

#4 Entry Requirements, Special Rules, and Procedures for the Annual Newburgh to Beacon Swim :

Overview

The Annual *Great Newburgh to Beacon Hudson River Swim* is designed as a pleasant fund-raising swim, not as a competitive event. All participants register in advance for the 1-mile open water swim. The event is scheduled for swimmers to splash in from the Newburgh waterfront 30-45 minutes before slack-before-flood current, then swim across the Hudson River (including the navigation channel), escorted by kayakers, to the Beacon waterfront. Kayakers may provide floatation support via a foam noodle to swimmers or signal a jetboat or PWC to remove a swimmer and take them to a support vessel. The support vessels can transport any swimmer to shore where ambulances are stationed.

Throughout the event there is a coordinated effort to help swimmers feel rested and relaxed, including a music program, snacks, a safety orientation in Newburgh, verbal guidance by escorting kayakers, and music at the Beacon shore. All swimmers entering and exiting the river are identified and accounted for by a redundant accounting process, including physical numbering, bright swim caps, visual monitoring, and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) ankle straps.

The event coordinators (River Pool at Beacon) have been coordinating this annual event for the past 20 years. Many of the swimmers, kayakers, and support volunteers are annual participants. In the event of inclement or hazardous weather, the event is scheduled to take place on the following day.

Because approximately 100 to 300 swimmers plus kayakers are crossing the navigation channel during this event, **we request that the USCG issue a Special Local Regulation establishing a restricted area in the vicinity of the event in order to reduce hazardous conditions that non-participating vessels, or their wakes, can present to the participants. We request that the special restriction be in place on Saturday, July 27, 2024 between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. In the event of inclement weather, we request that the Special Local Regulation be issued the following day, Sunday, July 28, 2024 from 1:30 pm until 3:30 pm.**

Entry Requirements for Swimmers

All swimmers must register on-line via the www.riverpool.org website at least two weeks prior to the event. The associated website describes the swim, distances, and conditions involved. Swimmers are required to provide their name, address, age, gender, swimming ability, and emergency contact information. In reality, most swimmers register 1 to 3 months in advance. The advance registration process helps assure that participants have thought through their decision to swim, are not pressured to make a decision on the day of the event and have had a chance to physically condition themselves in the weeks and months leading to the event. Participants contribute \$75 toward event coordination and raise a minimum of \$100 in sponsorship for the 501c (3) organization, River Pool at Beacon.

Minors aged 13-17 years old are permitted to participate, provided they present certification signed by a coach or athletic director of their ability to swim 1 mile in open water, and the participant and a parent or guardian sign a waiver. Minors aged 10-12 years old are permitted to participate provided that in addition to the above certification by a coach or athletic director, and a parent or guardian, they also come to the swim with an adult escort to swim with them, remaining in the water with the minor until, the minor checks out of water in Beacon. No swimmers under age 10, or persons who have not registered in advance, are permitted to participate in the swim. A maximum of 300 swimmers will be permitted to participate.

Entry Requirements for Kayakers

Kayaking escorts must register and provide their name, address, age, gender, and emergency contact information. Single person kayaks are encouraged. Minors aged 13-17 years old are permitted to participate provided they register and a parent or guardian signs a waiver. Minors aged 10-12 may only participate in a two-person kayak, provided a parent or guardian signs a waiver and there is an adult in the kayak. No persons under age 10 may participate.

Most kayakers register in advance via the event website. Kayakers are requested to attend an indoor safety orientation on the Wednesday evening prior to the event. Kayakers who do not register in advance may be accepted on the day of the event.

On the day of the event, all participating kayakers are required to check in, provide their name and emergency contact information, sign a waiver, and participate in a brief on-water safety training.

During the event, kayakers are required to wear personal floatation devices at all times that their kayaks are in the water.

Procedures for Participating Marine Vessels

There is a Boater Safety Meeting of representatives from all marine support vessels at the Newburgh docks approximately 1hr 20 min prior to the event splash-in. Marine support vessels typically include the USCG and USCG Auxiliary, county sheriff marine units, the sloop Woody Guthrie, a motorized pontoon support vessel, jet skiers, and kayak leaders. The Event Director chairs the meeting to review and set radio communication channels, rescue protocols, marine positions to control river traffic and provide support, and provides a list of telephone contacts. In the event of inclement or questionable weather, a decision will be made whether to reschedule the event.

Once all swimmers are out of the water and accounted for, the Event Director will give word to dismiss all support vessels from marine positions.

