'Swellies Extreme' Race Update: August 2011

These notes should be read together with the pre-race information, available as a download at www.kayakessentials.co.uk/swellies-extreme-race-2011/

This update describes the currently-planned race courses for the event. To interpret the information, you'll need at least a 1:50 000 sheet that includes the Swellies and also local knowledge. Plenty of time before 29 October to gain both! When reading the notes, remember that the races will take place on the ebbing tide.

Race 1: Time Trial

The start line will be at a marked point level with the upstream end of the Green (on the ebb), c.100m above Menai Bridge on the Anglesey shore. We anticipate that the start line will be defined by a post on the shore and a buoy.

The finish line will be at a marked point level with Nelson's Statue, downstream of Britannia Bridge (on the ebb) on the Anglesey shore. Again, the finish line will be marked by a buoy and Nelson's Statue itself.

The following notes given an indication of the planned race course and 'gates' - no OS GRs are available at this stage - although the descriptions give a clear picture of the planned areas of the Swellies that the course will visit. More details will be available in early October.

1. Depart start line (eskimo roll required immediately before the start)
2. Pass through Menai Bridge arch closest to Anglesey shore - into eddy next to concrete slab ('gate' 1)
3. Cross fast jets of water under Menai Bridge ('gate' 2) to Ynys Moch - island supporting Menai Bridge
4. Join main channel - cross eddy line directly under Menai Bridge ('gate 3')
5. Paddle down to mainland shore, into eddy formed by Platters Rocks ('gate' 4)
6. Back into main channel - 'gates' 5 & 6 in eddies on mainland shore near Price's Point boathouse
7. Cross the Swellies - passing downstream of the South Cardinal tower - into eddy on mainland side of Ynys Gorad Goch ('gate' 7)
8. Paddle around downstream end of Ynys Gorad Goch into eddy on Anglesey side of the island ('gate' 8)
9. Re-enter ebb, cross to Anglesey shore, into eddy c.200m upstream of Britannia Bridge ('gate' 9)
10. Re-enter ebb, cross Swellies into main channel, pass under mainland arch of Britannia Bridge, into eddy behind midstream buttress ('gate' 10)
11. Re-enter ebb, cross to Anglesey shore, through finish line at Nelson's Statue.

At the end of this race, we ask competitors to wait on the safe arrival of two more entrants, then to carefully paddle back up to Menai Bridge. The simplest - and lowest energy - option is to follow the Anglesey shore. There are two points where competitors might choose to portage: the headland c.200m upstream of Britannia Bridge; and Menai Bridge. Paddle slowly, keep clear of racing competitors - and get ready for the second race!

A short recovery interval will take place following the return of the final competitor to the Menai Bridge area.

Race 2: Mass Start

The race will follow the same course as the Time Trial, with the following exceptions:

Start Line: will be a short distance downstream of Menai Bridge Town Slipway, between the green lateral navigational mark (tower on the drying island) and the Anglesey shore.

'Gate' 1: competitors may paddle through any arch in Menai Bridge (the small arch, next to Ynys Moch, furthest from the Anglesey shore may have insufficient water) and will race down to a 'gate' 200m downstream of Menai Bridge, near the Anglesey shore. They will then work back upstream to 'gate' 2 and follow the remainder of the Time Trial course.

Once all competitors have reached the finish line at Nelson's Statue, we will tour back to Felinheli for results, prize giving and socialising...

Race 3: Sea Kayak Boater-X

This race will take place on Sunday 30 October.

Competitors will race in heats of 4-6 paddlers per heat over the following course:

Start Line:
The Green c.100m upstream of Menai Bridge (on the ebb) on the Anglesey shore.

Race down through Menai Bridge arch nearest the Anglesey shore, into the eddy next to concrete slab: 'Gate'

Cross the fast jets of water to Ynys Moch (island supporting Menai Bridge): 'Gate'

Race back across fast jets of water to eddy next to concrete slab: 'Finish'

In each heat, the first 2-3 competitors across the finish line will go through to the next round, with the remaining 2-3 eliminated.

The number of rounds will depend upon total entry numbers - we hope to have at least 4-5 rounds leading to a 4-boat final.

Safety & Logistics

Helmets are required for all competitors in the Boater-X event. Helmets are optional in the Time Trial and Mass-Start races. Competitors must exercise their judgement in deciding whether or not to wear a helmet.

Plastic sea kayaks are recommended for the Boater-X event. There will be a number of sea kayaks available on Boater-X day, subject to the support of manufacturers. More details will be released in early October.

In the Time Trial and Mass-Start races, all competitors must give due consideration to their fellow entrants and be prepared to offer assistance to anyone in difficulties during the race.

We ask all competitors to consider the safety of the fellow boaters. In the Boater-X event , we understand that contact between kayaks is inevitable - deliberate ramming, dangerous paddling and the grabbing of deck lines to gain unfair advantage will risk disqualification from the event!

At the end of each heat, we will ask all competitors to portage/paddle sea kayaks back to the Green, ready for the start of the next heat.