SPECTATOR GUIDE

Saturday 29th - Sunday 30th August 2026

How to Follow the Thames 200 Ultra

On the August Bank Holiday weekend, over 200 paddlers will be taking on the 3rd edition of the UK's newest ultra paddling race.

200 kilometres

200+ paddlers

5 checkpoints

Non-stop or relay

How the race works:

Every team or individual must finish the course **within 30 hours**, and pass through each check point location before the cut-off time.

The slower craft, typically SUPs and a few non-stop racers, will begin in an early start in Lechlade at **10 am on Saturday**. Everyone else will start in the **2 pm mass start**.

Location	Early Starters Arrive	Most Paddlers Arrive	Cut-Off Time (all racers must arrive before this time)
THE START Ha'Penny Bridge, Lechlade-on-Thames	09:00 - 10:00 Saturday	12:00-14:00 Saturday	14:00 Saturday
CHECK POINT 1 New Bridge	13:15 - 13:45 Saturday	15:45 - 17:30 Saturday	18:00 Saturday
CHECK POINT 2 Abingdon	18:00 - 20:00 Saturday	18:45 - 19:00 Saturday	23:30 Saturday
CHECK POINT 3 Pangbourne	23:30 Saturday - 03:00 Sunday	21:45 Saturday - 00:30 Sunday	05:00 Sunday
CHECK POINT 4 Bisham	05:00 - 10:30 Sunday	00:40 - 07:15 Sunday	10:30 Sunday
CHECK POINT 5 Staines	11:15 - 14:15 Sunday	03:40 - 13:30 Sunday	16:00 Sunday
THE FINISH Teddington (YMCA Hawker)	15:15 - 19:30 Sunday	05:30 - 18:15 Sunday	20:00 Sunday

Follow online

Lechlade-on-Thames

THE START

GL7 3AQ
10:00 - 14:00 Saturday

The Thames 200 Ultra has two race starts, an early start at **10am** (mainly SUPs and slower non-stop racers) and the main mass start at **2pm**. Racers and supporters will gather near the Thames Path just upstream of Ha'Penny Bridge, which marks the start of the navigable Thames River.

10:00
For prime viewing, stand on Ha'Penny Bridge overlooking the river or head down to The Riverside Pub and sip a coffee while watching from the bank. Cheer for the early starters at 10am, then enjoy some brunch or lunch in Lechlade while you follow the racers' progress online and wait for the 2pm start.

The 10 am early start will include the fastest stand up paddleboarders – the current SUP record belongs to Gavin Symonds, who completed the course in 29 hours, 19 minutes, and 50 seconds in 2024.

14:00
Head back to Ha'penny Bridge or The Riverside Pub a few minutes before 2pm to watch the fastest crews jostle for position just upstream of the bridge. This start will include the winners of the solo and doubles non-stop race, as well as the quickest relay teams.

Follow online

New Bridge

CHECK POINT 1, 26.5 km

OX29 7QD

13:15 - 17:30 Saturday

Watch from the **Thames Path** between the Rose Revived and the checkpoint location where relay teams are swapping paddlers.

The fastest relay teams will complete the first section of the race in **less than two hours**. This is a great spot to see the relay teams and other 2pm starters while they're all still close to each other – the battles here are tight!

Just remember to **steer clear of the pontoon** and the area where paddlers are moving boats and making swaps – feel free to stand upstream or downstream of this point to get a good view. You can also watch from New Bridge itself, just be mindful of traffic.

The early starters are all gone by the time most paddlers arrive, so if you want to catch them, arrive before 1pm and book a table at Rose Revived or a nearby pub to hang out until the 2pm starters pass through.

The fastest SUP usually arrives around 13:15. But the first of the early starters (in K1) could arrive sooner, around 12:45.

Follow online

Abingdon

CHECK POINT 2, 63.5 km

OX14 5LD
18:00 - 20:00 Saturday

The sunset spot.

If you want to watch the sunset and see as many racers as possible in one place, Abingdon is the place to go. This is where the 2pm starters catch the 10am starters, and the final checkpoint before racers paddle into darkness.

Abingdon Rowing Club offers the perfect views for spectators, where there's plenty of space so you don't have to worry about getting in the way of the paddlers.

You'll get a clear view upriver and downriver, and often see non-stop racers taking a slightly longer break here to prepare for the nighttime paddling.

Be mindful of local parking restrictions, and get your camera out for stunning sunset shots (weather permitting)!

Follow online

Overnight

Most paddlers hit the next two to three checkpoints in the dark.

If you're local to the area (and you have night owl tendencies), feel free to cheer for the racers as they pass through these locations. They'll appreciate hearing extra enthusiasm through the night!

As long as it's dark out, be mindful of your lights. **Don't use very bright lights or shine torches near the paddlers' faces**. This can be blinding in the dark, and potentially dangerous.

PANGBOURNE - CHECK POINT 3, 100 km
RG8 7DA
21:45 Saturday - 03:00 Sunday

BISHAM - CHECK POINT 4, 137.5 km
SL7 1RR
00:40 - 10:30 Sunday

STAINES - CHECK POINT 5, 172.5 km
TW18 3JN
03:40 - 14:15 Sunday

Follow online

THAMES 200 ULTRA

Teddington

THE FINISH - 200 km

KT2 5BH
05:30 - 19:30 Sunday

Relay teams, non-stop racers, and early starters will trickle in throughout the day Sunday any time between 5 am and 8 pm, making it the perfect spot for flexible spectating.

Because the Thames 200 Ultra covers the entire length of the navigable, non-tidal Thames, racers must paddle all the way to the last full lock: Teddington Lock. Standing at the finish line at YMCA Hawker, you'll see racers paddle past you heading downstream to the lock, where they must then turn around and paddle upstream until they cross the official finish line.

This is one of the most exciting moments of the race. Somehow even after more than 15 hours of racing, competitors are finding the strength for a final sprint, and finishing just a few minutes apart.

YMCA Hawker offers toilet facilities and you can buy drinks and snacks from their cafe. Located on the Thames Path between Kingston and Richmond, it's also a perfect chance to witness incredible athletic and personal achievements in the middle of your long Sunday walk along the river.

Watch from the finish line itself, or anywhere between YMCA Hawker and Teddington Lock on the Thames Path, or watch from the blue bridge over Teddington Lock. Just be mindful of other pedestrians and cyclists.

Follow online

How to Follow the Thames 200 Ultra Online

1. Dot Watching

OPEN TRACKING GPS

Head to: thames200ultra.com/gpstracking to follow every craft from start to finish. The perfect way to track paddlers' progress from afar, or check how soon they'll arrive the the checkpoint where you're waiting!

2. Live Blog

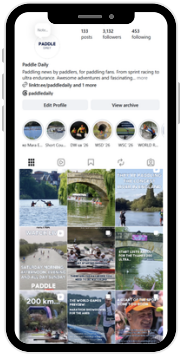
PADDLE DAILY

Text, photo, and video updates will be posted live to the offical race Live Blog by Paddle Daily. Hear interviews with racers from the start line (and even from relay paddlers mid-race!), see photos as paddlers progress, and stay up to date with all the action in real time.

3. Social Media

INSTAGRAM & FACEBOOK

To see Stories, Reels, and photo update posts during the race, and to make sure you don't miss any post-race, follow Thames 200 Ultra and Paddle Daily. Look for @200thamesultra and @paddledaily on Instagram, the Thames 200 Ultra Facebook group, and the Paddle Daily Facebook page.



THAMES
200
ULTRA
START
RACE
SEE YOU THERE