



## **Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race 2019**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Injured military veterans defy weather to finish 125 mile canoe race epic**

**London, 21 April 2019** – Two former Royal Marines injured in Afghanistan finished the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race on Easter Sunday, beating many able bodied crews to reach London in just 26 hours 27 minutes 03 seconds.

Jonathan White and Lee Waters defied scorching temperatures on Easter Saturday to complete the 125 mile canoe race, which usually defeats around one third of the almost 200 crews who attempt the non-stop race every year.

White, who lost both legs and his right arm at the elbow after being injured by an IED on Operation HERRICK in Afghanistan and Waters, who suffered gunshot wounds in an insurgent attack, previously completed the race in 2012. This time, however, the conditions were more arduous and there was much less flow, essential for a quick time on what is often described as one of the world's toughest endurance events.

This year's race included entries from the several Army regiments including the Royal Engineers and the Royal Signals. Personnel from the Royal Air Force also took part.

The race was won by a mixed civilian crew, Alexandra Lane and Dan Seagrove from Reading Canoe Club, who saw off international athletes from around the world to score a sensational victory.

Race Director James Treadgold said: "Both Lee and Jon are extremely inspiring men. Their completion of the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race shows their indomitable spirit and it is a tribute to them and to the Royal Marines that they met the DW challenge head on – and succeeded."

Competitors start their race at Devizes in Wiltshire on Easter Saturday but must time their departure to reach Teddington Lock in south-west London in time for the early morning ebb tide into London on Easter Sunday.

The race results can be found on the event website at:

<http://results.dwrace.co.uk/results/2019/Results/OverallClassResults.html>

#### **First three boats:**

1. Alexandra Lane and Dan Seaford, Reading Canoe Club 18:01:58
2. Richard Hendron and Aaron Jordan, Richmond and Maidstone Canoe Clubs 18:19:06
3. Alex Burt and Paul Hayes, Newbury Canoe Club 18:38:07

19. (Fastest all-women's crew) Jo Bates and Elena Golder, Falcon Canoe Club  
21:29:27

### **About the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race**

The annual Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race is the world's longest non-stop canoe race. Frequently referred to simply as DW, the race starts in Devizes, Wiltshire, and follows the Kennet & Avon Canal to join the Thames at Reading. The finish is in the heart of London at Westminster Bridge. Covering the 125-mile distance in kayaks or canoes, DW is one of the toughest endurance events in the world and is open to anyone with the necessary determination and commitment to train for it.

DW takes place over the Easter Weekend every year. More than 500 volunteers and organisations, including the Canal and Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and the Port of London Authority, give their support to DW either directly or indirectly.

The non-stop Senior Doubles event starts at 7am on Easter Saturday, 20 April. Completing the non-stop race is a colossal achievement. Most paddlers will take about 24 hours to complete the course, not stopping to eat, sleep or rest.

Alternatively, the race can be tackled in 4 stages starting on Easter Friday and finishing on Easter Monday. Competitors in the stages races (Junior Doubles, Senior Singles, Veteran/Junior, and Endeavour) leave Devizes on Good Friday, 19 April, from 7am.

The race started as a wager in a pub in 1948. Seventy years on, it has grown into a firm fixture in the world's canoeing calendar that is open to all comers. Previous competitors include Olympic rowing medalists James Cracknell, Ben Hunt-Davis, and Guin Batten, the explorer and adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, TV presenter Steve Backshall and his wife, Olympic rower Helen Glover, and the first British woman to summit Everest, Rebecca Stephens. All rate this as one of the toughest events for mind and body.

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