Procedures for Kayakers

On the morning of the event, kayakers check-in in Beacon, receive drinking water, a safety whistle, a foam noodle, and a brief safety training.

Approximately 75 minutes prior to splash-in "pods" of 10-20 kayakers paddle across the river from Beacon to Newburgh, then rest in a protected area along the Newburgh waterfront until splash-in. The "pods" increase visibility of the kayakers to any other marine traffic. Several lead kayakers monitor radio contact with marine support vessels throughout the event.

During the event, kayakers guide swimmers across the channel to the Beacon waterfront. Kayakers verbally offer directional guidance to swimmers, monitor swimmers for stress or exhaustion, and watch for floating debris. Kayakers may offer swimmers a foam noodle to rest, and may offer swimmers to rest on the bow of their kayak during the swim. A kayaker may use **one blast of the whistle** to summon the attention of a swimmer. There may be a pause and the signal repeated. If a kayaker notices a swimmer in distress, or who requests to get out of the water, the kayaker maintains eye contact with the swimmer, **blows their whistle 3 times**, and raises a paddle to signal for immediate assistance by a jet skier or support vessel. There may be a pause and the 3 blast signal repeated.

At the end of the event, or when a lead kayaker indicates their support is no longer needed, kayakers exit at the Beacon shore, and may join the waterfront festivities.

Procedures for Swimmers

On the morning of the event swimmers are required to check in, where they confirm registration and emergency contact information. Each swimmer is issued a brightly colored swim cap with a unique identification number. Volunteers write the number on the swimmer's arm and fasten a strap on the swimmer's ankle with the identification number encoded in an electronic RFID tag.

After swimmer check-in and approximately 30 minutes prior to splash-in, swimmers attend a brief swim safety orientation and observe a demonstration from shore on how to safely rest off the bow of a kayak.

Swimmers are then directed onto the floating docks in groups of approximately 50 swimmers where they are given directions by the Event Director.

Swimmers are required to wear the colored swim cap and the identification strap from the time they cross an RFID sensor mat at the entrance gate to the floating docks prior to splash-in, and throughout the swim, until walking off an arrival ramp in Beacon. At the appropriate slack current, the Event Director signals each group of swimmers to splash-in and to swim escorted toward Beacon. In addition to visual monitoring by the kayaker escorts, swimmers are accounted for via

- the RFID tags strapped to their ankles and electronically recorded at entry and exit,
- a paper and pen list of participant numbers entering and exiting the water, and
- a physical arrangement of boxes correlated to the swimmer ID numbers in which the ankle straps are removed and returned.

Proactive Procedures to Prevent an Emergency Situation

- 1) The event is scheduled during a slack current, and when river traffic is controlled.
- 2) Advance registration by participants avoids last minute impulsive decisions.
- 3) A drowning safety meeting and presentation, prepared by the Dutchess County Health Department and the event organizers, is held with kayakers several days prior to the event.
- 4) A non-competitive atmosphere is set prior to, and during the swim, with music, an orientation, and encouraging talking between the escorting kayakers and swimmers.
- 5) Swimmers wear a brightly colored swim cap in order to make them easy to see.
- 6) Kayakers scan the water surface for swimmers, and for floating debris or other hazards.
- 7) Kayakers maintain visual and verbal contact with swimmers during the swim in order to reduce and monitor stress and exhaustion.
- 8) Kayakers may offer a floating noodle for swimmers to rest.
- 9) Kayakers may offer the bow of their kayak for swimmers to rest.
- 10) Marine support crew and lead kayakers have radios for communicating to each other.
- 11) Upon exiting the water in Beacon, volunteers initiate verbal contact with each swimmer in order to monitor stress and exhaustion.

Emergency Response Procedures

- 1) Kayaker may offer a floatation noodle to the front of an exhausted or distressed swimmer.**
- 2) To summon help, the kayaker maintains visual sight of a swimmer, blows their whistle 3 times, and raises a paddle signaling the need for help.**
- 3) Upon seeing or hearing a distress signal, a Jet skier or jet boat shall respond to the tired or distressed swimmer, remove the swimmer from the water, and transport the swimmer to a support vessel.**
- 4) A support vessel crew may administer emergency treatment if required, and transport the swimmer to the closest shore (Newburgh or Beacon)**
- 5) An ambulance stationed at the shore may administer treatment if required and transport the participant to Saint Luke's Hospital in Newburgh.**
- 6) The Event Director will be notified of any swimmer or kayaker who is brought to shore by a support vessel so that the person is accounted for and emergency contacts can be notified if needed.**