



# Great Britain Wild Water Racing

**Wild Water Racing – Safety Policy – V.4.0**

**1 January 2005**



.....	1
<b>Great Britain Wild Water Racing</b> .....	1
<b><u>Wild Water Racing – Safety Policy – V.4.0</u></b> .....	1
Safety Summary .....	3
The Athlete .....	3
The Race Organiser .....	3
The Parent.....	3
The Coach.....	3
<b>Wild Water Racing Safety</b> .....	3
1. Background .....	4
2. Introduction.....	4
3. The Overriding Principle And Safety.....	4
4. General.....	5
4.2 Equipment (Other Guidance).....	6
4.3 Duty of Care .....	7
4.4 Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy .....	8
5. Equipment Checklist.....	9
6. Drugs and Supplements .....	10
7. Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation Procedure Competition and Training.....	10
7.1 Risk Assessment General .....	10
7.2 Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation - Competition.....	11
7.3 Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation - Training.....	12
8. Guidance For Race and Training Officials.....	12
9. Summary Practical Guidance For Athletes And Their Parents .....	14
10. Summary Advice For Coaches .....	14
11. Summary Advice For Race Organisers .....	14
12. Updates/Corrections .....	14
13. Regional Safety Officers .....	15
14. Training and Foreign Trips.....	15
Annex A: The Art of Wild Water Racing By Peter Keron is attached .....	15
Annex B: A Model For Assessing River Risk is attached.....	15
Annex C: River Risks are attached .....	15
Annex D: Wild Racing Safety Report is attached.....	15

## **Safety Summary**

### **The Athlete**

- Is responsible for being mentally and physically prepared for racing
- Acknowledges responsibility for his/her own equipment/conduct/capability to race
- Undertakes to race at his/her own risk
- Accepts the decisions of race organisers and coaches
- Trains safely

### **The Race Organiser**

- Is responsible for posting race details on the website/information line
- Is responsible for ensuring the course can be run
- Is responsible for delivering a safety briefing one hour before race start
- Is responsible for a risk assessment and for sharing the risk assessment at the safety briefing
- Checks equipment where appropriate/necessary
- Informs parents of decisions relating to juniors
- Is advised to ensure the venue is safe, and signed
- Is advised to ensure the venue is appropriate for the number of athletes and spectators

### **The Parent**

- Is responsible for the junior athlete as per 'The Athlete' above
- Will, in the event of any dispute, accept the verdict of the boys/girls coach/race organiser over their own opinion

### **The Coach**

- Prepares athletes to take their own responsibilities seriously
- Guides athletes in training
- Informs parents of decisions relating to juniors

## **Wild Water Racing Safety**

## References:

- A. Wild Water Racing Yearbook 2005
- B. British Canoe Union, Canoeing Handbook, Third Edition, Chapters 3 and 6
- C. British Canoe Union Emergency Procedures  
[www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Emergency%20Procedures.pdf](http://www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Emergency%20Procedures.pdf)
- D. British Canoe Union Risk Assessment  
[www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Risk%20Assessment.pdf](http://www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Risk%20Assessment.pdf)
- E. British Canoe Union Club Operating and Safety Procedures  
[www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Club%20Operate%20Safe%20Procedures.pdf](http://www.bcu.org.uk/pdffdocs/Club%20Operate%20Safe%20Procedures.pdf)
- F. British Canoe Union Health and Safety Policy  
[www.bcu.org.uk/aboutus/healthpolicy.html](http://www.bcu.org.uk/aboutus/healthpolicy.html)

## 1. Background

The purpose of this paper is to present a Code of Practice for Safety in Wild Water Racing and Training that recognises the challenging nature of the sport, encourages participation, and reassures competitors, newcomers and parents of juniors that the sports safety issues are managed in an appropriate manner.

Consultation suggests that accidents related to Wild Water Racing occur principally in training or international competition. It is important to note, therefore, that the sport has been traditionally both challenging and safe, except when unsupervised or at its most competitive. Having said this it is the case that numerous, relatively minor, incidents do occur, and these, which are common to all forms of paddlesport, do need to be reported and tracked so that a picture of risks can be built up.

References A – F are the basis for safety in the sport of Wild Water Racing. This paper does not replace these guidelines or consultation, but brings together in one document how safety in the sport should be managed.

