



BMW Around the Islands Race – Special Edition 2025

Outrigger Canoe

Sunday 16 November 2025

RACE AND SAFETY RULES

These Race and Safety Rules, together with the '**BMW Around the Island Race 2025 - Course Map and Instructions**' (available at www.atirkoutrigger.com), govern all crews competing in the BMW Around The Island Race 2025. It is mandatory that all paddlers read, understand and comply with these Race and Safety Rules. Please contact the Rowing and Paddle Sports Manager of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club if you have any queries (rowing.manager@rhkyc.org.hk).

The BMW Around the Island Race 2025 – Outrigger Canoe is open to outrigger canoe clubs or organisations meeting the requirements of the Race Committee as set out below. No entry will be accepted unless all requirements are satisfied. IVF Race Rules will apply to all canoes in this race unless modified herein.

1) ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

All crews must meet the following criteria to be eligible to compete in the BMW Around the Island Race 2025:

- a) Crews must submit completed Entry Form Application by the specified entry deadline date.
- b) Each individual in a crew must submit the online 'Race Entrant Indemnity Form' by the specified entry deadline date.
- c) Crews must pay entry fee before the canoe is transported to the race start venue.
- e) Team Managers and Steers from each participating crew must attend the race briefing
- f) Crews must register a crew safety contact and mobile number with race Safety Officer. WhatsApp must be installed on the smartphone of the crew safety contact.

The Race Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any application in its discretion.

2) RACE CATEGORIES AND PADDLER ELIGIBILITY

- a) Crews may enter in the following categories: Open (no more than 9 paddlers), Women (no more than 9 paddlers) and Mixed (no more than 10 paddlers, minimum 3 women in the canoe at any time). Minimum age of each paddler is 18 years of age unless prior permission has been granted by the Race Director. The final crew roster must be submitted no later than **1200hrs on Friday 17 October 2025**. No replacements will be permitted after the final crew roster is submitted. Please mail the enclosed crew list document to: rowing.manager@rhkyc.org.hk
- b) There will be two divisions of canoe in the Open and Mixed category - 'Unlimited' and 'Standard' (refer to 3 b for division descriptions). Women's category will be 'Unlimited' canoes only.
- c) For a division and category to be eligible for a prize, a minimum of three crews must start the race. In the event a category and division does not have three crews entered, then crews in a 'Standard' canoe may elect to race in an 'Unlimited' division. The reverse will not be permitted.
- d) The team captain, club captain and club coach of each crew are collectively responsible for



ensuring that their paddlers are physically fit and capable of participating in a marathon canoe paddling event. If there is uncertainty regarding a paddler's physical fitness, it shall be the team captain's responsibility to provide a medical clearance form and obtain the Race Committee's approval before the paddler enters the race. Team captains shall ensure that their paddlers are experienced in long distance canoe paddling and experienced in performing sea changes in an OC6 canoe.

- e) All paddlers must be able to swim a distance of at least 100m and tread water in paddling clothes for a minimum of 15 minutes. **Paddlers are advised to wear PFDs; those that choose not to wear a PFD acknowledge the additional risk they are taking.**
- f) Each paddler must sign Race Entrant Indemnity Form prior to commencing the race.
- g) Paddlers from different clubs may merge to form a crew, provided that each paddler must have written permission to merge from their respective club's designated representative. Paddlers must submit these same letters of permission to the Race Committee upon request.

3) CANOE HULL, RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT

- a) All canoes and rigging (including ama and iakos) must be of suitable construction for the event, able to withstand the water conditions likely to be experienced and be in good condition. The design is not specified beyond the expectations noted above and the specific requirements as noted elsewhere in these Race and Safety Rules.
- b) An 'Unlimited' canoe may be of any construction type and weight. 'Standard' canoes are of traditional construction or in the nominal 200kg (400lb) weight class. The Race Committee will determine the category in which any canoe that does not fit within these guidelines will race.
- c) No fins or keels will be allowed on canoe or ama in either 'Standard' or 'Unlimited' canoe divisions.
- d) Canvas 'skirt' or other similar covering on the canoe is **MANDATORY**.
- e) No sails or other artificial means of propulsion are permitted on the canoe.
- f) No mechanical means of bailing water out of a canoe are allowed in the 'Standard' canoe division.
- g) No foot support or braces of any kind are permitted inside the Standard canoe. Non-skid materials are permitted.
- h) The following equipment **MUST** be carried within the canoe:
 - Tow rope (minimum length 15m. Ideal length 30m)
 - One mobile telephone, the number of which has been registered with the Safety Officer before the race. Apple watch with cellular function is also accepted.
 - 6 buoyancy aids which are ready to wear (refer 4a, below)
 - A minimum of three bailers
 - Safety bag including basic first aid kit
 - At least one (1) spare paddle
 - One whistle



