MR 25 Paddler’s Guide

The Paddler's Guide is filled with information that is essential for every racer to know and is required for every racer to read (along with the rules).

Topics:

- Boat Selection/Divisions
- Coon Rapids Parking
- Emergencies
- Finish line & Awards & Post Paddle Party
- Gear
- Support Crew
- Race Landmarks
- Shuttle
- Taking a Break
- Things to Do Before the Race
- Weather/ Capsizing

Boat Selection/Divisions

As long as the boat you choose will move down the river using only human power, you can use it in this race. That said, some boats are inherently easier to move and faster and more comfortable than others. Whatever boat you plan to use, the important thing is to have spent some time with it on a river to get a feel for whether you can spend many hours in it, steer it and keep it moving at a reasonable pace.

Coon Rapids Parking

There is a fee to park at the Coon Rapids Dam (currently $6). The fee is good for one whole day and you can leave and come back as many times as you want.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency all racers should call 911 first and race officials second. If you have a support crew you should notify them after calling 911 and they can notify race officials. In the event you need non-emergency assistance and cannot get it from other racers, call race officials (unless you have a support crew, then call them first). Assistance may take hours to reach you, especially in adverse conditions, and all racers need to be prepared to self-rescue and/or hike to find assistance if needed.

Finish line & Awards & Post Paddle Party
Overall winner of the race will receive a trophy.

Divisional awards will be given to the top finisher in the division. Awards for 2nd and 3rd place finishes also will be given if there are enough racers in a division. See the required number of racers for these additional awards in the following chart:

1-5 boats (solo, tandem or team): 1st place award

6-9 boats (solo, tandem or team): 1st and 2nd place awards

10+ boats (solo, tandem or team): 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards.

You will receive your finisher medal as you finish the race and, if you won an award, you will receive that as well. Everyone is invited to come to the Post Paddle Party at 5:30pm. Daily parking passes are good for one entire day regardless of how many times you leave and return. Food will be available for purchase at the Post Paddle Party. We will recognize all award winners. Everyone is welcome, including all paddlers, support crew, friends and family.

**Gear**

The full list of required and recommended gear can be found in the rules. Here we expound on just a few of the items:

**Required Gear**

Maps: Minnesota DNR Mississippi River maps 8 & 9 cover the race route and are available at the following link: [Mississippi River State Water Trail](https://www.mndnr.gov/watertrails/).

You can e-mail the DNR at info.dnr@state.mn.us and request paper maps be sent to you free of charge.

You can also access digital versions of these maps and save them on your device, or print them out at home. Digital versions are available as GeoPDF maps. These allow you to see your real-time location on the map on your device even when you aren’t connected to the internet. For more information on the DNR GeoPDF maps see: [GeoPDF Maps](https://www.mndnr.gov/geospatial/geopdf).

Cell Phone: All racers and support crews are required to carry mobile phones and put the race organizer’s contact information into their phones. You will get the number at the pre-race meeting. Make sure you have a way to keep the phone charged and dry.

PFD’s: They must be “in serviceable condition”, meaning:
1. They are the appropriate size and fit for the intended user
2. They are legibly marked with a USCG approval number.

A PFD is NOT considered to be in serviceable condition if the PFD exhibits deteriorations that could diminish the performance of the PFD including:

- Rips, tears, or open seams in fabric or coatings, that are large enough to allow the loss of buoyant material
- Buoyant material that has become hardened, non-resilient, permanently compressed, waterlogged, oil-soaked, or which shows evidence of fungus or mildew
- Loss of buoyant material or buoyant material that is not securely held in position.

Water: We recommend carrying enough water to last for 5 hours on the water. You do not want to run out of water!

Food: Having snacks and high calorie drinks in an easy to reach location can make a big difference. Start the race with your tank full and don’t let it get too low. Drinking your calories is a good strategy for many folks—but make sure you’ve tried out any high-energy powders and drinks beforehand to make sure they agree with your stomach.