## 2. Introduction

This paper aims to:

- Preserve the challenging and friendly nature of the sport
- Give guidance on equipment and other general matters
- Introduce a Risk Assessment Procedure for competition and training
- Suggest Risk Mitigation Steps for competition and training
- Give guidance to race and training officials
- Give guidance to athletes and their coaches/parents
- Inform on actions in the event of accidents
- Summarise the main issues

## 3. The Overriding Principle And Safety

Wild Water Racing is a challenging sport, both technically and physically. There is recognition that in order to maintain the challenging nature of the sport safety must remain, in the final analysis, the responsibility of the participant or parent of the participant. Athletes participate

and train at their own risk. If an individual is concerned about safety or competence they should not participate in this sport.

The sport is also friendly – and it is friendly partly because all understand that safety is primarily their own concern. The camaraderie of the sport is therefore partly as a result of its challenging nature, and a common acceptance of risk. In general this is something to be preserved, and not tampered with. However, this is a modern world and some steps need to be taken to reassure new and younger athletes, more often their parents or friends, and protect the unwitting public from harm in potentially hazardous environments. Additionally, any first-rate organisation, or athlete, seeks to understand and minimise risk in order to perform to their potential. Finally and importantly, as affiliates of the British Canoe Union, the sport must take into account the Safety Views of the Governing Body.

**Nevertheless, the overriding principle of this challenging sport is that athlete and spectators participate at their own risk. This principle is recognised by both the British Canoe Union and the Executive Committee for Wild Water Racing and formally by each competitor, parent, or in loco parentis, on signing in for each Race.**

At Annex A is an article by one of the leading Wild Water athletes, Peter Keron. This gives a balanced view on how the sport should be approached.

It is important to understand that this Safety Policy does not seek to replace the Overriding Principle. It is meant to suggest some common sense actions that will allow the Sport to continue as a challenging Sport.

## 4. General

### 4.1 Policy on Protective Equipment for Athletes in Wild Water Races

The Wild Water Racing Committee indicates to competitors, via the Yearbook and the Safety Policy that Wild Water Racing, by its nature, requires a level of skill that varies with the racecourse and the conditions, and necessarily involves some element of risk.

The Wild Water Racing Committee will draw the attention of competitors, via the Yearbook and the Safety Policy, to any relevant published standards for protective equipment, of which the Committee, by making reasonable enquiries, is aware.

The Wild Water Racing Committee will make it clear to competitors, via the Yearbook and the Safety Policy, that each competitor is responsible for deciding whether he or she should practice, race, or continue to race, on a particular race course, in the prevailing conditions. For Junior Athletes guidance should be sought/given from their coach.

The Wild Water Racing Committee will make it clear to competitors, via the Yearbook and the Safety Policy, that each competitor **must wear a buoyancy aid and a helmet while racing and training (except where dispensation from a qualified coach has been given) on wild water**, and that each competitor is responsible for ensuring that all protective equipment he or she uses is suitable for the conditions of use and is in suitable condition.

**Buoyancy Aids – European Commission Approved** – Buoyancy aids can sometimes be a problem for Wild Water Racers, as many of today's designs rise up the paddler's body, when being worn in the boat. Look for a small compact buoyancy aid that is fairly tight fitting (although not too tight to constrict your upper body rotation) and make sure that it does not

ride up your body when worn in your boat with a spray deck fitted. Buoyancy aids must be European Commission compliant. Buoyancy aids will be checked randomly from the start of the 2005 season for compliance.

**Helmets – *European Commission Approved*** – Helmets should be comfortable and fairly light, but most importantly they must protect your head safely. Helmets must be European Commission compliant. Helmets will be checked randomly from the start of the 2005 season for compliance.

The Wild Water Racing Committee will require each competitor, when entering a Wild Water Race, to sign his or her entry card to confirm that he or she is aware of the relevant requirements of the Yearbook and the Safety Policy.

In the case of competitors less than 18 years of age, these duties of the competitor fall on the competitor's parent(s) or other responsible adult acting for the parent(s).

The Wild Water Racing Committee will require organisers to take reasonable measures to ensure that the racecourse is not obstructed or otherwise clearly unsuitable for the proposed competition. In assessing whether the course is suitable, organisers will take into account the nature of Wild Water Racing as described above.

