

The Devizes to Westminster Organisation Limited

DW 2024 – Directors' Statement

River Conditions

The DW Directors have noted the cancellation of both Thameside 1 and Thameside 2 due to the river conditions - flow rates and levels have been exceptionally high on the scheduled dates for these races.

These cancellations have prevented some crews from gaining first hand course knowledge and this will potentially have impacts on crew screening scores for DW - knowledge of the locations of weirs, channels to navigate and where to expect turbulent water are critical safety issues for every crew.

The continuing wet weather is also of concern noting the very high ground water levels and, in many places, flooding. It will take some time for conditions to return to "normal".

We are, as part of our contingency planning, looking at and planning for a range of options around the staging of DW 2024. **No decisions have been taken at this point.** It is clear that the flow will need to drop considerably from where it is now (over 200 cumecs at Reading, 300 cumecs at Kingston) for us to run a 'normal' DW with the safety of all crews being our priority.

Entries

Perhaps through a combination of the river conditions and the general reluctance of crews to commit to DW, the entries are very low. Just over 20 crews in Senior Doubles, a handful across all the stages classes with just over 2 weeks to go before entries close.

We appreciate that potential crews want certainty that the race they want is going to happen. We are just not able to give that certainty at this point.

The knock-on effect is that unless the entry numbers increase significantly, DW 2024 will not be financially viable. For example, it costs over £30k to enable a Westminster finish. If there aren't sufficient numbers then Senior Doubles may need to finish at Teddington, saving the vast majority of this cost.

Should the race be significantly altered from that stated in the latest Handbook, all entered crews will be offered a full refund, partial refund or deferral to the 2025 race.

At the current levels of entry, the 2024 race will not run. We have fixed costs of approximately £70k to run the race, most of which we can recover if we cancel the contracts within the notice period. The Organisation has limited reserves and cannot run the race at a loss - that would present a risk of the Organisation becoming insolvent and in turn that would probably be the end of the DW.

We need the commitment of paddlers now. If you have trained for the race and are going to enter, don't wait for Waterside D, enter today. There is no financial risk to you. You don't have to pay until the closing date – as part of the entry process you will get an email asking for payment after receipt and subsequent acceptance of your entry. If we require more information from you before we can accept your entry, you will be contacted.

You can even change Class if your circumstances change – right up to the Wednesday before the race.

The Directors.
28th February 2024

Vice Presidents: Robin Meads
Mrs Janice Begent
Tom Armitstead