

WAKA AMA – SPRINT Event Operations and Safety Management Plan: Te Waka o Aoraki Regional Sprints



BACKGROUND

Te Waka o Aoraki Regional Sprints – held every December as a build up to the Waka Ama NZ National Sprint Championships, including being the qualifying event for regional W1 and W12 paddlers to compete at the Nationals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Event Name: Te Waka o Aoraki Regional Sprints

Event Dates: 12 December 2020

Contingency Dates: 13 December 2020

Event Locations: Kerrs Reach, Ōtākaro/Avon River (Wainoni, Ōtautahi/Christchurch)

Event Start Time: 8.00am Registration – 8.30 Karakia – 9.00am racing starts

Event numbers competitors and Spectators: 150 competitors (max); 100 spectators

Event Support Boat: Naval Point Rescue Boat / Rescue Boards

Number of Competitors on the water at any one time: 18 + 18 in a W6 event; in a 3 + 3 W1 event (racing + paddling to start line)

Event Outline: W6 & W1 Waka Ama Sprint Regatta with 1000m turn and 500m and 250m straight races
This event is held as a qualifying regatta for Waka Ama New Zealand's National Sprint Championships, held at Lake Karapiro in January every year.

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Kerrs Reach Venue and Race Course Map



Waka are loaded and unloaded from the small beach and pontoons by the Christ's College Rowing Club.

500m Straight Race start line is the Northern End of the Reach. 250m Straight Race start line (and turn race start/finish line) is near the Arawa Canoe Club. The 250/500m Straight Race finish line is at the Southern end of the Reach.

Waka must stop and turn before the swing bridge at the Southern end of the lake, as well as at the beaches at the Northern end.

Toilets are located in the Arawa Canoe Club.

For more information about Kerrs Reach see:
<https://www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/canterbury-region/swimming/avon-river-ar-kerrs-reach/swimsite>

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3. RISK ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this part of the safety plan is to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to determine support boat/ lifeguard and medical support requirements and form part of an effective event decision making protocol and communication to all participants.

a. 'Environmental' risk assessment

Past experience for the same or similar events	TWoA have held their sprint event at various sites since 2001 so have a good understanding of the specific operational and safety aspects of the event, including the specific venue and weather risks. Wind can be an issue at times, particularly later in the day, with strong NE, NW or SW winds causing difficulties. Hence the event is planned to run from 9am through to 2-3pm to avoid stronger afternoon winds.
Anticipated number of competitors	100-150 competitors
Number of competitors on the water at any one time	Up to 36 in W6 races (max 18 or 3 x W6 racing; and 3 x W6 paddling to start); Up to 6 in W1 races (3 x W1 racing; and 3 x W1 paddling to start)
Number of waka on the water at any one time	As above: 6 for W6 races; 6 for W1 races
Length of the course	500m
Design of the course	3 lanes for W1; and 3 lanes for W6
Proximity of the course to land	Less than 50m from shore at all points
Anticipated wave / surf size	Nil, Flatwater venue
Assessment of paddlers ability of competitors	Competitors abilities range from novice to experienced paddlers
Age Range of paddlers	6 to 70 Plus
Any pre-entry qualifying criteria	<p>The safety briefing will cover the course and race procedures, as well as local weather forecast (including wind direction and strength) and the likely effects of weather on paddlers and contingencies in relation to weather.</p> <p>The safety briefing will cover how to raise assistance in an emergency, safe launching and exiting from the water, and safe beaching of waka, as well as what to do in the case of flipping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All waka will be safety checked prior to the start of racing, and after any incidents • All competitors must be able to swim 50m or they must wear a lifejacket • All junior paddlers (Midgets/Intermediate/J16/J19) must wear a PFD • All competitors must be fit and competent of completing the course
Start / finish area	Will be indicated on the day (according to the map on page 2). Competitors will be made familiar with course during the briefing
Water temperature	Expected to be approx. 12 to 15 degrees (but will be confirmed before the event)

