



WELLS MOAT BOAT RACE

RULES AND Regulations 25th August 2025

1. General Information:

- a. Races will be held on the Bishop's Palace Moat in Wells, by kind permission of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.
- b. The City of Wells Lions Club are the Event Organisers.
- c. Disclaimer:
 - i. The City of Wells Lions Club will not be responsible for rafts made by the competitors and thereby carry no liability.
 - ii. Testing rafts on the Moat is not part of the event and the City of Wells Lions Club thereby carry no liability for any team that does so. Permission must be granted by the Bishop's Palace to any crew wishing to 'try out' their raft on the Moat before the day of the event.
 - iii. All competitors compete at their own risk and the City of Wells Lions Club carries no liability for any injury to a third party on the water.
- d. Local bylaws ban the drinking of Alcohol in the area of the Bishops Palace and its surrounding areas.
- e. In the interest of safety and to comply with the Organiser's insurance, we are unable to permit Barbecues, camping Stoves or any other cooking items that could result in explosion or fire within the event footprint:
 - i. We do however, fully encourage picnics and teams to bring refreshments along for the planned break;
 - ii. All teams are responsible for clearing all rubbish from their designated pit lane and the immediately surroundings.
- f. The Lions Club of Wells will appoint a Race Director, who will be responsible for all water side activities in the interest of Safety, adherence to the rules and to ensure all participants have an enjoyable day:
 - i. The Race Director will be clearly identifiable;
 - ii. The Race Director will not form part of any team racing on the day or be directly affiliated with any team racing;
 - iii. The Race Director will be supported by the Launch/Recover Lead and The Start/Finish Team of Judges;
 - iv. In the event of any dispute relating to the racing or water side activities the Race Director's decision is final.
- g. For a day of fun and fair racing it is essential that all individuals and teams follow the rules laid down;
- h. In the event of a dispute or complaint relating to the racing – the Race Director's Decision is final, there is no appeals process once a decision is made.



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2. Team Information:

- a. Team crews will be of between 4 and 6 team members on a raft;
 - i. A team may have up to 8 members registered, leaving those not racing as reserve/substitutes if required;
 - ii. All crew members must be capable swimmers;
 - iii. Only those named on the entry forms are permitted to race;
 - iv. All teams must have their own flotation aids, which must be used at all times by all crew members when on the water;
 - v. It is highly recommended that all junior team members wear a protective helmet when on the water;
 - vi. **Closed toed footwear must be worn by all crew members** for reasons of safety.
- b. The **minimum age for crews entering is thirteen** years on the day of racing. Entrants under the age of eighteen must have their parent's written consent (see entry form);
- c. All Junior Team members must be between the ages 13 and 17 years on race day;
- d. All Adult Team members must be 18 years and over on race day;
- e. Entry of a team consisting of adults and juniors combined is not permitted;
- f. A changing area and toilets are available for Teams at the Bishop's Barn:
 - i. A steward, based at the barn all day, will control entry. Please be patient if you are asked to wait while another team is changing;
 - ii. All Junior competitors or any other team member needing assistance must be accompanied and under the supervision of the adults who are fully responsible for these participants.
- g. Any 'Pit Crew' or helpers that are affiliated with a team are subject to the same rules as team members. i. Particular attention should be paid to rules **4d, 4e & 4f**.

3. Raft Information:

- a. Each team must have their own raft. **Sharing is not permitted** except when an organisation has a senior and junior team. We strongly encourage all teams to have their own rafts:
 - i. This avoid delays in the race programme that are caused by 'crew swapping' between Adult and Junior teams;
 - ii. This allows all teams to be eligible for the Best Designed Raft Trophy that is awarded to Adult and Junior Teams independently.

