

A Guide to the 100 Mile Canoe Test

Not the way to do it!



***The 100 Mile Canoe Test is one of CYP'S
longest running National events.***

This guide gives you all the facts you require to participate in what is the second longest distance canoe event in the canoeing calendar. It provides you with information to enable your group to participate and complete the 100 mile canoe test

What is the 100 Mile Canoe Test?

The Canoe Test is based on endurance not only for canoeists but for support crews also. The event runs over 4 to 5 days usually at the late May Bank Holiday Weekend and uses the big rivers in England, the Rivers Wye and Severn on occasions the River Trent is used.

The event covers 4 days of water travel with a static base camp for all participants usually sited within easy travelling distance from start and finish sections for each day. The Test begins with a start point on day 1 with around 20 to 24 miles paddling, over the following days 2 and 3 increased distances of around 33 to 36 miles are covered. The final days paddle aims to be no more than 10 to 12 miles. The finish is usually around 2.00pm allowing for the presentation of certificates and departure from the event at around 3.00pm.

The event relies on a small number of volunteers to ensure the event is run under the strictest safety criteria, these volunteers run the base camp operation, water safety team and land marshalling. The event therefore has its own base camp personnel and these are catered for independently from participants.

The base camp evolves into a small community for the duration of the event, with structured meetings each day and evening, and some on going activities on site. The event starts mid morning on the Saturday and participants need to arrive at base camp on the Friday evening to set up the site (or at the earliest after midday). The event concludes after the presentation of certificates on the Tuesday afternoon and the base camp returned to its former state prior to our arrival.

The Test brings together the whole ethos of the work of Clubs for Young People, it meets a number of government initiatives, regarding improving the health of young people and most certainly it gives a sense of achievement for those involved, both for the young people and adult support teams.

This event is not easy and it is advisable if taking part for the very first time, as a club or group to link up with a club within your area/region who have taken part before. You will learn so much about the event, how to organise it in the future on your own and furthermore you will be able to share resources in material and labour. Even if you only have a small number of club members wanting to take part, by joining forces with others (clubs or county) it allows for participation. Some counties successfully run county squads, contact you local CYP office for more details.

So if you desire 4 to 5 days of sleep deprivation, the likelihood of getting wet in inclement weather, blisters from paddling distance then this event is for you, and your members. No it's not really like that it is a fantastic event full of fun and action. An event you will want to return to each year, most certainly one you will remember taking part in years to come.



PROVISIONAL TRAINING SCHEDULE :

JANUARY: EVENT IS USUALLY ADVERTISED, RECRUIT INTERESTED MEMBERS AND BACK UP TEAM, GET SOMEONE IN WHO HAS EXPERIENCED THE TEST BEFORE TO GIVE YOU AN INSIGHT OF THE EVENT AND ITS FULL WORKINGS.

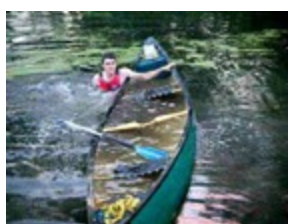
PLAN SOME INDOOR SESSIONS AT THE LOCAL BATHS ,MOST WILL DO KAYAKING SESSIONS AT A REASONABLE COST. YOU CAN PICK UP A GOOD VARIETY OF PADDLING SKILLS IN A POOL, AND ITS WARM AND COMFORTABLE FOR ALL TAKING PART. TRY TO MAKE CONTACT WITH A LOCAL CANOE CLUB OR A CLUB IN YOUR AREA WHO HAS COMPLETED THE TEST BEFORE, WITH THE VIEW TO JOINING UP WITH THEM TO SHARE RESOURCES.

FEBRUARY TO MARCH: HAVING GOT A GROUP TOGETHER PLAN SOME SKILL SESSIONS ON LOCAL RIVERS OR CANALS, FLAT SHELTERED WATER IS BEST, THIS PERIOD COULD BE WELL USED FOR ATTAINING A BCU STAR GRADE, GO FOR A MINIMUM 2 STAR.

APRIL TO MAY: AS THE SKILL LEVEL IS REACHED DEVISE SHORT RIVER TRIPS ON LOCAL WATERS, START WITH SAY 10 MILE TRIPS LEADING UP TOWARDS TRIPS OF 15—20-25 MILES. FULL DAY PADDLING REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT BY ALL TAKING PART, IT REQUIRES TIME FROM THE VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR BACK UP TEAM. IN REALITY IT IS A REHEARSAL OF THE ACTUAL EVENT AT THE END OF MAY. YOU SUFFER THE SLEEP DEPRIVATION WITH EARLY STARTS, YOU FEEL TIED AT THE END OF THE LONG DAY PADDLES.

