

Entering a Sprint Regatta In Scotland

So you are ready for your first sprint regatta race. You've done all of the training, you've done the practise, and your coach has suggested you go to the next regatta, so what do you do next? Regattas are run to be as friendly as possible but you can do your bit to try to make the process as easy as possible.

There are 2 types of regattas in Scotland, Club regattas held at locations like Kinghorn, Linlithgow Lochs which are less formal and a great place to start, and National regattas held at Strathclyde Park, a bit more formal, but still fun.

Regattas are a series of races which take place throughout the day and competitors race over 200m, 500m, & 1000m with 100m for the Under 10's. Most regattas organise K2 races and some will have K4 races as well. In Scotland, the races are usually organised by age group and sex.

For juniors, under 12 years old, there are 6 classes (under 12, under 10 & under 8 - male & female) where all paddlers compete in the same design of boat, called a Lightning. In 2018 an Open U12 class has also been introduced where paddlers are not restricted to paddling Lightnings, they can compete in full size K1's, mini K1's or Lightnings.

The race organiser should post their race details on the SCA's website www.canoescotland.org in the Events section and distribute the information to local clubs. Start times, costs and locations will be detailed here. In Scotland, entries for club regattas can be made online via the race information on the canoescotland website. It is also usually possible to enter on the day of the race. For the Scottish Championships and British national regattas at Nottingham advance entries are required and this will be noted on race entry details on www.CanoeScotland.org. For these regattas entries are submitted by club coaches / team leaders and not by individuals.

When you get to the race, you need to look for the booking-in desk (sometimes a car with the tail gate open & a queue!), complete the entry form (if required), show SCA membership card and pay the race fee. You will be given a race number board (to be fixed into the clip on your boat) or race number bib to wear if you do not have a clip on your boat. It is important to make sure that your race number board is attached securely to the back of your boat. If the organisers can't read your race number at the finish, your time may not be recorded, or you may not score points for your club. Next thing is to look for the course map and a schedule setting out the order of the races - don't be afraid to ask around for someone to explain the course to you if it does not seem clear.

There will be a race briefing around half an hour before the start, listen carefully to this as there may be updated information regarding the course. Then it's time to make your way to the start. Warm up, but always stay off the course and wait beyond the start line until your race is called forward. The race order will vary between regattas so listen at the briefing and to the starter.

If you are at Strathclyde Park, you will have pre-entered and your team manager will be given your number board and he/she will give you the briefing.

When you finish the race, KEEP PADDLING until you pass the finish line and you have heard the whistle or beep, clear the finish line and paddle to the cool down area. Once cooled down, get out at the allotted place and, at the end of the day, once racing is complete, return your number board or bib. There may be a prize giving at the end of the regatta. Results will be posted on www.canoescotland.org in the results section & perhaps, the club's website, as soon as possible after the event.

Now you start the process again, ready for your next regatta.