- b. **The raft must be 'home-made'** and the only permissible means of flotation will be oil drums or similar containers, plastic or metal:
 - i. All drums or barrels must be clean and decontaminated;
 - ii. The decking should be wooden, and any sharp corners must be padded.
- c. **No part of the raft should be designed to 'streamline' the structure.**

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- d. Propulsion must only be achieved by 'home-made' paddles of any size, shape:
 - i. Paddles are to be **single bladed** and made of wood and/or plastic;
 - ii. **No metal blades are permitted.**
- e. A team number is allocated when the application is received:
 - i. Please display your team number on a large sign, securely fitted to the front of the raft;
 - ii. Your team number must be clearly visible to the judges at all times;
 - iii. If more than one team representing an organisation use the same raft the team numbers displayed on the raft must be changed showing the current team crewing the raft.
- f. Each craft must have a painter (strong rope) with a minimum length of 3 metres, securely fixed to the craft to enable it to be towed.
- g. Construction of the raft must conform to these basic rules and any breach will result in disqualification. All rafts will be inspected before they are launched and any raft considered 'unsafe' will not be launched. h. **The Race Director's decision is final** on challenges to the design and construction of a raft.

4. On The Day:

a. **Arrival and Registration:**

- i. Registration Opens at 09:00 on Race Day and Closes at 10:30. The Registration Desk is at the Lions Control Point based at the Silver Street end of the Moat.
- ii. There will be a strict 'one way' system in place for the unloading of rafts into the Pits area. For safety reasons:
 - 1. Entry is from Silver Street on to the public foot path by the Moat. This is a public right of way and clear passage must be permitted to everyone using it;
 - 2. You will be advised of your 'Pit Bay' at the registration desk;
 - 3. On arriving at your 'Pit Bay' please unload your raft and vacate your vehicle and trailer from the foot path via the exit on to Tor Street in a timely manner to avoid tail backs and potential safety issues;
 - 4. No vehicles must be left on the footpath or grassed area after 10.30.
 - 5. Cars may be parked in the Palace Fields, accessed from Silver Street.
- iii. All rafts will be Scrutinised before launching on to the Moat. The scrutiny is to check that each

raft meets the build rules and is 'safe' to use:

1. The team must be present at the time of scrutineering and must be prepared to make any modifications required before the raft is launched;
2. Each team will be expected, under the direction of the Launch Area Lead, to support the launching and recovery of their raft.

b. Safety briefing:

- i. There will be a safety briefing at the time specified in the race pack you receive with your entry;
- ii. The safety briefing will take place outside of the Bishop's barn (inside if it's raining);

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- iii. All members of each team (including reserves/substitutes) must attend the safety briefing;
- iv. A register of attendance will be taken at the safety briefing;
- v. Teams failing to attend the safety briefing will be disqualified;
- vi. Immediately after the safety briefing all teams must proceed to the launch area to start the launching process.

c. Team Boarding

- i. Boarding of Rafts will start after the safety briefing has finished;
- ii. Teams can only board and disembark from the designated area;
- iii. Teams must follow the instructions of the Launch/Recovery team when boarding and disembarking;
- iv. Initial launching and boarding will be done based on race order to avoid delays to the race programme;
- v. Please be aware of the races you have entered and make sure your team is ready to board 2 races in advance.

d. On the water – SAFETY

- i. **EMERGENCY SIGNAL:** *The right arm is to be raised above the head with fist clenched and waved from left to right. If this signal is performed for any other reason that boat will be **immediately disqualified**;*
- ii. With the exception of the Rescue Race, all rafts must start and finish races with the same crew on board;
- iii. If a raft is damaged while on the water and, either the Water Safety Team or the raft crew or both, consider the raft 'unsafe' and a hazard to the crew and / or other crews the EMERGENCY SIGNAL must be given immediately. The Water Safety team will help and escort the crew and raft back to the Launch Area and the Launch Team will then recover the raft. If the team 'make good' any damage to their raft and it passes Scrutiny the team may continue to use the raft and race;
- iv. No crew members are permitted to jump up and down in their raft;
- v. The use of water pistols, deliberate splashing, etc. is not permitted;

- vi. Failing to follow the instructions of the Water Safety Team or Race Officials may lead to disqualification and especially if actions could lead to injury to anyone. The Race Director will have the final say in any dispute;
- vii. The depth of the Moat varies. In some places the depth exceeds 10ft. Anyone voluntarily entering the water will be at risk of disqualification;
- viii. The Moat's water is not safe for drinking due to the wildlife that live in and around the moat: 1. If you accidentally swallow the water in the Moat we advise you to seek medical advice if you feel unwell;

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- 2. The St John's Ambulance is the onsite First Aid team will be able to sign post you to the correct and most effective medical pathway if you feel unwell due to swallowing the Moat's Water.

e. On the Water Environmental

- i. The Moat has a large population of resident waterfowl and anything which will be detrimental to their well-being is not permitted;
- ii. Water bombs, loose plastic containers and bags are **not** permitted on the water;
- iii. The throwing of weed is **not** permitted;
- iv. If you drop anything into the Moat and if it's safe to do so please retrieve it. If you cannot retrieve the item please tell a member of the Water Safety Team.

f. On the water – Racing

- i. Please listen to any special instructions relating to individual race rules:
 - 1. There are up to 5 different race formats;
 - 2. Individual race briefings will be given prior to each race start;
- ii. Subject to the number of entries in each category there could be:
 - 1. two or more heats per race and a final;
 - 2. No more than four rafts in each heat or final.
- iii. The race officials are volunteering their time to ensure the event is run on a safe basis and everyone can enjoy themselves while entertaining the public;
 - 1. Any abuse aimed at race officials will not be tolerated in the same manner that abusing a referee in any other sport;
 - 2. Anyone abusing or disrespecting a race official may be told to withdraw from a race;
 - a. Up-to one warning or 'Yellow' card will be issued if this occurs;
 - b. Further cases will be treated as a Red Card and substitutions will not be allowed;
 - c. In extreme cases a whole team may be disqualified from a race or the entire

event.

- iv. At the end of each race, teams should move to the mooring area to allow the next teams to line up;
- v. Teams may watch the races, in which they are not participants, from the water as long as they do not interfere with the racing and put themselves or others at risk;
- vi. Every effort will be made by the race officials to keep the 'waiting time' between races to a minimum. A reduction in shared rafts will support reduced waiting time.
- vii. All rafts must remain in the water until all races have finished and the Launch Lead has confirmed that all competitors are off the water. The only exception is where special permission is granted by the Race Director and has directed the launch and recovery team to remove a raft before racing has finished.
- viii. The aim is for all races to be complete by 17:00.

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g. At the end of the day:

- i. Once all racing has been completed and all competitors have disembarked, rafts will be removed from the moat:
 - 1. At this stage the Launch and Recovery team will lead the recovery of rafts from the Moat at the launching point;
 - 2. Each team will be required to assist with the removal of their raft under the direction of the Launch and Recovery Lead in order to avoid injury to participants, stewards and members of the public.
- ii. At their discretion the Launch and Recovery Lead can enlist the help of experienced rafters to remove rafts from the water:
 - 1. Only if instructed by the Launch and Recovery Lead or Race Director can team members voluntary enter the water;
 - 2. Anyone entering the water without approval from these officials may be disqualified and forfeit any trophies their team has won;
 - 3. It is planned to complete all races no later than 17:00 hrs.
- iii. Once rafts have been recovered onto the Moat footpath teams must move their rafts back to their 'Pit bays' and wait for their transport to arrive.
- iv. This area is a public right of way and clear passage must be permitted to those using it. The Chief Marshal (responsible for crowd and landside activities) will decide when to allow vehicle access to the Pit Area based on crowd levels and safety factors;
- v. The entry route for collection of rafts will again be from the Silver Street entrance on to the moat footpath and the one-way system to the Tor Street exit will be open.
- h. All competitors, vehicles and rafts must be clear of the Moat footpath by 19:00 hrs on the day of the event;
- i. There is no provision for the storage of rafts after the event;

j. Teams must ensure that rubbish, raft parts or paddles are removed before they leave.

5. After the event:

- a. Teams are encouraged to provide constructive feedback on the event to enable us to improve for the following year:
 - i. Feedback and enquiries can be directed to
 - 1. cityofwellsions@gmail.com
 - 2. [Wells Moat Boat Race](#)
- b. After the event all teams are invited to a presentation evening:
 - i. This will normally be within 3 months after the event;
 - ii. The date, time and venue will be communicated by the organiser either during the race day or within 1 month of the presentation evening.