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Event apparel worn during event	Club uniform race tops and shorts, with dry fit/polyprop under garments; No Jeans, Tracksuit pants or heavy clothing. Light weight water shoes/sneakers are allowed, but no heavy shoes or gumboots in the waka/water.
Water quality assessment	Water quality in the river can be changeable and at times can be affected by high e.coli readings. These are notified to the public by the Canterbury District Health Board and the river can be shut down during such events. Therefore, the river water quality will be checked in the week leading up to the event for suitability for the event. The lake is monitored by Environment Canterbury as part of its swimming water quality tracking, with up to date results found at: https://www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/canterbury-region/swimming/avon-river-ar-kerrs-reach/swimsite
Other considerations	<p>Safety Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All competitors must read and have the event waiver explained to them. 2. All competitors must sign a waiver confirming that they are able to swim, and if they can't they will wear a PFD during racing. They will also confirm they are aware of risks associated with sprint racing. 3. All competitors must be fit and competent of completing the courses and the race director has the right to stop anyone from paddling who they believe is not competent of racing. 4. All junior competitors will wear PFD. 5. Junior crews can have an adult steerer who must not paddle or propel the waka in anyway. 6. First aiders and trained lifeguards will be on site and identified during the race briefing. 7. The starting boat and start line spotter will be in direct radio contact with the finish line/admin tent and race director at all times. 8. Extreme weather conditions such as high wind and/or rain that jeopardise the safety of paddlers may lead to the postponement and/or cancellation of racing. Event organisers will endeavour to inform all entrants of this by email or phone, on, or before the day of the event of adverse weather conditions, as well as during the race briefing and throughout the day. 9. All children must be supervised by an adult at all times on and off the water. 10. Swimming is not advised at Kerrs Reach. 11. Dogs are allowed at the venue but should be on a leash in the main event area. 12. Take only photos – leave only footprints! Competitors rubbish is their responsibility. 13. Covid 19 – QR code posters will be printed and displayed to enable all attendees to check in using the NZ Covid Tracer App. A paper roll will also be on hand to record names and contact details for those who dont have the App and/or if the App / Electronic means do not work for any reason. Hand sanitiser will also be available at the event, and reminders will be sent out in the lead up to the event about the need for people to not attend and/or compete if they are sick or showing any symptoms.

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RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN / RISK ACTION PLAN

EVENT Te Waka o Aoraki Regional Sprints **Race Director / Event Manager** Craig Pauling / Caleb Te Kahu **Date** 12 December 2020

Risk: What could go wrong?	Cause	Prevention: Eliminate/ Isolate/ Minimise	Equipment	Check (tick)	Who is responsible?	Eliminate, Isolate, Mitigate
Injury related to the race	Pulled Muscle, fatigue, exhaustion, Heart Attack	Note and identify risks at briefing; First aid personal on site; local after hours and/or ambulance if required.	Race briefing notes; First aid kit; Safety Plan with local after hours clinic contacts;		Event manager / Race Director / Onsite First aid	M, I
Paddler unable to continue	Person affected by alcohol, anxiety, inexperience, weather conditions etc	Note and identify at briefing; Race Director and/or Event Manager to be informed and to make assessment of paddler; Crew or support boat/waka to assist paddler to land and looked after.	Race briefing notes; VHF radios for communication; Admin Tent/area for shelter / rest area if required.		Race Director / Event Manager / Support Boat	I, M
Drowning	Separation of canoe and paddler / Paddler cannot swim	Note and identify risks at briefing; Ensure paddlers are aware of the course, safety boat and safe exit areas. Any paddler unable to swim 50 and all juniors must wear a PFD. Use safety boat to assist paddlers in trouble / need.	Race briefing notes; VHF radios for communication; Safety boat PFDs		Event manager / Race Director / Support Boat / Paddlers	I, M
Wet / bad weather-causing race to be unsafe	Monitor weather	Call off event if weather becomes to dangerous.	Communication on Facebook, phone or email (laptop/device/phone)		Event manager / Race Director	E
Spectators causing trouble.	Alcohol,	Have someone constantly patrolling the area. Call police if there is any kind of trouble.	Cell Phone, VHF Radios		Event manager	I, M
Vandalism	Graffiti, Damage to Property and Buildings	Monitor throughout day			Event manager	M
Damage	To equipment, cars, public property, canoes etc...	Public Liability cover for any damage to property of the third party, including cover for illness from water drinking sources, serious injury or death of officials.			Event manager	M
Injuries	Running into something, pulling a muscle. Cut foot	First Aid Station, have ice available.	First Aid Kit		Event manager	I, M
Vehicles	Vehicle incidents involving passengers and or pedestrians in and around venues	Clear instructions around parking and crossing roads	Race briefing notes		Event manager	I, M

