

LCRK HCC Preparation Seminar Number 1, 23 August 2013: Tony Hystek, Rae Duffy and John Duffy
Presenters: Tony Hystek, Tom Simmat, Rae & Neil Duffy and John Duffy

Takeaways:

- Aim for 10 hours on the water per week from now to the HCC;
- Use this time to get your seat right (shaped closed-cell foam with appropriate cut-outs and Teflon cover receives strong support but other approaches have supporters too);
- Use this time to get your seat righter;
- Use this time to get your seat rightest (yes, it is that important).
- Use this time to test out and wear in all your paddling kit.
- Long distance ergonomic and comfort problems won't show up in a 2 hour paddle – this needs 3+ hour paddles.
- Paddling style problems that will injure or impede you during an HCC won't show up until much longer than 2 hours - this probably needs a couple of 4+ hour paddles (Myall Classic provides one).
- Similarly for nutrition (including “crook gut” problems) and hydration problems (dehydration or excessive fluid intake).
- Ideally, have at least one steady 5-6 hour paddle before the race (“Spend a day on the river”).
- You should get to the end of the HCC totally “stuffed” but without injury or soreness.
- People get cold as soon as they stop paddling and get out of their kayak cocoon.
- So, if you stop and get out of your boat (i.e. at Sackville or Wisemans), get changed into dry (and probably warmer) clothes immediately; tell your landcrew to have your gear ready and maybe a blanket to throw over you while you change.
- Consequently, there is no such thing as a worthwhile quick stop – if you get out of the boat, assume at very minimum, 15 minutes to change, eat, stretch and refresh.
- With this year's tides, Sackville is not a good place to stop unless your body or mind really needs to: you will be giving up a big tidal advantage.
- Almost everyone will be paddling against the tide at Wisemans this year so this is the best place for a break.
- Hands, feet and many other parts of your body get sore and soggy (the “prune skin” look) over a long night paddle – put on Vaseline, Gurney Goo or similar product a few hours before the race start as a preventative and soother (but if you don't wear gloves, putting slippery stuff on your hands just before the start is a recipe for an early swim).
- The temperature range will differ from year to year but it is certain that the temperature and wind will vary through the night – have additional and alternative clothes with you in easy reach, including something that fits over your PFD without having to pull up or wrecking your drinking system.
- Greatest heat loss is from your head – have at least a beanie in easy reach.
- Put on an additional layer as soon as you feel slightly cold; you can't wait until the next scheduled stop.
- Actively work the river, looking for the best (or least bad) current or available wash ride.
- Against the tide, this may mean an aggressive cross-river path to move from the backflow close to one edge of the river to the backflow close to the other edge just around the bend;
- When paddling with the tide, in the middle of the river is OK but you can do better through intelligent use of shortcuts – downstream of the inner side of a bend is typically shallow due to silt deposited.
- If you suddenly slow down, you are in shallows – don't try to ride it out, get back to deeper water quickly.

- If you might finish after sunrise, have your landcrew give you a pair of sunglasses at Wisemans or you may never find your way along Milson's Passage and up to the finish through the glare.
- Accept that some things are out of your control, e.g. the weather; just aim to minimize their effect.
- Even if you have prepared perfectly, something will go wrong but you will get through it.