

# Kayak and Canoe Marathon Racing

## Information 2021

### Introduction to Marathon Racing

As soon as you have picked up the basics of paddling in a racing kayak or canoe you are ready to race. A coach or a fellow paddler in your canoe club will be able to suggest a suitable race for you to start with. This may well be one of the flat water races listed across the page. Most of these are on canals where there are no currents or technical sections to worry about.

You don't have to be part of a canoe club to race as anyone can enter the races, but there are lots of benefits to being in a canoe club - coaching, support at events, sharing transport etc. At races which are part of what's called the 'Hasler Series' (marked HQ in the calendar) competing gains you points to earn your club and you a place in the annual Hasler Final event. You will also gain points for various Scottish trophies and medals. You will also have to either join the SCA or pay for day membership to be able to compete in any race.

The main UK Canoe and Kayak Marathon racing season runs from April to October, with events somewhere most weekends. During the summer there are some weekday events and your club may have their own races as well as the regular training nights. The races range from about 6 km (less for younger children) one Scottish event of 87 km, and the epic annual Devizes to Westminster race of 200 km. The majority of Scottish races are around 6—20 km. Most races are held on canals or lochs within the central belt, with a few river races further north.

The basic information for this season is in this leaflet. Find out more by talking to people in your club and look at the Scottish Canoe Association website ([www.canoescotland.org](http://www.canoescotland.org)). Look under the 'Discipline' tab for Marathon or the 'Events' tab. For most events you can enter online or on the day, but check the requirements online for each event.

Across the page are some FAQs about Marathon Racing in Scotland. Ask at your club or get in touch with the SCA Marathon Committee – details can be found on the SCA website where there is also more information about the discipline and the sport.

[www.canoescotland.org/disciplines/marathon](http://www.canoescotland.org/disciplines/marathon)

### Marathon Racing in Scotland FAQs

**How does it work for children?** Children in the under 8, under 10 and under 12 age groups (as of 1st of January) generally practice and race in a particular design of smaller and more stable racing kayaks. These Lightning kayaks allow young paddlers to develop their skills on an equal footing, typically racing 2—4 km in an event.

**What about adults?** Adults and young people who are under 14 and above (as well as some younger paddlers) use longer boats of varying designs. The courses raced vary from around 6 km for a "mini" course to 13 km for a "short" course and to 20 km for a "long" course.

**How do I know which course to do?** Each race organiser selects their courses based on the 'feel' they want for the event. There is a divisional system which is not based on age or gender. Competitors new to the sport may start in Division 9 and through good performances can work up to Division 1. The lower divisions (9, 8, 7) race a mini course, divisions 6, 5 and 4 a short course, and divisions 3, 2 and 1 a long course. Promotion to a higher division (and demotion) can be gained throughout the season and is based on times in races. There is also a Division 10 purely for U12 paddlers to start in.

**Can I win a prize at each race?** Competing in races gains the competitor and their club points towards qualification of the Hasler Finals and for the SCA awards. Most races award small prizes after the race depending on the event and the number of competitors.

**Is each race an individual event?** Yes, but some races count towards a series. For example the Highland Series and Scottish Racing Week. The Scottish Marathon Championships is a stand alone event which is classified by age and gender rather than the divisional system. Age is no limit with some Scottish competitors who are over 70 still competing internationally. The details of how prizes are awarded at the end of the season can be found on the SCA website.

**What's this Hasler I keep hearing about?** Races marked 'HQ' in a calendar are events at which individuals and their club as a whole qualify to enter and compete at the annual Hasler Final which is usually held in the south of England. The spectacle of over 1,000 canoes and kayaks racing in their various divisions is an amazing experience, yet there is care taken to ensure that even the youngest Lightning paddlers have a safe and enjoyable experience. These are the international competitors of the future!