Recommended Gear

Sunblock/sunscreen: A bad sunburn has caused more than a few paddlers to quit long distance paddle races early. Apply sunscreen early and often! Don’t forget that you can get burned from the sun’s reflection off the water. Use a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and/or long-sleeves and pant legs for full body coverage.

Support Crew

If you want to have a support crew that can meet you at one or two of the landings over the course of the race you can; benefits to doing so include that they can:

1. Drive you and your boat to the start, meet you along the race course as needed and then meet you at the finish line
2. Carry food, water, and clothing for you and re-supply you if needed
3. Assess your health
4. Monitor the weather forecast
5. Cheer for you and boost your morale
6. Provide first aid if needed
7. Take pictures!
8. Communicate with race officials on your behalf if needed
A custom Google map has been created that shows the race landmarks (race start and end and an optional stop where your support crew could meet you). Your support crew can use Google maps to get directions to these spots. Note: there are many more possible meet-up spots as listed on the DNR maps. Google map link:

**[Mississippi River 25 Canoe and Kayak Race Landmarks](#)**

### Race Landmarks

**Minnesota DNR Mississippi River maps 8 & 9 cover the race route and show the following landmarks and many more. Available at the following link:** [Mississippi River State Water Trail](#)

One optional stop is listed in this chart; there are many other ramps and parks and islands that are good spots to take a break. If you are going to take a break longer than 30 minutes anywhere but at a checkpoint, please let race officials know. The DNR maps show all the possible places to stop including campsites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mile Mark</th>
<th>Total miles</th>
<th>Mile btw</th>
<th>Landmark (L=Left, R=Right)</th>
<th>Bathroom *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Race Start: Norin Landing/Kadler Ave (boat ramp) (R)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>876</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Optional stop: Mississippi West Regional Park ramp (L)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>866</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (race end) (L)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*this column indicates whether the location usually a bathroom right at the river but does not guarantee there will be one on race day*

**Taking a Break at campsites**

Most campsites are only big enough for one party, please do not stop at these campsites if occupied by non-racers unless it’s an emergency. A few campsites may be able to accommodate more than one party.
Shuttle

You can choose to get yourself, your gear and your boat to the start line or sign up for the shuttle service when you register.

If you are using the shuttle service be sure to follow these steps:

1. Between 6:45am and 7:45am: Drop your boat and teammates (if any) at Norin Landing and check-in with race officials OR leave a teammate to do so while you are gone.
2. By 7:45am: Leave Norin to drive to Coon Rapids Dam (about a 30 minute drive)
3. By 8:30am: Board the shuttle. At Coon Rapids Dam Park you will need to pay the fee (currently $6) to enter, find a parking spot, then board the shuttle. Shuttle will be in the main parking lot near the Visitor Center. Shuttle will leave at 8:30am.

Things to do before the race

- Review the gear list; procure gear as needed
- Come up a transportation/shuttle plan
- Come up with a food and hydration plan
- Come up with a break plan/eating plan
- Train/practice, good to train on a river, cross-train, flatwater train.
- Practice capsizing and self-rescue
- Join our Facebook group: it's a growing community of people interested in our races and a great place to ask questions and share ideas. Check it out at: facebook.com/twopaddlesMN

Weather/ Capsizing

In June in Minnesota temperatures range from 40 to over 90, with the average high in the 70’s. Both heat and cold are threats to cause someone not to finish the race so you need to be prepared for both.

The water temperatures can still be on the chilly side. Do not be fooled into thinking there is no way you will capsize—it is always a possibility and you must be ready. No matter how skilled you are it’s always possible to hit a rock in swift water and get quickly overturned. It is absolutely essential to have a change of clothes in a dry bag that you can put on once you get to shore. Remember it is required to wear your Personal Flotation Device at all times. Also, you should have a plan for how to make sure you don’t lose your gear in the event of a capsize.

In the event racers encounter severe weather, racers should take shelter as appropriate. Race organizers will attempt to notify racers of severe weather threats,
however each racer should monitor the weather independently and make good decisions for themselves.

Race officials have full authority to hold racers in place in the event of severe weather.