.
- c) Cars can be used for shelter/boat-racks etc (if near enough).

If races are to be timed, it is necessary to have some means of communication with the start, so that the timing mechanism/stopwatch can be started when the Timekeeper hears the starter say "GO". Provided that the Start can be seen from the Finish, it is also possible to 'watch' for the GO.

If times are taken, it is important to record these alongside the finishing order as soon as possible, otherwise you may not have cleared the timing system/watches when the Starter is ready to start the next race.

The Team Leaders' Meeting

If at all possible, it is best to hold this inside a tent or building. It is very difficult to make yourself heard in an open outdoor situation.

General Tips:

1. Make all your general announcements before you start going through the programme. The sort of announcements you will need to make are:
 - a) Describe the course. Give instructions about where the boats should be launched and what route they should take to the start. Explain where the long distance races start, where they turn and how many laps for each race.
 - b) Let Team Leaders know at this stage whether you will be taking late entries throughout the day for all events, for none, or just specific races, such as 3000m or 5000m. (The last suggestion is about the most workable, the first very difficult to manage.)
 - c) Arrangements for collecting entry fees. (This is a difficult task, and it is as well to have one member of the Regatta staff at the Team Leaders' Meeting to record the number of late entries made by each club.)
2. Don't allow the meeting to degenerate into a free-for-all, with everyone talking at once. This can easily happen when Team Leaders are trying to make up crews amongst themselves. Keep a firm hand on the situation and maintain an orderly procedure, otherwise information is wrongly recorded and confusion occurs during the events.
3. KEEP AN EYE ON THE CLOCK; the meeting must end at least 20 minutes before racing is due to start.
4. Going through the programme and taking late entries. Take the races one at a time in chronological order. In the case of a group of heats for one event – treat them as one race. First ask if there are any existing entries to be scratched. (In the case of a group of heats, you must deal with all cancelled entries before attempting to take any late entries.)

If taking any, ask the meeting for any late entries. Count up how many late entries need to be made. Count how many spaces you have in the programme. If there are sufficient spaces, enter the paddler's names and clubs, (remembering to keep the heats as even as possible where this is applicable).

If there are insufficient spaces, there are two courses open. You can either draw the names from a hat for the spaces there are, and turn away the rest of the entries, or you can add an extra heat to the programme and accommodate everyone. If you attempt the latter alternative, it is fairer to re-draw all the entries for that event into the new heats. This information must be published on the noticeboard immediately after the meeting, stating the times of the events and the time of the final. It is also essential that all the officials are aware of the changes.

Fixing a time for the final is difficult. If you are lucky, it may fit into a space where an event has been scratched through lack of entries. It may fit into part of the lunchtime break (if any), or you may just have to squeeze it in between two other races.