

WHAT TO WEAR

by Tom Simmat



**What you have on is between you and your kayak and paddle.
What you have on is what drives the kayak.**

The difficulty about the HCC is it may start in 30 degrees plus and at 2 am it can be near zero.

1) SET UP YOUR LAND CREW

You should have decided where you are going to stop
Have a separate set of dry thermals in a marked bag for your land crew to have ready for you at each stop.

2) WHAT TO WEAR NO STOPS (what I wear)

- a) **On the hands at least one hour before racing I put on Vasculin and rub it in. I don't wear gloves and if you do, put Vasicine on first.**
- b) **On the bum and anything else that is likely to chafe I put on a lot of Vasculin**
- c) **Then speedos (budge smugglers) these give me slip and help me rotate without chafing.**
- d) **Then full length "Skins" on upper body and arms and pants including legs. These are like a compressive skin and are for muscle support and prevent muscle fatigue. They are not a thermal and in fact are the opposite; they draw the moisture off the skin. This helps you keep dry, especially in rub areas, they also slip against your Speedos to prevent bum chafe during rotation.**
- e) **Paddling shorts over my leg skins, again for rotation**
- f) **Then on top a good quality pure wool long sleeve thermal. Wool pulls the moisture off the skin and remains warm even when wet. In the heat at the start wool will soon get wet from your sweat but will then stabilise your temperature.
Don't wear cotton any where. COTTON KILLS. Synthetic thermals are OK for a short period of time. Once they are saturated you will need more layers to keep warm.
If you are going to wear a skirt you don't need any more on your legs. I don't intend to get out so I don't wear booties, simply to save weight. (About half a kilo)**
- g) **Then a good quality but light Gortex water proof jacket. Mine has air vent zippers under the arm pits. These are open at the start, as it gets cold I can do them up.**
- h) **Then your skirt, which is another layer of insulation. I wear a skirt with a shoulder strap which is loose around you gut and chest and is easier on the breathing.**
- i) **Then you're PFD. If it is a good one it will also add to your thermal insulation.**
- j) **I wear a well fitted, ventilated paddling cap. The brim keeps paddle splash and sweat out of your eyes and off your glasses.**

I am paddling hard and my body is generating heat which is contained in the above. If you are not paddling as hard and your body is not generating as much heat you may need a stand by layer.

On the Yukon I wear the same as above, but I have woollen socks to put on, woollen gloves and another insulated Gortex jacket to pull over the whole lot, including my PFD.

3). WHAT TO WEAR WITH STOPS

Same as above, but work out a race plan and where you are going to stop and about what time you are going to be there.

If it is a hot afternoon, you may plan to get to Sackville in 3 to 4 hours which will put you there in the dark. You could start the race in the heat with a lighter synthetic thermal, but all the above should be the same. Have that extra stand by insulated water proof jacket in the boat as above, and put it on as soon as you get cold, even if you think Sackville is just around the corner.

When you stop, and you are running on synthetic thermals put two fresh dry thermals on. Your light weight waterproof jacket will be wet inside and it won't be so uncomfortable to put back on. Put leg thermals on also as your skirt will be wet now also.

So have your package at Sackville & Wisemans ready for your land crew. In the package two upper body synthetic thermals or one wool thermal and a pair of leg thermals.

If you are doing the cruise and stopping at the Low Tide Pit stop, have a package in the boat to change there.

If you are stopping for a while at the check point put on more Vaseline.

RULE NUMBER ONE TO FINISH, DON'T GET COLD.

TO COMPLY WITH RULE NUMBER ONE

PUT ON MORE LAYERS OR CHANGE BEFORE YOU GET COLD.

TO AVOID GETTING COLD WEAR WOOL

Don't wear synthetic jumpers, or cotton or synthetic shirts as under layers. They will get wet and drain the warmth and energy from you.,

Don't ever wear jeans in a kayak.

Alternatives to wool thermals, you will pay \$100.00 plus for a good wool thermal.

You can get good quality pure wool long sleeve and long leg under wear quite cheap.

You can get light weight pure wool jumpers, especially at Vinnys.

Happy Hawkesbury.