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Hazard identification						
Event courses	Hazard		Steps to minimise		Steps taken	Responsibility
	Yes	No	Yes	No		
Possible 20+ knot wind could come up and blow all the competitors off course – all the paddlers could be in trouble and need rescuing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Races will be run in the morning before the wind comes up too much. Monitoring of the wind during the day by Race Director. Race Director and Event Manager to make the call to change course and/or postpone or cease racing	Race Director <i>in consultation with the Event manager</i>
Paddlers could suffer fatigue, have a heart attack or epileptic seizure, cramp etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Medical Condition disclosed on entry form and Safety craft following paddlers from start to finish & VHF Radio Contact	Race Director / Event Manager
Paddlers could capsize, get a knock on the head by ama or another waka /paddle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Identify at Race briefing, have spotters along course. All crews must be familiar with huli process and look after each other until support arrives.	Race Director / Event Manager

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4. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS (Equipment and Personnel)

Based on the risk assessment completed previously, personnel and equipment requirements will be determined for this event.

Equipment Required	Number of equipment to be used	Number of experienced personnel	Personnel Competencies to use equipment
Support Boat (with throw/tow ropes etc)	1	2	Capable of assisting paddlers to shore
Rescue Boards	2	4	Capable of assisting paddlers to shore
Radios and other communication tools	5 VHF Radios (Start line; Start Boat; Finish line; Loading Area; Admin/First Aid Tent)	N/A	VHF with on water safety. RTS between land management
PFD's	18 (1 for each seat in each waka that is racing)	N/A	Brief and check fitting
First Aid Station/Kits	1	At least 1	First Aid person to hold current First Aid Cert
Event signage/Maps etc	1	N/A	Covered at race briefing
Hand Sanitiser / QR Code Posters	6	N/A	To provide for adequate C19 hygiene / Allow people to check in / trace

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5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

There will be direct (VHF radio) communication between:

- i. **Race Director / Event Manager, Race Starter (Starter Boat) & Start Line Spotter, Finish Line Crew, Loading Bay Crew and Admin Tent**

There will also be indirect (arm signals, whistle and/or voice) communication established between the competitors and start/support boat, and on shore personnel.

6. PRE START SAFETY COMMUNICATION TO PADDLERS

- a. General Safety

Pre Race Safety Briefing (will cover):

1. *The course, local weather patterns, tide times, wind direction and the likely effects on paddlers and the explanation of the Safety Waiver.*
2. *How to raise assistance in an emergency, safe launching and exiting from the water, and who the First Aiders/Lifeguards are, and what happens in an emergency/safety incident.*
3. *Where paddlers need to go, and buoys to start, finish and turn on to be on the correct path for racing and loading/unloading.*
4. *That the Race Director or other event personnel can stop any paddler from competing/completing if they show signs that they will not complete it in an acceptable time or acceptable condition.*
5. *That the course may be changed by the Race Director due to conditions.*
6. *The process should any race need to be stopped for any reason.*
7. *A reminder for paddlers to hydrate, dress appropriately and apply sunscreen prior to and during the event.*
8. *That PFDs must be worn by all Junior competitors and those that cannot swim 50m.*
9. *That all Waka Ama NZ Race rules apply.*
10. *That everyone has check in using the Covid 19 QR Code and Tracer App (and/or on the hand written roll)*

Cancellation/Postponement

Extreme weather conditions such as high wind and/or rain that jeopardise the safety of paddlers may lead to cancellation/postponement of the race. Event organisers will endeavour to inform all entrants of this by email by 4pm the day before the events or as early as possible on the day.