YOU FEED AS YOU WOULD ON THE ACTUAL TEST. THE KEY IS TO TRY TO KEEP YOUR GROUP MOTIVATED EACH SESSION, YES IT WILL RAIN ON OCCASIONS BUT ITS USUALLY DRY IN MCDONALDS AFTER A GOOD DAYS PADDLING.

WITH PREPARATION BEFORE THE EVENT YOU SAIL THROUGH IT, WITNESS THOSE WHO DO NOT, THOSE WHO TURN UP AT BASE CAMP TOWARDS DARKNESS, THOSE WHO WILL BE FIRST ON THE WATER THE NEXT MORNING VERY EARLY, WHILST YOU HAVE AN EXTRA HOURS SLEEP.



When training on local waters or canals, start off with small achievable distances in the beginning say 10 mile or less for the first session, build up distances gradually until you can do a simulation of one of the long days of the tests a 25 mile plus is a good one to do. On the later stages of training do your capsized drills and self rescues, so the group know how to react in such situations and require help from group leaders. The real water trips bond the group together well in advance of the event, therefore making it a more achievable for all of the paddlers in the group.

Typical Training Schedule

THE PERIOD YOU START TRAINING IS WEATHER DEPENDANT, BUT IF YOU HAVE GOOD QUALITY EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING FOR PADDLERS, THEN YOU CAN DECIDE WHEN YOU WANT TO START TRAINING. YOUR CANOE INSTRUCTOR WILL ADVISE YOU BEST.

IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE AN INDOOR POOL FOR STARTER SESSIONS OVER THE WINTER PERIOD, LEADING UP TOWARDS OUTSIDE JOURNEYS AT A LATER STAGE OF THE SCHEDULE.

SO WHERE DO WE START, FIRSTLY YOU NEED TO SELL THE IDEA TO INTERESTED CLUB MEMBERS, WATERSPORTS DOES NOT APPEAL TO EVERYONE.

A SMALL NUMBER OF MEMBERS 8 TO 10 IS AN IDEAL GROUP TO WORK WITH. RECRUIT A QUALIFIED BCU CANOEIST TO HELP YOU WITH THE TRAINING AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THE RIVER RUN LATER IN THE YEAR.



<http://www.bcu.org.uk/tests-and-awards/personal-performance-awards/paddlesport-start-i-1-to-3-star/>

YOU CAN BUILD INTO YOUR TRAINING SCHEDULE A BRITISH CANOE UNION AWARD FOR

PADDLERS, THIS GIVES AN ADDED INCENTIVE TO PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE PART. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO COMPLETE THE 100 MILE RIVER TRIP, SO PADDLERS NEED TO HAVE A NUMBER OF KEY SKILLS TO CARRY OUT THIS TASK. CANOE / KAYAK SKILLS ARE VITAL, ALONGSIDE STAMINA, TEAM WORK, CO-OPERATION, LIVING TOGETHER ON CAMP, WILLINGNESS TAKE PART AND SUPPORT OTHERS IN THE GROUP.

ALL THESE CHARACTERISTIC WILL DEVELOP OVER THE TRAINING SCHEDULE PERIOD.

PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS. WE HAVE SAID EARLIER THIS EVENT IS NOT EASY, IT REQUIRES GOOD PLANNING AND GOOD LEADERSHIP TO COMPLETE IT SUCCESSFULLY. THE END RESULT ON THE FINAL DAY IS WORTH ALL THE EFFORT.

Open Canoe

"What type of boat"

Open Canoes offer a flexible approach to the 100 Mile Canoe Test, firstly it provides the option of tandem paddling (2 paddlers) or if your are wanting the maximum number of participants you can triple up a canoe. The other main advantages of open canoes is the fact the you are able to carry within reason far more equipment.(waterproofs/lunches etc). For the very qualified a solo paddler is not an unusual site on the water.



Kayaks

The first thing to think about when planning a paddle of this distance is what type of boat do I need. The emergence over the last 10 years of radically designed kayaks, means there is an vast amount of choice out there. The reality of all this radical change of design means a great number of craft are not suitable for long distance journey canoeing. Yes they look great and give street credibility but be warned they are designed for specific purposes, play boating and white water conditions etc.

In deciding what is the ideal boat to do distance, ask those who have done this event a number of times. The general rule is the longer the boat the easier it travels through water, remember some days are in excess of 30 miles which in low water conditions can mean an average speed of 3 to 4 mile per hour, add on stops/lunch and travel and you find you are into a long day for all of your team.

It does not have to look the best craft in the world for this event, so be sensible when choosing the type of kayak you are going to use. If in doubt ask you local canoe club or canoe supplier.



CAMPING EQUIPMENT

Your whole group needs to be self sufficient in all aspects of the event, this includes all camping equipment, cooking equipment, canoeing equipment ,transportation, back up team, canoe leaders/instructors, cooks and base camp team workers.(hence the suggestion you link up with groups or counties to share resources and equipment)

You will create a small standing camp for 4 days along with everything that goes with a modern day camping experience.



TRANSPORT

A vital element for the event you will need to provide separate transport for canoeists, and base camp personal. You will also require a trailer to transport canoes/kayaks over the event period. (trailers are not required every day) Cars are an ideal option for base camp for that vital supermarket shop.



Standard /Proficiency

IT IS NO USE GETTING TOGETHER A SQUAD OF PADDLERS AND TURNING UP AT THIS EVENT. THE EVENT REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF PRE-EVENT PREPARATION AND CO-ORDINATION.

YOUR CANOEISTS NEED TO BE UP TO A REASONABLE STANDARD OF PROFICIENCY FOR THIS EVENT. THEY ALSO NEED TO BE PHYSICALLY ABLE TO ENDURE CERTAINLY 2 LONG DAYS IN THE BOAT ALONG WITH SOME DEGREE OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION EXPECTED ON CAMP.

IDEALLY YOU NEED TO SCHEDULE TRAINING SESSIONS SOME MONTHS PRIOR TO THE MAY EVENT, THIS MAY BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE WITH YOUR LOCAL CANOE/KAYAK CLUB OR WITH ANOTHER CLUB IN YOUR REGION. THIS TRAINING SCHEDULE ALLOWS FOR THOSE WHO AT FIRST THINK IT IS GOING TO BE A DODDLE, TO WITNESS THE HARD WORK REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE SUCH AN EVENT. THIS SHOULD NOT PUT YOU OR YOUR CLUB OFF TAKING PART. WITH A STRUCTURED TRAINING SCHEDULE WHICH INCLUDES DISTANCE OVER TIME AND SOME FORM OF ACCREDITATION VIA THE BRITISH CANOE UNION AWARD SCHEME, YOU WILL SOON HAVE A TEAM OF PADDLERS MORE THAN ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT.



ONE THING YOU WILL NEED IS A QUALIFIED BCU INSTRUCTOR OR COACH WILLING TO TAKE YOUR GROUP ON THIS JOURNEY. A GOOD INSTRUCTOR/COACH WILL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP YOUR SQUAD IN THE PRE-EVENT TRAINING SESSIONS.

A WELL PREPARED TEAM WILL FIND THIS EVENT A CHALLENGE AND PROVIDE POSITIVE YOUTH WORK PRINCIPLES IN THE PROCESS.

IF YOUR PARTICIPANTS CAN ACHIEVE A BCU AWARD PRIOR TO THE EVENT, THEN THIS WILL BE OF ENORMOUS ADVANTAGE. OVER THE PERIOD OF TRAINING THIS IS VERY ACHIEVABLE IN THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE EVENT.

THE RIVERS USED ON THE TEST MEAN THAT YOU ARE PADDLING ON MOVING WATER WITH SOME SECTIONS GRADED. SO IF YOU ARE TRAINING ON A CANAL TRY TO DO SOME SESSIONS ON MOVING WATER AT THE LATER STAGES OF YOUR SCHEDULE.



An ideal training paddle is on moving water



These look great but are not designed to run rivers for long distances or indeed Flat water canals.. they are play boats

PLAY BOATS



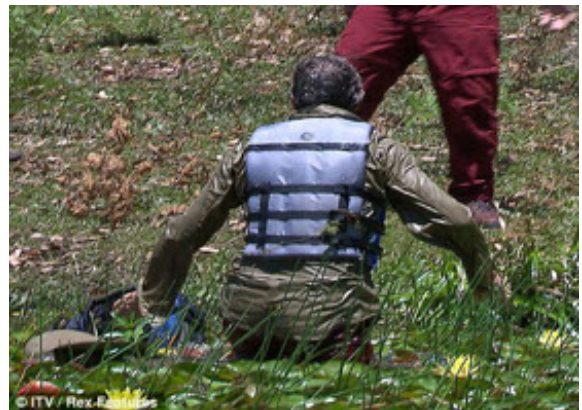
“Looks like an old bloke in an old boat”, but he will have no problem keeping it straight. Furthermore he has room for spare clothes and other equipment with lots of legroom. Note also others in similar craft in the picture.