The Wild Water Racing Committee reserves the right for organisers to examine or test competitor's protective equipment. This does not prevent organisers from examining any item of a competitor's equipment to ensure that no unfair advantage is gained, nor does this prevent any organiser from prohibiting any competitor from racing if he or she is clearly incompetent or not properly equipped. It is, however, recommended that organisers make a check of safety equipment. From the start of the 2005 season checks will be made, from time to time, of individual equipment.

Neither the British Canoe Union, the Wild Water Racing Committee, the organising Club or its members shall accept any liability for the failure of any competitor to use suitable protective equipment, or for the decision of any competitor to practice, race or continue to race on any course for which he or she is not competent. The Overriding Principle pertains.

See Also:

Helmets for Canoeing and White Water Sports. BS EN 1385:1998 (Copyright BSI)

European Commission Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Directive (89/686/CE)

British Canoe Union Statement and Recommendations for Personal Protective Equipment

The Wild Water Racing Executive has adopted the guidelines laid down by the British Canoe Union.

## **4.2 Equipment (Other Guidance)**

**K1 Paddles** – When starting in Wild Water Racing, any serviceable paddle is permissible. The more experienced athletes use 'Wing' paddles; but asymmetric flat paddles are fine. Check with coaches to understand what may be most suitable.

**K1 Boats** – Composite or glass fibre Wild Water Racing K1 designs are forever changing. With new boat designs, it is difficult to decide which boat to choose in the first instance. It is probably best to try to get hold of a *Wavehopper* (a plastic boat built by Perception), before progressing to a second-hand boat that is in fairly good condition, without too many repairs and watertight. (See the Discussion Page on Wild Water Racing web site, Classified Ads in 'Canoe Focus' or other paddlesport magazines, or try a local Canoe Club). Boats need to be equipped with air bags front and rear, and bow and stern grab loops. (See paragraph 5 for details).

When you are training on white water, to help protect the boat from the inevitable knocks that Wild Water Racing boats will incur on a rocky river, especially as you are learning the river and finding the best racing lines, you could make some crash/rock guards to fit the front and back of your boat. It is possible to tape a piece of linoleum on to the back end and some old hosepipe on to the front. Alternatively these can be made out of glass fibre and kevlar. If you want relatively trouble free racing, it would be best to buy or borrow a plastic Wild Water Racing *Wavehopper* kayak. They are great fun to paddle and learn a new river in. You can also race and river tour with them and they are a very good introduction boat. *Wavehoppers* can be borrowed from the British Canoe Union Wild Water Racing Committee.

**C1/C2 Paddles** – Canoe paddles can be made out of wood or composite materials. They can either be flat or curved: flat is more common. Compared to the blade area of a Slalom paddle, the area is smaller for Wild Water Racing. This is mainly due to the higher number of strokes you use in a Wild Water Race, compared to a Slalom race. Adult canoe paddles are normally around 140 – 150cm long, although you might find that you could steer better with a longer paddle. It is advisable to experiment yourself.

**C1 Boats** – Like K1s there are a number of different designs of C1. To start off a fairly stable boat is advisable. Modern boats are fairly tippy and only suitable for the more experienced paddler. Second-hand boats are again better to start off with. Boats need to be equipped with air bags front and rear, and bow and stern grab handles.

**C2 Boats** – Try anything second-hand, bearing its condition in mind! At present the most competitive C2 on the market is the '*Feeling*', but anything will do, especially in the beginning. Boats need to be equipped with air bags front and rear, and front and rear grab handles.

**Spray Decks** – Spray decks should ideally be tight fitting, with a good seal around the cockpit, they should also be as water tight as possible. The body tube should not be too tight as it may constrict your upper body rotation. Neoprene decks are the best for keeping the water out of your boat and they also help to keep you warm during the winter.

**Clothing** – Clothing should be light and comfortable. Most athletes do not wear full wetsuits; they wear a pair of Lycra shorts, with a pair of thermal trousers in cold weather. Jelly shoes or wetsuit shoes are advisable on your feet. Thin thermal long sleeved or T-shirt tops are worn again depending on the temperatures, with either a cap or cap deck over the top. Comfort is the most important thing. You must not get too cold waiting for the race to start; you must also not get too warm during your race. Novices should wear equipment as per paragraph 9 below.

