



Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Mixed crew overturn the odds to win 125 mile canoe race epic

London, 21 April 2019 – In a sensational outcome, a mixed crew has seen off competition from all-mens crews from around the world to win the 125 mile Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race.

Alexandra Lane and Dan Seaford from Reading Canoe Club were considered outsiders for the race, often described as ‘the canoeist’s Everest’ and one of the world’s toughest endurance events. After enduring baking temperatures on Easter Saturday and historically low levels of flow on the Thames, Lane and Seagrove reached Westminster in 18 hours, 1 minute and 58 seconds, more than 17 minutes ahead of the next crew, an all-male boat from Richmond and Maidstone Canoe Clubs.

The competition also included members of the Great Britain team and canoeists from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, and the US.

Lane, who has previously won the women’s class, said she was delighted.

“We trained very hard but there were some great crews in the race,” she said at Westminster today. “We knew if we kept going, we would be alright, but to win is obviously very special.”

It’s the second time in four years that a mixed crew has won overall. In 2015 Great Britain Team members Keith Moule and Lizzie Broughton triumphed.

The non-stop race attracts entrants ranging from international athletes to the Armed Forces. Every year hundreds of amateur canoeists attempt the race but around one-third fail to finish, often defeated by the sheer effort of paddling for around 24 hours and portaging kit-laden boats around 77 locks on the Kennet & Avon canal and the Thames.

Among the favourites for the Senior Doubles title this year are past winners Keith Moule and Tom Sharpe from Chelmsford and Richmond Canoe Clubs. They pulled out at Reading after more than 50 miles of canoeing after Moule developing breathing problems.

A challenge from promising military crews came later in the race with strong performances from the Royal Marines and Royal Engineers, but Lane and Seagrove were too strong for them and the fastest three boats were all civilian entrants.

Race Director James Treadgold said: “The performance by Alexandra and Dan is truly remarkable. It again shows that on an ultra-endurance event women are every bit as

capable as the men. I hope it encourages more girls into canoeing and to take part in the race.”

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.

Media contacts

Guy Dresser

Head of Communications

Tel: 07713 066 986 / +41 79 314 5333

Email: publicity@dwrace.co.uk