- i) The following equipment must be carried on the escort boat or canoe (and easily accessible) during the race:
 - Course Map
 - Spare steering blade plus any additional spare paddles (i.e. in addition to the mandatory additional paddle that must be kept within the canoe as mentioned above)
 - One signalling mirror
 - One small first aid box
 - Bottle of Vinegar or medicated wipes (for jelly fish stings)
 - Knife or tough scissors
 - Spare rigging rope and rubbers
 - Spare rope at least 5m in length.
 - Duct Tape (in Zip-lock bag)
 - One light
 - **One smartphone in the escort boat with WhatsApp installed.** The phone number must be registered with the Safety Officer on or before the safety briefing and tested by sending a message to the Safety Officer. The crew's designated safety contact must possess the smartphone and be accessible at all times.
- j) During the race, each crew shall have its assigned identification symbol permanently displayed on the starboard side of the bow of the canoe. The Race Committee will assign this identification.
- k) An inspection of all equipment used in the race may be conducted by a race official/scrutineer at the start venue prior to the race.
- l) The Race Committee shall have the final discretion in approving or disapproving any entry, any canoe or any equipment.

4) WATER SAFETY

- a) Each crew must provide LSA/SOLAS or ISO approved buoyancy aids for each person that boards their escort boat and each paddler in the canoe.
- b) Each crew is responsible for complying with all applicable Marine Department Regulations and requirements.
- c) Each crew is responsible for assuring that each paddler, coach, helper and/or guest are water safe.
- d) Each crew must a) have a person holding a Hong Kong Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency in control of the escort boat and b) ensure that the steersperson for the crew is knowledgeable of the Rules of the Sea as they pertain to Hong Kong.
- e) Each crew is responsible for providing basic first-aid supplies and ideally, for ensuring that at least one member of the crew is qualified to use them.
- f) Each crew is responsible for providing adequate nourishment and liquids for all paddlers in the canoe and each person, on the escort boat.
- g) The Race Committee reserves the right to disqualify any crew if it determines that the crew is incapable of participating in, or finishing, the race within a reasonable time.
- h) In the event of a medical emergency: (1) STOP RACING and inform the Safety Officer about the



emergency. The Race Committee may adjust the time if it is possible for the affected crew to resume the race. (2) with the help of the Safety Officer, assess the casualty's needs. The Safety Officer will provide directions to the crew on the rescue. It is critical that the crew safety contact follows the race Safety Officer's instructions at all times.

5) SPONSORSHIP SIGNAGE

- a) Any signage used by a crew must be pre-approved by the Race Committee. The Race Committee reserves the right to remove any signage which is not in good taste or which adversely impacts the promotional rights of the race sponsors. The Race Committee will determine whether sponsorship signage on canoes, escort boats, and the athletes themselves is permitted on a case-by-case basis, in its absolute discretion.
- b) Signage on a canoe must be between the two (2) iakos of each canoe. Signage on escort boats may be in any place except starboard side of bow where the Race Committee requires placement of the assigned identification for each crew.

6) START OF THE RACE

- a) All canoes shall be ready to start before the time set for the beginning of the race at the designated start venue.
- b) The start of the race will be conducted by Start Marshal on board the Race Committee boat. A series of flags and air horn blasts will indicate the countdown to the start as follows:
 - 3 minutes to start : 3 short blasts indicates 'proceed to the start area'. A white flag will be raised;
 - 2 minutes to start : 2 short blasts on an air horn and red flag raised;
 - 1 minute to start : 1 short blast on an air horn and green flag raised;
 - Start signaled by a single long blast on an air horn and green flag lowered.
- c) Any crew crossing the start line before the start signal will incur a 5 minute time penalty.
- d) Any crew impeding another crew on or before the start line will incur a 5 minute time penalty.
- e) Steers are strongly advised to take into account wind speed and direction and factor this in to how they position their canoe in the start area.
- f) No crew may start the race unless their escort boat is within 200 metres of the start line no later than five (5) minutes before the race start procedure commences. Each crew and escort boat must identify themselves to the race officials. If a crew's escort boat is not at the start line as the start procedure commences, the race officials will prevent the crew from starting the race until their escort boat arrives and identifies itself to the race officials. If this interferes with the start procedure, or any subsequent start procedures, the crew will receive a 15 minute time penalty and the crew may be disqualified. Any crew starting the race without an escort boat will be disqualified.



7) COURSE

a) The course shall be that defined by the Race Committee, as presented in the "**BMW Around the Islands Race 2025 - Course Map and Instructions**" document.

8) PADDLERS AND RELIEF PADDLERS

a) There may be no more than (6) paddlers in any one canoe at any time during the race. Mixed crews must have a minimum of three female paddlers in the canoe at all times.

b) Starting and relief paddlers may be used at the discretion of the coach.

c) The first change of paddlers may not take place until after the first no change zone as marked on the Course Map.

d) No changes are permitted in the areas highlighted in red below.

From	To	Distance KM
NO CHANGE FROM START FOR FIRST 20 MINUTES		
Start	Round Island	2.1
Round Island	Chesterman Turning Marker	1.9
Chesterman Turning Marker	Po Toi Island 1	8.2
Po Toi Island 1	Po Toi Island 2	2.8
Po Toi Island 2	Kissing Whales Turning Marker	4.7
Kissing Whales Turning Marker	Satellites	5
Satellites	Magazine Island	9.2
Magazine Island	Turning Marker	1
Turning Marker	Magazine Island	0.7
Magazine Island	Lighthouse	2.7
Lighthouse	Ocean Park	1.3
Ocean Park	HK Country Club	1.7
HK Country Club	Finish	1

e) Each canoe must finish the race with six (6) paddlers in the canoe.



9) SWAMPING OR OVERTUNING OF CANOE

- a) If a canoe swamps or overturns after the start of the race, the canoe may be righted and bailed out and will be permitted to continue in the race.
- b) Relief paddlers and additional qualified persons on an escort boat may assist in righting and bailing out a swamped canoe.
- c) The escort boat will standby and render any assistance to the swamped canoe but must not tow a swamped canoe in the direction of the finish line while the canoe is officially entered in the race.

10) OVERLAPS & OVERTAKING

- a) An **overlap** is defined as a condition that exists when no open water can be seen between the stern of the leading canoe and the bow of the following canoe, when viewed at right angles to the leading canoe's line of travel. If no overlap exists then the canoe is considered **clear ahead**.
- b) A canoe **clear ahead** has right of way and may steer in any direction in a seaman-like manner. A canoe behind must give way to any canoes **clear ahead**.
- c) **Obstacles:** When an overlap exists at two canoe lengths before an obstacle, the outside canoe MUST give room to the inside canoe (for canoe and ama) to pass any obstacle or perform a seaman-like turn around a mark. Obstacles include but are not limited to; land, jetties or pontoons, rocks above and below water, other canoes racing or stationary and any marks on the race course.

NOTE: An inside canoe with right of way must still keep clear to allow the outside canoe to manoeuvre (don't touch nose to tail). *It's also recommended to call for room "Overlap - I need room here".*

- d) **Overtaking:** When an overlap exists, the leading canoe must maintain proper course and not deliberately steer to block an overtaking canoe. Proper course is defined as the fastest direction to the next turning point or finish line. This may not be a direct line when tides, swell and wind are considered. An overtaking canoe must keep clear of the leading canoe and give them manoeuvring room to maintain their proper course (don't touch nose to tail).
- e) A canoe may not impede or slow another canoe by any means including but not limited to; collision, holding the ama or using a paddle.
- f) In addition to points a) to e) above, in the final 500m of the race (i.e. from the last turning mark to the race finish line), a canoe is not permitted to make any alterations to its racing line. Any attempt to deliberately block or cause another canoe to alter its course, will result in a 5 minute penalty. The only exception to this rule is when a course change is required in order to avoid marine traffic or fixed moorings.



11) ESCORT BOAT

- a) Each crew must have one (1) escort boat to accompany them throughout the race. The escort boat assists in the retrieving of paddlers during sea changes.
- b) The escort boat must be no more than 30ft in length and paddlers must be able to climb directly out of the water onto the main boat deck. A commercial junk may not be used as an escort boat. Junks may be used for additional spectators, however they must stay clear of the course and cannot interfere with racing competitors.
- c) **The escort boats must be licensed and bear a Marine Department number. If an escort boat does not have a number, it will be asked to leave the course, and the crew will be declared ineligible to race.**
- d) The escort boat must meet the minimum Marine Department requirements to carry passengers.
- e) The escort boat must be equipped with two-way communications (in addition to the crew safety contact smartphone). Marine Band (VHF) Radio communication capable of receiving and transmitting on Channels 99, 96, 72, 77, 14 and 16 is preferred, but not compulsory. **Any crew whose escort boat does not have a working communication system registered with the race safety officer will NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE.**
- f) It is recommended that escort boats have a GPS on board.
- g) For safety purposes, all escort boats must have a Marine Department approved carrying capacity to accommodate the relief and support crew of the canoe being escorted in addition to the crew and passengers of the escort boat itself, along with the Marine Department required equipment.
- h) All escort boats are required to carry a minimum liability insurance coverage required by the Marine Department.
- i) Each escort boat skipper must hold a valid Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency in accordance with Marine Department regulations.
- j) Each escort boat skipper will ultimately be responsible for the safety of their own crew and any relief paddlers and supporters on board the escort boat. Crew captains and steers people must listen to the escort boat skipper's instructions.
- k) Each escort boat skipper must comply with the requirements of the 'Notes for Support Drivers', which will be circulated at the race briefing.
- l) Each escort boat must follow behind its assigned canoe throughout the race, except for swamped and overturned canoes. An escort boat may not come alongside or ahead of the canoe except for during the transfer of relief paddlers, supplies, or in the case of an emergency.
- m) At no time will an escort boat deliberately cause a wake to assist their ownboat or interfere with another canoe. Escort boats cannot block or cause a wake to approaching canoes in the race.
- n) At all times, escort boats must maintain a safe distance from canoes and other boats.
- o) Canoes in the race always have the right-of-way over escort boats.
- p) Coaching and directing from the escort boat is permitted. However, excessive use of loud hailers that disrupt or prevent other escort boats from safely communicating with their crews will not be allowed. Any escort boat crew refusing to comply with a race marshal having been instructed to discontinue use of it's loud hailer, may incur a time penalty of up to 5 minutes.



- q) Escort boats cannot be used to transport any articles to a canoe. However, any qualified person may pass refreshments or other articles to a canoe from the water.
- r) The Race Committee may refuse to allow a crew to participate where it considers the escort boat to be overcrowded, or not meeting the Marine Department requirements or is otherwise unsafe.
- s) Minors are not permitted on escort boats.
- t) The Race Committee may approve or disapprove of any vessel to be used as an escort boat in its absolute discretion.

12) FINISH LINE

- a) Escort boats should follow the route to the finish as outlined on page 11 in 'Course Map & Instructions' doc when entering Deepwater Bay.
- b) Relief crew members and crew members on the escort boat must follow the instructions of the Race Officials while unloading gear off escort boats. Crews should keep the pontoon area clear and must remove off-loaded gear in a quick and timely manner to ensure everyone's safety.
- c) Crews on the escort boat must be ready to disembark quickly at Middle Island. Escort boats are NOT permitted to be secured at the pontoons.
- d) Escort boats must not stop or anchor in the area in front of the Middle Island Clubhouse as this may damage submerged cables or interfere with the safe passage of canoes.

13) PROTESTS

- a) Protests must be lodged in writing to the Race Director within 30 minutes of the last crew finishing (or withdrawing) from the race.
- b) In the event of a protest, a Protest Committee will be formed at the end of the race. The Protest Committee will be comprised of the Race Director, Safety Officer, the Rowing and Paddle Sports Manager and two other suitably experienced RHKYC members not otherwise involved in the protest.
- c) The Protest Committee will meet with the complainant and with any other witnesses relevant to the protest. An adjudication will be issued on the day of the race. In the event that the Protest Committee is not able to meet face to face with the complainant due to Race Control being located in a different area, the Protest Committee will discuss the issue over the phone with the complainant.
- d) The Protest Committee may issue any penalty for infractions of these Race and Safety Rules that it deems appropriate, including (but not limited to) time penalties and disqualification.

14) APPS

For further information on areas such as shipping lanes, markers, and chart information it is suggested to download the e-sea go app.

