



Expert Category Info and Rules

Welcome to 2nd year of Expert Category in Scotland Coast to Coast. We wish you a great journey, and importantly, a great race and successful completion. You are joining many other daring participants in this category.

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. The Racer then Challenger Categories will be setting off behind you on the same day - Saturday. (In 2010 Experts and Racers set off on Sunday). Last year the Expert winner was first before the first Racer; we will see what happens this year! We do not expect any elitist attitudes or behaviours and have accordingly called the category 'Expert' rather than 'Elite', from the outset.

Registration, Timings and CUT-OFFS

Friday Sept 16th

- 1200 – 2200 Registration open (Nairn): At registration you will collect your race numbers, timing card and Support Crew vehicle I.D. pass – to be on display on the dash of your vehicle.

Saturday Sept 17th

- 0615 Start (Nairn)
- 1600 – CUT-OFF at Claggan (Fort William) Not allowed to continue on route.
- 1930 – CUT-OFF at Loch Leven. Not allowed onto water. You must be ON the water at 1930.
- 1600 – 2000 Finishes (Glencoe)
- 1800 - Prize Giving and Party begins
- 2000 – Course Closed

Distances

Your event route, when measured on mapping resources, is very close to 100 miles.

- **Trek/Run - 7 miles (5 miles off-road)**
- **Road Cycle - 34 miles**
- **Kayak - 11 miles (600 metre running interconnection to Cycle)**
- **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

Mandatory Kit:

- **Cycle Helmet**
- **Bicycle**
- **Race Numbers and Si Timing Card**
- **I.D. Pass for Support Vehicle**
- **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 (60N is recommended. 50N is allowable. Whistle must be fitted.)**

Recommended Kit:

Running shoes with good sole grip, cycle shorts, shoes and gloves (for kayaking also), puncture repair kit, bike pump, bike lock, bike bell, tools and accessories, bike water bottle, small rucksack or bum bag with hydration bladder, sunglasses, sunscreen.

Torch for initial part of first Trail run.

Although we have issued a mandatory kit list for the whole course, it is clear that some items are applicable to certain stages, and not to others. You can make the decisions whether to carry certain items based on your knowledge and skill, and your assessment of the weather conditions - because you are an Expert. **However, with the exception of the following items - which must be carried throughout; survival bag or blanket, whistle, basic first aid kit, race number, SI timing card.**

2010 Review and Tips

You will know that the 2010 year of the Expert Category has proven that the whole format was all possible and we had glowing praise from some very well travelled and revered multi-sporters. Take a look at the 2010 results [LINK](#) and look at the splits – only one Expert missed the final kayak cut-off.

You will need to do your homework on the course routing. When you have got your 'racing head down' on this route, it is possible to miss a waymark arrow e.g. at a junction, so develop some knowledge and tools to keep on track: E.g. mini-map and stage breakdown on handlebars, cycle computer.

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 ONLY.

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 – it was evident from 2010 that Experts were very aware of the actions of their competitors and their support teams, and this worked well – there was good camaraderie, respect and assistance if required.

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 a union if their travelling rates deviate greatly. Any larger union is likely to require an unreasonably large vehicle, and therefore we do not encourage.

Transition Locations – Details for You and your Support Crew

In the Expert Category we have some exact transition spots to describe to you and your support team. In some instances they are deliberately different to the Challenger/Racer Category transitions spots, and of course the Loch Ness stage is unique to you. When manoeuvring the vehicle do not rush .. there will be a boat on the roof that is likely to be longer than the vehicle.

As you will have already read, ABSOLUTELY NO SUPPORT is allowable outside of these locations.

Run to Bike; at Cawdor Castle

As per all Categories - In the field behind Cawdor Castle. The support MUST deposit the bike, bike accessories and kit at Castle Cawdor on the day/evening before event 1200-2200. The support crew person does not have to be present at this transition (e.g. they might just be collecting trail shoes) but it is possible. DRIVE CAREFULLY. The support crew may also watch/say hello/contact their Expert they pass on the cycling stage to Foyers but no actual support is allowed until the Lower Foyers kayak put-in.

Cycle to Kayak; at Foyers Pier

Grid Ref 250012,821382 and shown on online mapping here <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=250012&Y=821382&A=Y&Z=115>. This location is a large gravel car parking area near the Loch shore (not the Hotel) where a marshal will be met. Follow their instructions to the put-in point (which will not be exactly at the Pier shown on map). It will be honourable if the support crew can help other crew carry boats into position on the beach here. Drive safely down the minor road after leaving the B852, ESPECIALLY taking care at the sharp bends and ESPECIALLY when departing this location, as other riders will be descending towards you. PARK SAFELY. DRIVE CAREFULLY. If dry weather permits we alternatively have the option to send the cyclist down the footpath before the road down to Lower Foyers. If so, this will be marshalled and this will avoid road conflict. Please note that this path has steps at beginning and end and needs to be walked, at least at those parts.