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7. PRE START SAFETY COMMUNICATION TO RACE PERSONNEL

- a. A register of all personnel present on the day of the event will be taken.
- b. The Event Manager/Race Director (or appropriately trained representative) should:
 - i. Run through all the safety and race instructions being given to the event paddlers;
 - ii. Run through the risk assessment for the event;
 - iii. Run through the role of the on water event personnel – support, rescue, first aid;
 - iv. Run through the communication plan;
 - v. Outline what will happen in a rescue and/or emergency;
 - vi. Outline the role of the personnel: 1. At the start of each race; 2. During the race; & 3. At the end of each race
- c. Personnel Wellbeing and Personal Safety
The Event Manager should also ensure that all event personnel have the right equipment. Event personnel should be wearing appropriate clothing for the conditions and they should wear a hat to protect from the sun and have sunscreen available to use. Event personnel should be adequately hydrated and feed for the event.

8. ON WATER SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- A participant in distress will be approached by the closest available on water support personnel when they raise their paddle, or are in obvious distress
- Event personnel will assess the severity of the situation and determine whether further assistance is needed. If not, then the paddler will head on their way
- If support is needed, then the personnel on the scene at that time will call for the assistance of the nearest rescue boat and immediately start administering first aid if possible
- Another quick assessment will be made by event personnel
- If the situation is deemed an emergency, event personnel will immediately make radio contact (or cell phone call if needed) to the land based event manager and call for advanced paramedic support / ambulance and/or police and instruct them to meet at the emergency rendezvous point
- All efforts will be made to commence first aid treatment – dependant on conditions
- Event personnel will then transport the participant to the agreed emergency rendezvous point and await support to arrive
- In the event that a support vessel has to take a victim to a different rendezvous point the land based event manager will liaise with the medical staff
- Race number of participant reported to the event manager
- First Aid personnel will continue first aid until it is suitable to hand over to the land based medical team and/or arriving ambulance paramedics if necessary
- Race numbers of all leaving the race reported to the event manager for counts

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The following minimum first aid resources will be available at the event:

- Cell Phone and VHF Radios x 3
- At least 1 key personnel with Current First Aid
- First Aid Kit on shore and On the Support Boat
- Ice (on shore)
- Defibrillator (nearest one is at: Pegasus Medical Centre, 1 Te Kohanga Drive, Phone 111 for Cabinet Combination)
- On Call - 111 Ambulance

Resources will be positioned at the following locations:

- Admin Tent near the finish line (which is also the Emergency Rendezvous point)
At least 1 x Qualified First aider on shore

9. RESCUES OR FIRST AIDS DURING AN EVENT

The Event Manager should record all incidents during the course of an event - incidents will include:

- i. Event personnel supporting a paddler – but allowing that paddler to continue
- ii. Event personnel withdrawing a paddler who they feel is not able to continue the event
- iii. Event personnel rescuing a paddler who identifies themselves as being in distress via physical or verbal communication
- iv. All first aid interventions as highlighted on hazard identification table.
- v. In case of serious injury, injured persons can be taken to A&E at Christchurch Public Hospital (2 Riccarton Ave, Christchurch Central, Christchurch 8011) or 111 called for an ambulance. If someone is required to be transported for minor to moderate (i.e. non urgent treatment) they can be taken to the following locations:

24 Hour Surgery

Address: 401 Madras Street (Entrance on the left just before Bealey Avenue)

Distance from Venue: 4.9kms / 9mins by car

Phone: 03 365 7777

www.24hoursurgery.co.nz

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10. POST EVENT DE-BRIEF

There will be at least two levels of event de-brief.

- i. The Event Manager should meet with all event personnel immediately following the completion of the event. Areas to cover will include: an assessment of the risk factors, whether there was adequate on water presence, and areas where improvement could be made. This is a good time for the Event Manager to ensure that the lifeguards are all okay (physically and emotionally) and thanked for their efforts.
- ii. If there are other key authorities involved with the event, such as Harbour Master, Police etc then they should be included in this meeting if required

The purpose of the de-brief is to run through all aspects of the event for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of the planning for this event, and areas that improvements could be made for similar events be held in the future.

Notes from these meetings should be recorded.

11. POST EVENT SAFETY DE-BRIEF WITH ON WATER PERSONNEL

Date: 16 December 2020

Time: 11am

Venue: tbc

Incident Summary:

- # Interventions where the paddler continued
- # Interventions where a paddler was withdrawn
- # Rescues
- # First aid interventions

Incident forms completed for rescues and first aids: YES NO

General comments from the event personnel about the event: