

2009 Wisconsin Season Opener Canoe / Kayak Race

Date: Saturday, March 14, 2009

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

Location: The Yahara River in downtown Madison, Tenny Park, just downstream of the locks, at the canoe racks. You can reach this parking lot from Sherman Avenue.

More Information: Kevin LeRoy, cell: 608/712-0980. Kevin.leroy@tds.net

Gimmick: We try to set a race course where the winning time in minutes will equal the forecasted high temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. For your reference, the average high temperature in Madison on March 14 is 42 F. The lowest recorded high temperature is 18 (1906) and the record high is 75 (2005).

Entry Fee: None. However, please note that you get what you pay for. All we are providing is a course and somebody to shout, "GO!" There are no classes, no door prizes, no awards, no safety support, no bathrooms, no t-shirts...the list of what this race does not provide goes on and on. Timing and scoring will be "casual".

Disclaimer: It is very important that you understand that canoe and kayak racing has certain inherent risks that could cause severe injury or death. These risks are magnified by the fact that this race will take place on nearly frozen water. The casual nature of this race means that nobody is going to take any steps to ensure your safety. You are completely on your own and must use your own judgment. You should only participate in this race if you have sufficient paddling experience, understand what you are getting into; and perhaps lack some common sense.

Course description: The race course will be laps up and down the river (number of laps > depends on temperature). This stretch of the Yahara is almost exactly one mile long between Lakes Mendota and Monona. It is almost entirely straight, is generally about 3 - 5 feet deep and roughly 30 or 40 feet wide. Depending on water levels in Lake Mendota, current can range from minimal to moderate. This is an urban river with plenty of urban river features such as old bridge pilings, pipes, abandoned bicycles and discarded shopping carts. You do NOT want to hug the shoreline (especially under bridges). The middle of the river, however, is clear of obstructions. If ice and wind conditions permit, we will use part of Lake Monona. However, in the seven years that we've held this race, we were only able to use Lake Monona twice. Once it was too windy, and four times it was still ice covered.

Post Race WCRA Meeting & Party: After the race, there will be a WCRA business meeting and pot-luck dinner at the home of Kevin LeRoy and Julie Snyder. All are welcome – you need not be a WCRA member. We'll post more details about the meeting in a couple weeks. (Hint to those of you who are not inclined to immerse yourselves in WCRA business: come a little later. We'll be more fun once we get some business out of the way.)

Other Paddling Events that Weekend: This race is scheduled on this date to coincide with the big Canoeopia paddlesports expo. They claim this is the largest paddling expo on earth. For more information, go to <http://www.rutabaga.com/> and click on "Canoeopia". Also, the other paddlesports shop in town, "The Paddlin' Shop", (<http://www.paddlin.com>) will likely be having specials that weekend as well, and they located near our race course. We purposely set the race start time late in the day so you have plenty of time before the race for shopping and / or listening to speakers at the show.