NOTE: Support Vehicle: After leaving Nairn it is strongly recommended that you drive via Dores to Foyers and under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you access the (very narrow and steep) road between Errogie and Inverfarigaig.

NOTE: That the underpass under the A9 at Daviot is strictly OUT OF BOUNDS to ALL vehicles.

Kayak to Cycle; at Fort Augustus

Grid Ref 238240,809372 and shown on online mapping here <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=238240&Y=809372&A=Y&Z=115>. It is tight for space and there will be a queuing system, marshal control and marshal assistance. This location is a tarmac road and turning circle alongside a beach. The landing area is between the mouth of the canal and the river. (The footbridge shown over the river is not applicable – it's derelict and inaccessible). There is also separation between the Loch egress point and the bike depart point in order to make safe use of the space (i.e. there is a 600m run in-between) ... consider your footwear. There will be a system on the day that will allow you down this road from the A82, in sequence, and only after your Expert has been through and collected their bike. As follows;

(Please note that this procedure will be reviewed later this summer. It did work in 2010 but space is tight.)

- Park your car in Fort Augustus, anywhere west of A82. PARK SAFELY. DRIVE CAREFULLY.
- Place the bike and any accessories at this marshalled location alongside the upper canal lock. Grid Ref 237587,809157 <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=237587&Y=809157&A=Y&Z=115>.
- Wait here. When your Expert arrives direct them to their bike and take any discarded kit to the vehicle.
- Without delay drive to the egress point and collect their kayak and any discarded kit.
- Drive towards Fort William on the A82 only.

Cycle to Run; at Claggan (Fort William)

The main transition for all classes is at the Football Ground at Claggan. However, we ask that Expert support vehicles park in the Ben Nevis Industrial Estate and follow the following routine; This will keep Expert support vehicles out of our main transition area/car park, which needs to retain space for large manoeuvring vehicles

- Park at a safe location in the Ben Nevis Industrial Estate. PARK SAFELY. DRIVE CAREFULLY. Grid Ref 211812,774595 <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=211812&Y=774595&A=Y&Z=106&ax=211812&ay=774595>
- Walk through to the Transition Area with any transition kit for the final run. (The route passes through a narrow pedestrian alley into Grant Place, then turns into Telford Place to the Transition). Transition area Grid Ref 211928,774313 <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=211928&Y=774313&A=Y&Z=106>
- Wait here. When your Expert arrives direct them to their run kit.
- Take their bike and accessories back to the support vehicle – Please use an alternative walk route to the race

route, as there are narrow pathways to take the bike back against the flow – the Streetmap link shows the road choices, they pass a small SPAR shop in Claggan Estate.

- Prepare the boat, kit and accessories thoroughly before departing for Loch Leven.. see reason below..
- Drive to Loch Leven transition.

Run to Kayak; Loch Leven (near Callert House on map)

There is very limited parking here and you will be directed by marshals as you arrive. There are choice of fields and lay-bys that will be utilised according to the ground conditions on the day. Please be very observant to these instructions, as follows;

- DRIVE CAREFULLY on this narrow B road.
- The mean area for this transition is Grid Ref 208780,760230; <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=208780&Y=760230&A=Y&Z=120>
- You will be required to drop the boat and accessories very quickly. This requires that you have prepared before you left Fort William.
- Then you will probably be directed to move your car to another location away from the boat drop location.
- You can then wait in person back at the boat drop and help your Expert into the water
- Remove any discarded kit, return to car and drive to the Finish kayak collection car park at the Isles of Glencoe Hotel – follow marshals instructions.

Kayak to Finish Run-in

The target point is right of all islands, and in the bay west of the Hotel. Grid Ref 208170,758675; <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=208170&Y=758675&A=Y&Z=120>

The egress destination is obscured by islands so you might decide to preview this section.

You will not need to handle the boat immediately upon your Expert landing. In fact your Expert can reach the finish without you actually being at the kayak egress point. Just consider footwear for the final 300m run-in. As soon as your Expert has finished, return to load the boat, immediately.

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 you 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 or at least have the plan to do so. 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 ask that you email us the following by September 5th:

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: If you are a larger adult you should not be considering anything less than 60N (13.5 Lbs) of buoyancy' however 50N is allowable. 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

Good luck!

The Coast to Coast Team