



## Gael Force Marine Ness Marathon 2017

<http://www.gaelforcemarine.co.uk/>

### SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017 - Race Information

**RACE INFORMATION** – The twelfth Ness Marathon (Maraton Abhainn Nis) has been Sponsored by Gael Force Marine and is organised and hosted Nairn Kayak Club, with assistance from Inverness canoe club. It is part of the Highland mini-series and counts for club points towards the Series trophy. This is the eleventh annual event with growing participation.

This year we shall be offering 2 different courses, there is a long course (20km) for regular racers up the canal and Loch Dochfour to the head of Loch Ness, then turns back around and down the river. Note portage at the end of the canal lock gates is shortened again to the length of the locks only and the multi choice options at the Torvean weir are back in, paddle the fast chute at the end of the weir, portage round the edge of the sluice gats or take the hole in the wall option. A few technical choices on route , but not so far to run lugging your boat.

A short course (10km) for those looking a fun race downriver or less distance than the long course. Open for anyone 14 plus in any boat as long as it is inspected and found safe. This course being more ideal for families with under 14's chaperoning them down, slower boats or those just wishing a good old river race.

Both courses will continue down through the Ness Islands and through the town finishing at the Final white pedestrian Bridge – the second Bridge after passing Inverness Castle and the town centre. Egress from the river is immediately after the finish Bridge on the left hand bank, Pick up cars should be parked and waiting along this bank.

The new evolving discipline of Stand up Paddleboards will be particularly welcome and if required we can have classes in both courses for those wishing to attend. Kneeling down through the bouncier rapids is definitely within the rules – though you will have to paddle the slower sections. The Long course is only recommended to existing fit and motivated racers though as the canal and the loch Dochfour sections if against the wind will require a races level of fitness. If not sure race the short course this year and see what folk look like after the long course.

The River Ness is a grade 1 - 2 river; see the SCA Rivers Guide for more information. All paddlers should have experience in their chosen boat and have been down rivers before if they chose the long or the short course. We do not require competitors to hold 1 or 2 star certificates.

#### MEETING POINT

All paddlers should meet at the Scout Hall, Muirtown Basin, Inverness (IV3 8LS for satnav) at 10.00am to 11:00 to register. Event briefing will take place at 11:30 am. Due to limited parking at the Scout Hall, please use the parking areas on both sides of the canal, east of Muirtown Bridge - and, if these are full, the nearby retail park and Co-op car parks. Event organisers vehicles only in the scout car park.

#### EQUIPMENT

As with previous years, reasonable extra buoyancy (in excess of the 12.5kg equivalent) bow and stern is required. All boats used in marathon racing must be fitted with sufficient buoyancy to support the boat and crew in the event of a capsized. Inherent buoyancy in composite boats is not sufficient to meet this requirement. Additional foam buoyancy or air bags must be fitted. . Sea Kayaks with bulkheads and hatches are deemed to comply with the buoyancy requirements

BCU rules advise, all competitors in Division 7,8 & 9 and those under 16 year of age must wear buoyancy

aids. They are discretionary for all other paddlers although all paddlers are advised to wear them and dependant on the water and weather conditions the organiser may insist on all paddlers wearing approved buoyancy aids.

**The race organiser does require all competitors to wear buoyancy aids on this race** due to the nature of the river course, and due to the agreement made with Scottish Waterways that all racers will be in buoyancy aids. Anyone turning up without a buoyancy aid will be refused entry. This is the race organisers advice and requirements for the Ness marathon 2017.

Helmets are required for any competitors in closed cockpit boats (e.g. White Water Racers), and are recommended for all. Footwear is required for both portages, this is over rough Ground so K1 \ K2 paddlers will need footwear on or some quick to put on sandal \ shoe for portaging.

### **LONG COURSE, 20 Km– Canal, Portages, Loch then Grade 1 / 2 river**

From the top of the Muirtown locks, up the Caledonian Canal to Dochgarroch, up Loch Dochfour to the head of Loch Ness channel, but not into the loch, back down onto the River Ness, finishing at the town centre white pedestrian bridge, (fourth Bridge you pass under). Paddlers are required to portage Dochgarroch lock on the way up the canal, either side – your choice, then continue up Loch dochfour and turn round at the Loch Ness second green single bouy, then back down to the river. This year there will also be a racers choice of running Dochgarroch Weir and Torvean weir – (boats can get damaged at these shallow weirs) or portaging the weirs. So this year we have a tactical race with personal route choices available to all competitors, Ensure you have footwear as the Torvean wier portage will be short but through water and stones onto a sandbank, 100 meters, or sit and paddle through the pool. Portage options will be explained on the race brief and clearly marked on the day. The Dochgarroch portage is over slippery cobblestones so do plan for the portage if that's your choice.

### **SHORT COURSE, 10 km– Grade 1 \ 2 river**

From the start line up from the Lock gates at the top of the grass bank and beginning of the weir up to the last Black white chevron sign and before the start of the weir proper – then portage across into the river and on down. A safety marshal will be at the portage point on the weir to advise people to portage and change direction downriver and then passing the first hidden Island on the right hand channel, second Islands on either channel, onwards past and avoiding Fast Eddy, the dragons tail onto the Torvean Weir – which offers two paddling and two portage options then down through ness islands and onto the town centre - to the Last white pedestrian Bridge after passing ness castle (fourth bridge you go under) and the race finish shortly before the river meets the moray firth.

Depending on water levels, the organisers have the right to make any of these obstacles a compulsory portage. The Loch Dochfour section also may be altered if wind strength is deemed unsafe on the day.

### **ENTRIES**

Entries will be accepted up till 11.00am on the day. All entries to be made on the day £5-00 per entry. Please make cheques payable to the 'Nairn Kayak club'.

### **Liability and Scottish Canoe Association**

Racers who are not full SCA members (or other BC constituent member) members are required to take a one day SCA day membership at an additional cost of £5-00 as per the Scottish Canoe Association event rules to ensure they have sufficient third party insurance for the event.

### **TIMINGS**

Registration/Check-in: 10.00-11.00am. - Race briefing: - 11.15hrs,  
Long and short course start : 12:30 pm. - Prize giving: 4.00pm.

If there are a surplus of entries for the short course, due to the short distance to the portage we shall have 1 minute staggered starts, a decision will be made before the race briefing on this

Full information will be available from the events team on the day – it's the 12th race, we've done it before. Alternately email [macksteve@btinternet.com](mailto:macksteve@btinternet.com) , phone 07775682034 Steve Mackinnon, or your local race organiser to pass your query onto us

## Race categories

Long Course – Senior men, Under 23 Men, Junior men (U18). We shall also have non BCU marathon championship Prizes for experienced racer Sea kayak Male \ Female, experienced racer Male \ Female SUP, Open canoe Tandem experience racer.

Short course – Senior Ladies, Under 233 Ladies, Junior Ladies (U18), Vet Ladies (34 and over), Vet men (34 and over), Youth U16. We shall also have non BCU marathon championship prizes for SUP, River kayaks, Sea kayaks, Solo open canoe and Touring kayaks \ Sit on tops.

