



Expert Specific Category: Rules and Guidance

It's great that you are entered into the inaugural year of what is sure to be a classic event, and we wish you a great journey, and importantly for Experts, a great race and successful completion. You are joining 49 other participants in this category.

We are keen not to set out a deep set of rules for this format, and certainly not in year 1. In this way, we can see what works well for you, for the event, and we can then grow or change the category.

However, we do require that you follow certain key rules and have certain etiquettes, to ensure that the competition is fair and safe.

Other Participants

You are part of a much larger event. There are 950 others in this Nokia Coast to Coast event. The Challenger Category will have set off the day before, and you might catch the tail of them on the final run. You will be amongst the Racer Category on the day, and they will get ahead of you while you are kayaking Loch Ness. You might catch them again before the end of the day. We would expect a Racer to be first to the Finishline. But of course, you are not racing them are you?! We do not expect any elitist attitudes or behaviours and have accordingly called the Category Expert rather than Elite, from the outset.

Distances

Your event route, when measured on mapping resources, is very close to 100 miles. You might take a GPS device and update us after the event, with the route distance with all the wiggles in the trail!

- **Trek/Run - 7 miles (5 miles off-road)**
- **Road Cycle - 34 miles**
- **Kayak - 11 miles**
- **Off-Road & Road Cycle - 33 miles (16 miles off-road)**
- **Trek/Run - 14 miles (12 miles off-road)**
- **Kayak - 1 mile**
- **Short run to finish line**
- **TOTAL JOURNEY - 100 miles**

Kit

There are no changes to the existing published general kit or wording.

Mandatory Kit:

- **Cycle Helmet**
- **Bicycle**
- **Full waterproof or windproof body cover**
- **Warm headgear**
- **Warm gloves**

- **Survival bag or blanket**
- **Basic First Aid Kit**
- **Whistle**
- **Additional upper body thermal layer**
- **Food**
- **Water**
- **Kayak, Canoe or Other Boat**
- **Buoyancy Aid of min. 60N, with Whistle fitted**

Racing

The race is a solo effort. Drafting in the cycling is not allowed. Therefore a Peleton is absolutely not allowable. Drafting or bow surfing in any kayaking stage is not allowed. Double kayaks are not allowed. When passing other participants, give due warning of your approach, especially when off-road. Please help any other participants that are in distress; injury, cold, kayak incident. This will require that you stop to talk to a static participant in order to determine if distressed.

Bicycle Type

Any type and number of bikes are allowed. These can only be changed at the official transition points. Wheels or other component changes are also allowable at the official transition points.

Running

On the course, all maintenance issues must be dealt with by the soloist. The soloist may seek help and be helped by other soloists, but not by others in an alternative category; i.e. Racer or Challenger. You may be forced to seek help from your Support during a stage. From this moment you will be classed as non-competitive, and we ask you to declare to us if this has happened. We hope that you are able and wish to complete the course thereafter.

Support

You are allowed one support vehicle, with any number of people allowed in that vehicle. It is of considerable help to the event if these vehicles are not large vehicles. Larger vehicles will struggle to negotiate certain transitions, narrow roads, trees, and green field sites. We have designed the course so that support vehicles will not have to rush their driving. Please drive safely.

Your support person(s) will need to be able to handle your boats and bikes without the assistance of event marshals. For example, this may mean that they need the soloists help to get the boat to and from the vehicle roof and the water side.

No support whatsoever is allowed during any stage from the support vehicle or any person associated with that vehicle or associated with that soloist. Between stages there are allowable support/transition areas here:

- 1. Cawdor Castle: Run to Bike transition**
- 2. Foyers (Loch Ness shore): Bike to Kayak transition**
- 3. Fort Augustus: Kayak to Bike transition. This bike choice is the most interesting as the ongoing route has a mix of surfaces.**
- 4. Fort William (Claggan): Bike to Run transition**
- 5. Loch Leven shore: Run to Kayak transition**

There is a final run at the end of the kayak but no support is allowed at this transition. You will recover your boat, at leisure, after the finish.

The crucial element of support relates to boats and bikes, and in addition, and only at the transitions above, your support may help with kit changes, food and drink.

Soloists may join-up with others during the racing. However, the 'Racing' rules still apply. If soloists agree to stick close together then it might be possible for one support vehicle to support 2 soloists. You will then have to consider the implications of supporting such as union of their travelling rates deviate greatly. Any larger union is likely to require an unreasonably large vehicle, and therefore do encourage.

Kayaking

In entering the Expert Category you have also committed that your boat, qualifications and experience are up to the challenge of this Category. The kayaking stages are both on open water, where the nearest shore could be up to 800m away. There will be safety support on the kayaking stages but it cannot travel alongside every participant.

Boat choice is very open. If you can paddle it and it has buoyancy, then you can choose to use it. Boats and Accessories will not be inspected by the event organisers. You may even bring more than one boat. It would help you considerably if you utilise a boat that you are trained in. Do not assume that because the water we are accessing is near to shore or narrow, that there might not be sea-like conditions. Both bodies of water can build up swells and waves depending on wind strength and direction, though the access/egress areas we are using should be reliably accessible in most conditions.

We require that you have a BCU 2 star UKCC qualification (or foreign equivalent) to take part in the Expert category. The 2 star is the (2008 onwards) equivalent of the 'old' BCU3 star (in any kayak discipline). This also meets the requirement for this event. We require this qualification even if you choose to use an open cockpit boat (e.g. Sit-on-Top) in this event.

By now, you should be advanced with your skills and training. If you would like any further ideas as to where to acquire these please visit the <http://www.bcu.org.uk/> site which has a full list of clubs and services. We have also had a direct offer from a kayak coach Peter Gibson based in Stirling, Scotland, should anyone wish to follow this up for training and assessment all in a one weekend course.

We ask that you email us the following by September 6th:

1. BCU 2 Star UKCC Certificate
2. Proof or List of Experience

If items 1 & 2 are not received by this date, or if they are deemed inadequate then you will not be allowed to take part in the Expert Category, though you will be offered a place in the Racer Category.

If in doubt, you must contact us in August so that there is time to clear up any issues.

Boat and Accessory Requirements:

Boat

Boats of any dimensions are allowable.

Closed cockpit boats are allowable, and these will be the most popular. These boats must have buoyancy inbuilt (e.g. sealed bulkheads) or added buoyancy using fixed-in foam blocks or flotation bags. All closed cockpit boats that are designed for use with spray decks must have them fitted and in use.

Sit-on-top boats are allowable. These boats have inbuilt buoyancy.

Canadians or other Open Canoes would be an extraordinary choice but are allowable. These boats must have buoyancy inbuilt or added buoyancy using fixed-in foam blocks or flotation bags. You will have a bailing device for these boats.

You will be responsible to ensure that your boats meet these requirements and that they are in good condition and seaworthy.

Boats and Accessories will not be inspected by the event organisers. Handling and rescue will be aided if there are a good number of grab handles and lines.

Buoyancy Aid & Whistle

This is a mandatory item and must be CE approved and marked: As an adult you should not be considering anything less than 60N (13.5 Lbs) of buoyancy. It needs to be of correct fit, in good condition, and to have not lost buoyancy through ageing. A working whistle must be fitted to the buoyancy aid.

Paddle(s)

As an expert you will have practised with your favourites and can make your own choices.

Paddling Clothing

As an expert you will have worn your favourites and can make your own choices.

Emergency Equipment

As an expert you will have developed your own emergency kit list and can make your own choices.

If you have any questions or suggestions that enable us to keep the rules even fairer or clearer then please do not hesitate to email us at info@scotlandcoasttocoast.com