#### 4.3 Duty of Care

The British Canoe Union wishes to ensure that all those taking part in canoeing are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff, coaches and/or volunteers. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

**With this in mind the British Canoe Union recognises that they have a duty towards all those taking part in paddlesport activity and to any club providing paddling opportunities ensuring that support is provided to ensure all can do so with the highest possible standards of care. All coaches and clubs should have a clear understanding of operating within an appropriate code of ethics, aware of what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position in providing activities and being responsible for others.**

As the organisers of activity, there is a possibility of someone being harmed. In a small number of cases action may be taken against you if the person decides to make a claim. This action may result in financial losses but can also harm your reputation or the reputation of your club and the British Canoe Union itself.

A good definition of 'duty of care' is:

***“The duty which rests upon an individual or organization to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organization is responsible”***

In an activity such as kayaking/canoeing, safety and keeping people safe is all about risk assessment and minimizing the risks involved at all levels of participation. While all taking part in activity have a duty to their neighbours, in organised activity we all have a heightened duty of care and as such we should be aware that the principal risks extend to the quality of control exercised by those in charge.

Trainers, coaches, referees, umpires or administrators should all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those directly taking part in activities and at any time they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge - in vehicles, during journey's to and from the activity, during events, team training events and camps etc.

#### **4.4 Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

The general policy on British Canoe Union Health and Safety is at Reference F.

Creating a safer environment within our sport in order that everyone can enjoy themselves safely is everyone's responsibility... coaches... volunteers... sport and recreation organizers... local clubs and associations... schools... all levels of Government... the participants...

Clubs are advised: they should take the matter of child protection and harassment seriously and preferably appoint a person responsible for this area. If it is a small club it may well be the chairman or secretary. The important thing to remember is, they do not need to be experts in issues relating to child protection. It simply identifies someone who people can report to. It is not up to any club member or official to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is their responsibility to take action, however small the concern.

The following are 'PDF' documents. (You will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader to open these files on a computer. If you do not have this software on your computer it is freely available from the Adobe website.)

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

[British Canoe Union Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy booklet](#) (PDF doc 447k size)

- [Club Child Protection and Harassment Policy](#) (PDF A4 page 91k size)
- [Club Code of Conduct](#) (PDF A4 page 94k size)
- [Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment](#) (PDF A4 page 87k size)
- [Junior Code of Conduct](#) (PDF A4 page 119k size)
- [Consent Form](#) (PDF A4 page 23k size)
- [Confidential: Personal Declaration form](#)
- [Volunteers and Staff Working with Young People](#) (PDF A4 page 21k size)
- [Supervision of Trips Club, Regional and International Teams](#) (PDF A4)

For further information or to share any concerns, please contact [Miranda Churchill, WWR Child Protection Officer](#). Tel. 020 8874 7827

## 5. Equipment Checklist

From the start of the 2005 Season boats and athletes will be randomly checked against the following checklist:

Safety Spot Check List  
 For Athlete: .....From Club.....Bib No.....  
 Division A, B, Wavehopper Challenge (Circle As Appropriate)

<b>Divisions A and B</b>			
<b>Boat</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Complies Yes/No</b>
K1	Length	4.50 m Max	
	Width	0.60 m Min	
	Weight	11kg Min	
	Air Bag Front (Attached)	30 Litres Min	
	Air Bag Rear(Attached)	50 Litres Min	
	Handles Front & Rear	Less Than or Equal To 30cm From Bow/Stern And Can Take Template 10x10x1.5cm	
	Rudder	No	
	Tobacco/Drink Ads	No	
C1	Length	4.30m Max	
	Width	0.70m Min	
	Weight	12kg Min	
	Air Bag Front (Attached)	40 Litres	
	Air Bag Rear (Attached)	50 Litres	
	Handles Front & Rear	Less Than or Equal To 30cm From Bow/Stern And Can Take Template 10x10x1.5cm	
	Rudder	No	
	Tobacco/Drink Ads	No	
C2	Length	5.00m Max	
	Width	0.80m Min	
	Weight	18 kg	
	Air Bag Front (Attached)	60 Litres	
	Air Bag Rear (Attached)	60 Litres	
	Handles Front & Rear	Less Than or Equal To 30cm From	
	Rudder	No	

		Bow/Stern And Can Take Template 10x10x1.5cm	
	Rudder	No	
	Tobacco/Drink Ads	No	
Note That ICF Rules Can Call For A Boat To be Filled With Water To Ensure It Sits Level And Is Buoyant			
Paddle	Appropriate For Event	Not Cracked etc	
Helmet	Plastic/Chin Strap	CE mark	
Buoyancy Aid	Non Absorbent	6kg CE mark	
Spray Deck	Adequate	Riverworthy	
<b>Other Equipment</b>	<b>Appropriate For</b>	<b>The Standard Of Paddler</b>	
Athlete	Fit For Race	Does He/She look OK – For Children Are They being Bullied Into It? ( this was a problem at the Nene last time in one or two very young athletes cases)	
Safety	Understand General Rules	2 Paddler Rule etc	
Wavehopper Challenge etc.	Appropriate And As Above For Division B	Wavehoppers Should Have Airbags. Children Who Paddle Need Trousers	
<b>All</b>			
	Course	Clear	
	Venue	Appropriate	
	Facilities	Appropriate	
	Safety Briefing	Given	
	Training Run	Opportunity Given	
	Paddler	Satisfied	
	Parent	Satisfied	

## 6. Drugs and Supplements

There is more information and detail on drugs and supplements elsewhere. In summary: in terms of individual safety NEVER take/ingest/inhale/inject anything you are not sure of. This applies to a range of supplements as well as to the more obvious performance enhancing drugs. The Wild Water Racing Executive Committee supports UK Sport's campaign on this and related issues. If you are not sure about what you are taking, or propose to take, see [www.uksport.gov.uk/did/](http://www.uksport.gov.uk/did/) - but NOTE they don't have everything dangerous listed – so if in doubt don't or see a trusted medical practitioner. If you are encouraged to take drugs or supplements please REPORT this so that the chemical nature of the substance can be verified. Note: just because something has been verified in the past does not mean that it hasn't been modified since. IF IN DOUBT DON'T.

## 7. Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation Procedure Competition and Training

### 7.1 Risk Assessment General

The British Canoe Union website contains guidance (Reference D) on risk assessments both generic and specific. This forms a proper basis for an overall approach to risk assessment.

## 7.2 Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation - Competition

Attached at Annex B is a suggested Risk Assessment Procedure for Wild Water Racing. This procedure recognises that rivers can be high, medium or low and that in each of these states paddling risk can be higher, normal or lower. For example, a high river can be safer than the same river in lower water – and in other cases vice versa etc. The Matrix identifies risk as Green, Amber or Red. Green means all athletes are responsible for their own actions; Amber means Elite or the Organiser's nominated athletes might first check and later sweep the course. Red means the deployment of enhanced safety cover should be considered. All novice races, and races held on artificial courses, are Risk Red – this is not necessarily because of the risk to athletes but because these races attract a wider audience, participation and therefore risks rise and exist that are not necessarily entirely relevant to paddling. It is important on Risk Red courses that the wider environment is both understood and assessed. If the understanding and assessment merit a reduction in risk then the race organiser has that discretion.

Race organisers and coaches have the final say on risk assessments and risk mitigation. Organisers for the race; coaches for their athletes. Parents are expected to defer to coaches/race organisers.

Elite athletes are recognised yearly. They are at the top of their sport. They can be generally considered to have a thorough understanding of the risks – however, they are at risk in the same way as other athletes when on the water and should be treated the same. Even in the case of elite athletes the race organiser and coaches' advice should be followed.

Division A athletes are also at the top of their sport. However, some athletes in Division A will only recently have moved up from Division B. As a consequence it is sensible that in competition a more experienced athlete checks the course first, where they are present. There have been recent incidents where trees have fallen into rivers, blocking courses – and these hazards should be identified first. The race organiser must be satisfied the course is safe to run. This is a condition of References A-F. It is further sensible that the course is declared clear by an Elite paddler, where appropriate, to and on behalf of the race organiser, before the competition closes, if other means of doing so are not available.

Division B athletes can be new to the sport - and can get into difficulty. Where Division B athletes are involved it is reasonable to make a judgement that in cases of normal or increased risk the course needs to be checked and swept; and course marshals, throw lines and rescue boats deployed. Use and positioning of these facilities is the decision and at the discretion of the competition organiser.

The above guidelines are relevant to races 'not suitable for novices'. There is clearly recognition that this is a challenging sport; and, the Overriding Principle pertains, individuals (except Juniors) are generally responsible for their own actions. The exception is where Division B/Junior athletes are involved on a river of increased risk where further precautions should generally be taken.

In all competitions where novices, a large number of spectators, or artificial courses are involved further precautions may need to be considered. This is both common sense and a result of the sport being shown in very public places, often on Local Authority owned premises, and therefore more hazardous in a variety of ways, not always obvious. In these circumstances the course should always be checked and swept (this can be done visually at places like the Nene, Tees Barrage etc.). Course marshals should be deployed, properly

equipped, and rescue boats on the water where appropriate. Note: common sense needs to prevail e.g. rescue boats cannot realistically be deployed on the Nene but should be deployed on the Tyne for a *Wavehopper* race at Prudhoe. Life Buoys and other publicly provided safety gear should also be checked before the race starts – if for no other reason than in the event of a dispute there is a record of what was or was not available. Appropriate measures must be in place to protect the public, particularly young children, from harm. This is usually a Local Authority responsibility – but it is a good idea to check first and the race organiser must use his/her discretion.

In all cases the means of contacting First Aid and the Emergency Services should be known as should knowledge of and the location of the nearest A&E hospital and mobile 'phone dead spots.

### **7.3 Risk Assessment/Risk Mitigation - Training**

'Less than three there should never be' is the general guideline for *recreational* athletes of the British Canoe Union, Reference B, on river safety. This is clearly impractical in some cases for Wild Water athletes – many Wild Water racing athletes do not have training partners. The boats are faster than other kayaks, thus using other types of kayak athletes, as a partner, is also impractical. It therefore seems sensible to introduce a training code of practice that recognises the challenging nature of the sport; the personal responsibility involved, but, at the same time, takes appropriate precautions where necessary.

Where training is carried out under British Canoe Union supervision, therefore, the same guidelines as for competition shall apply.

In other circumstances:

All adult athletes will be responsible for their own actions. An adult should supervise all U16, and are advised to supervise U18, athletes. Interpretation of risk is at the adult's discretion and risk. In the case of parents, they are deemed responsible for their children in any event.

Where possible the following guidelines should be followed:

- Athletes should not go out alone (It is recognised that this may always be possible)
- Athletes should wear both helmets and personal floatation devices unless specific dispensation has been given by coaches
- Particular care should be taken on both lakes (because of the inherent dangers of being far from the shore) and on canals (for similar reasons, and because objects are sometimes thrown at athletes)
- Notification of time out and expected time back should always be left with someone
- Training sessions should be supervised by a coach or responsible adult whenever possible

## **8. Guidance For Race and Training Officials**

Officials responsible for competition and training are also deemed responsible for safety – although this may be specifically delegated to another individual in the case of competition. References C-F should be referred to for some generic guidance on Emergency Procedures and Club Safety.

Officials should:

- Consider the appropriateness of a Swift Water Rescue Team being on hand
- Ensure information is available on the race information phone line and, specifically, on the Wild Water Website. The Wild Water Racing Information Telephone Number is 01483 824449. This helps to prevent confusion
- Ensure there are sufficient assistants in terms of organisers, competitors, parents first aiders, etc. to provide additional cover if risk levels rise
- Establish that competitors, spectators and vehicles can be safely accommodated at the site – place restrictions, or identify alternatives, as appropriate
- Ensure that, if a novice or artificial course, that sufficient measures are in place to protect the public (this may not be the race organiser's responsibility – but organisers do need to know whose responsibility it is, and what is available)
- Open the venue in good time; sign it if possible
- Ensure athletes sign disclaimers before competing in accordance with References A - F (and/or training if British Canoe Union supervised)
- Establish the course is suitable to run in terms of both water level and hazards
- Have equipment available to remove course impediments (If these cannot be easily removed the race should be cancelled)
- Establish the risk level against the Annex B Matrix as Green, Amber or Red and advertise the risk level to competitors signing in. At an air temperature of below 5 degrees centigrade but above 0 degrees centigrade the risk level of the race should be raised by one risk level e.g. from Green to Amber; this level is raised again at 0 degrees centigrade or below, e.g. from Amber to Red, in this case. At or below 0 degrees centigrade further hazards appear on the river and a separate discussion should be held with athletes on the hazards prevailing. The same applies to wind. Risk levels raise by one level at Beaufort Scale 6 and another at Beaufort Scale 9.
- Check and deploy safety cover and marshals relevant to the river, risk level or relevant to an amended risk level. Annex C gives a range of particular river risks, courtesy of James Wingfield.
- Agree times for river familiarisation if relevant (Coaches often organise familiarisation before a race.) At Division A races a development run for upcoming Division B athletes should be planned two hours before race start.
- Hold a Safety Briefing one hour before race start describing risks, safety cover (if it is non-existent say so), first aid procedures, rescuing of athletes in difficulty, and reinforce the 'waiting for the next two kayakers' end procedure as per References A-F. If available the Safety Briefing should include a Video of the course.
- Check the location and availability (including telephone numbers) of Emergency Services – and how they might be contacted. Some courses are in dead spots for mobile phones.
- Check competitors equipment if appropriate
- Check timers and their equipment
- Run the event to time – failure to run an event to time is a source of confusion and hence increased risk
- Sweep the course as appropriate
- Check for injuries and incidents
- Report compliance and any incidents to the Wild Water Racing Safety Officer on 01434 604753/07730 456652 by phone or eMail ([maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com](mailto:maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com)) giving the information at Annex D.

Basic First Aid Kits should be available at each course.

Additional First Aid Facilities should be provided at the discretion of the Race Organiser.

## **9. Summary Practical Guidance For Athletes And Their Parents**

Athletes are deemed to be responsible, in the final analysis, for their own actions. The Overriding Principle pertains.

However, reckless or intolerant behaviour will not be countenanced. A British Canoe Union disciplinary panel should sanction those displaying such behaviour.

Athletes are expected to compete and train in:

- A riverworthy boat equipped with
  - Front and rear airbags secured to the boat
  - Front and rear grab handles
- A paddle that is fit for its purpose and is of a suitable size for the paddler
- A buoyancy aid that complies with References A-F
- A helmet that complies with References A-F
- A spraydeck that fits the boat
- A pair of ('Canoe shoes') or trainers, should be worn when paddling
- 'Pogies'
- Suitable spare Personal equipment

If in doubt use the checklist at paragraph 5.

Athletes and or parents/in loco parenti should consider the benefits of both a White Water Safety Course (so all understand how to navigate White Water if OUTSIDE the boat) and a Swift Water Rescue Course where appropriate. The former can be found in most regions and John Handyside 01159 892 313 can advise on the latter.

Parents are advised to comply with British Canoe Union Guidelines.

## **10. Summary Advice For Coaches**

British Canoe Union coaches are expected to comply with British Canoe Union Guidelines.

Non-British Canoe Union Coaches are advised to comply with British Canoe Union Guidelines.

## **11. Summary Advice For Race Organisers**

Be aware of safety. Do everything you feel is necessary to make the race safer and a success. Report any incidents as soon as possible after the race as possible to the Safety Officer. Note – if there are no incidents please make a zero report.

## **12. Updates/Corrections**

Please suggest or communicate any changes/acts of omission/commission in this document and its appendices to [maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com](mailto:maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com)

### **13. Regional Safety Officers**

It is proposed to introduce a system of Regional Safety Officers. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in undertaking such a role please let Maitland Hyslop know at [maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com](mailto:maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com).

### **14. Training and Foreign Trips**

The training of athletes at home and abroad under any British Canoe Union aegis MUST be carried out with regard to all parts of this document and British Canoe Union Guidelines.

**Annex A: The Art of Wild Water Racing By Peter Keron is attached**

**Annex B: A Model For Assessing River Risk is attached**

**Annex C: River Risks are attached**

(Please feel free to add more by emailing Maitland Hyslop on [maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com](mailto:maitland.hyslop@btopenworld.com))

**Annex D: Wild Racing Safety Report is attached**