

## Senior Doubles Second Tide

Every year the DW Organisation conducts a thorough review of the whole race, in particular, safety. A number of ideas and suggestions were generated in 2019 and these are variously being followed up. One of these is the “second tide”.

### Background

When DW started as a race it was a very different world. Senior doubles started on Good Friday and were able to complete the course by Bank Holiday Monday morning. The canal was derelict, the Thames and Tideway had significantly less boats, and there was little commercial traffic on the Tideway.

Times have changed significantly and engagement with external bodies – in particular the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency and the Port of London Authority is now essential.

DW has evolved in response. The introduction of GPS trackers is a prime example of DW making changes to enhance safety. This has been transformatory. The virtually real time crew locations mean support crews know where their crew are and the number of “lost crew” incidents is down considerably. It has also improved how crews are monitored on the tideway.

### Second Tide

There have been concerns about the second tide for some time. These crews can be slow and less competent but not always. The craft paddled varies – a mix of racing doubles, folding boats, double sea kayaks and Canadian.

The main concern is these crews paddling the final stretches of the non-tidal Thames and the Tideway on Sunday afternoon/evening when they are tired, typically 30+ hours after leaving Devizes.

The information and guidance issued by DW has always been that crews anticipating a time of over 30 hours should consider the Endeavour class. This message is now being reinforced.

Therefore, with a heavy heart, DW is changing the rules, and the only tide now available to Senior Doubles will be on Sunday morning. If a crew misses this tide window, there is no longer an option to wait for the evening tide.

### 2020 Race Impact

The first SD starters can leave Devizes at 7am. The tide window closes at 09:57 am. This then allows (almost) 27 hours to make it to Teddington and onto the Tideway. Adding 4 hours to get to Westminster means that a 31 hour crew can complete SD on this tide.

Analysing results from a number of previous races suggests that potentially 10-15 crews will need to transfer to Endeavour.

We trust you will appreciate this change is not made lightly, and is done so with the safety of paddlers, as well as volunteer race staff, as our primary concern.