

TIPS FOR LANDCREWS

by Justin Paine



1. Above all, **be there for your paddler**. Every year some competitors are left shivering on the river bank at checkpoints because their landcrews are not there. All the preparation in the world is worthless if you can't deliver.
2. On race day, **keep your paddler rested** by checking the paperwork, waiting in the inevitable scrutineering queue, etc.
3. **Plan the race carefully** with your competitor. Decide where he/she is going to stop and be there early. Planning to arrive early gives you time to recover if you take a wrong turn in the road, have difficulty parking, etc and also gives you time to suss out the check point.
4. **Decide where at each checkpoint you'll meet** and how you'll make contact (colored lights, shouting numbers or names, etc). Remember that the checkpoints are going to be as busy as Pitt Street at lunch time.
5. **Decide in advance just what your paddler will need at each checkpoint** (drinks, food, clothing, mopping out the boat, etc) and be ready to meet these needs quickly.
6. **Be prepared to get your feet wet**. It will help to have water to wash sand off your feet later, a towel to dry them and dry shoes. You may have to repeat this process several times.
7. Know where the **nearest toilet facilities** are. Take toilet paper.
8. **Keep your paddler rugged up and warm while he's on shore**. And try to keep him moving, the body cools down quickly when you stop after vigorous exercise. Have a blanket to wrap around him.
9. A **change into warm, dry clothing** can make a world of difference for a cold, wet, tired paddler.
10. **Let your paddler know how he's going** compared to his race plan. If he is competing against some rivals, try to monitor their progress.
11. At all times, **motivate and encourage your paddler**. But at the same time make sure he's fit to continue and seek medical assistance if in doubt.
12. **Don't rely on using a mobile phone** to check your paddler's progress. Reception can be poor to nil.
13. If your paddler has to withdraw, console him and tell him **personal welfare and safety come first**.
14. If you've got a camera, **ask someone to take a few shots of you and your paddler**. You'll enjoy them later.
15. **At the finish**, get your paddler's boat out of the water and back to the car, get him dried and changed and have food/drink ready. Congratulate him on finishing and let him know how his friends went in the race.
16. **Don't forget yourself. Have fun**. If you have someone to talk to at checkpoints the event will be much more enjoyable. Look after your own food and drink needs and keep warm. Rugs and folding chairs add to comfort. If wet weather is likely, be prepared for it. Remember, it's going to be a long and tiring night.