Personal Canoeing Equipment

Without question the most important part of the event, all participants will need to be suitably dressed and equipped for all weathers. Personal clothing is one of the most important parts of this event. Take advice from your instructor/ coach regarding the appropriate clothing for paddlers.

Whilst investment in such clothing is expensive, see if you can borrow from a local canoe club. Awards for All may fund personal and boating equipment for the event.

Ensure all your participants know how to respect the value of personal equipment.



Canoeist personal equipment must include a helmet
 Bouancy Aid and paddles (don't forget spare paddles each day)
 Plus waterproof clothing and water bottles and food
 Containers/dry sacks

EQUIPMENT

A FULL LIST OF SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT IS REALLY DOWN TO THE GROUP TAKING PART, IT REALLY DEPENDS ON YOU AND YOUR TEAM. WHAT IS VITAL TO THE WHOLE EVENT IS KEY PLAYERS IN AT LEAST TWO AREAS.

BACKUP DRIVER / TEAM CANOEISTS

THE IDEAL FORMAT IS A MINIBUS AND CANOE/KAYAK TRAILER FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PADDLERS TO AND FROM EACH DAYS PADDLE. THE FIRST DAY USUALLY INVOLVES A REASONABLE DISTANCE TO TRAVEL AS WE TRY TO GO THE LONGEST DISTANCE FROM

BASE CAMP TO THE START OF THE EVENT, AS WE TRAVEL ALONG THE ROUTE TRAVEL DISTANCES REDUCE PRO-RATA. YOUR DRIVER NEEDS TO BE CONVERSANT WITH OS MAPS. USUALLY BEFORE THE DAYS PADDLE YOUR BACKUP TEAM LIAISE WITH THE CANOE LEADER TO DECIDE UP ON MEETING POINTS AND REFRESHMENT STOPS. WHILST MOST WILL FOLLOW OTHER GROUPS IT WILL DEPEND ON HOW QUICK YOUR GROUP IS TRAVELLING PER HOUR TO MEET CERTAIN POINTS ALONG THE ROUTE, THERE MAY BE SITUATIONS IN QUICK WATER, WHEN BACK UP TEAMS ARE NEEDED TO RE-SCHEDULE PRE- ARRANGED STOPS. AND VICE VERSA IN LOW WATER CONDITIONS.

Your back up vehicle should carry sufficient equipment and food for the whole day and be self sufficient. The team should also carry alternative food to make hot food if the weather turns during the day. Spare clothes from each canoeist should be carried also for changing into at the end of each day, unless paddlers want to wait until they reach base camp and change after showering. In any event some additional warm clothes on the mini bus is advisable.

The ability to be able to carry spare canoes/kayaks is an advantage each day, although trailers may not be required to be used each day after the start.(a roof rack is ideal)



Access Points

Throughout the event designated access points to the river are identified, along with areas were only where land marshals will be situated, sometimes back up teams can not gain access to marshals, as it may be private land. Attention must be made to accessing private land and fishing areas on all rivers. Sometimes the most obvious vantage points are bridges over the river, sometime this causes major problems as parking can be unavailable, it may be advisable to seek out other vantage points on each days route. A little more attention to the OS maps can sometime reveal access that is only a short walk across a field, but away from other more popular advantage points.

Base Camp

In addition to shower facilities additional toilets are provided by the event organisers.



You will need some basic camp safety equipment



Standing Camp Equipment



Enough equipment to be able to cook and feed your group in some comfort



Generators are allowed They must be switched off by 11.00pm



The base camp is a major part of the activity, we build a small community for the duration of the event, some groups have equipment hired in(marquees/cookers etc) and erected by the providers, other groups have a dedicated base camp team(cooks/driver/general helpers)

THIS EVENT IS ALSO IDEAL FOR THOSE CLUB MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT WATER ACTIVE, BUT KEEN VOLUNTEERS

you only need 2 or 3 as there is a lot of down time when canoeists are off site.

Communication with paddling group.



Back up teams can liaise with land marshals to get an update on their groups progress, mobile phones are also a good source of communication, although signals are not always guaranteed. So be prepared for long waits at vantage points on some days.

Seeing your group along the way

Whilst its always nice to see support crews, it can sometimes have an effect on the groups progress in mileage covered during the day, more so if you choose to stop and go bank side. Back up crews will have liaised with the canoe group leader for designated stops for lunch etc, sometimes just a drop off of snacks from a bridge or river bank is all that's needed...On the long canoeing days on day 2 and 3 to many stops slow down the group and the task becomes so much harder.

"Its round the next bend" always motivates paddlers

An important note to back up crews

The event organisers have to get permission for marshals locations, sometime these are on private land with limited vehicular access, so these positions are not always good ones for back up crews with minibuses to use.



Beware of hazards on the water



Base Camp Crew

Vital to the running of a successful Canoe Test is the base camp team particularly the Cook/Chef. Most groups decide on a camp kitchen and cook house as part of their infrastructure, but it requires some organisation and transportation to site. It does become the hub of your stay on base camp.

It is therefore very important to choose a small group of helpers that should include young people, to be part of your base camp team. You could be catering for numbers of around 16 to 18 unless you have joined forces with another group or county team. A good healthy menu should be planned prior to the event, there is no guarantee we will always be near to food outlets more likely the opposite.

So you need to be resourceful enough to take the first few days food and then shop for fresh food, such as bread ,milk and veg etc.



CRUCIAL TO A SUCCESSFUL BASE CAMP TEAM IS THE TIMING OF FOOD PREPARATION, BREAKFAST CAN BE SOMETIMES AS EARLY AS 6.30AM AND THE PADDING GROUP MAY BE AWAY FROM SITE BY 7.30AM. USUALLY THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS START CAN BE EARLY, IT WILL DEPEND ON THE CANOEISTS PROGRESS EACH DAY. THE QUICKER THE GROUP, THE LATER THE DEPARTURE FROM CAMP. THEREFORE A LATER BREAKFAST.



PACKED LUNCHES

EACH CANOEIST SHOULD HAVE A SUITABLE PACKED LUNCH EACH DAY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF METHODS TO ENSURE THIS HAPPENS. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO GET EACH PADDLER TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN LUNCHBOX. YOU CAN MAKE UP BOXES OF ASSORTED SANDWICHES AND FRUIT ETC FOR THE MINI BUS. DRINKS ARE VERY IMPORTANT ESPECIALLY IN HOT WEATHER. CANOE INSTRUCTOR SHOULD ALSO CARRY MARS BARS AND EMERGENCY RATIONS IN CASE THEY FAIL TO MEET UP WITH THE BACK UP TEAM.

TRAINING IS A MUST
AN EVENT OF THIS NATURE REQUIRES A
PLANNED TRAINING SCHEDULE
YOU CANNOT JUST JUMP IN A
CANOE OR KAYAK AND EXPECT TO

What does it cost

££££££££££

This is a 5 day event if you take in travel to the event which is on a Friday

So you need to factor in for

Entry fees for canoeists (2011 £25.00)

Back up team (2011 £15.00)

Food per day per head variable but £5 to £6 should be ample

Fuel to and from event base camp all vehicles

Fuel for support vehicles (rough mileage guide around 475 miles whilst on the event)

Hire of equipment if needed

Any canoeing equipment and camping equipment

Food on journey to event

Food for canoeist and back up team on the event

Who pays for it

££££££££££

The real cost to participants is always supported by most clubs, although the real cost to participants needs to reflect a big slice of the actual cost. No real benchmark on this it's how you are able to generate income. 5 days away all in will not be cheap.

Sponsorship per paddler always has an impact, collate to 4 marathons 4 x 26 miles

Participants should score high just in their family group, provide a substantial prize to who raise the most. A £100 per canoeist should be a nice target to aim for. You can even raise income for your club

Grant funding, local charities, local councils, lottery the list is endless, set up a fund raising team and task them for raising money for equipment, and the running cost of the event, get a local company to sponsor you with tee shirts and boat stickers, ask supermarkets and suppliers for food.

Planning is key, well in advance of the event

2012 is the 50th 100 Mile Canoe Test

A proficient group with quality equipment



“So here we are then which end do I go in”



Communication with paddling group.

Back up teams can liaise with land marshals to get an up date on their groups progress, mobile phones are also a good source of communication, although signals are not always guaranteed. So be prepared for long waits at vantage points on some days.

NOTES

This guide is produced as an insight into the activity/event. Its purpose is to give a broader picture of the event and the required commitment of all participants and volunteers / leaders, to ensure a worthwhile lifetime experience for all taking part.

This is a challenge that is physically and mentally demanding ..so therefore not a holiday but part of real life.