



# RACE TO THE MIDNIGHT SUN HANDBOOK 2026

[YUKONRIVERQUEST.COM](http://YUKONRIVERQUEST.COM)



# WELCOME TO THE YUKON RIVER QUEST

## The Race to the Midnight Sun

So, you've signed up for the Yukon River Quest.

Good choice.

Or questionable choice, depending on how much you like sleep. Either way, welcome to the madness.

This handbook is your guide to everything you need to know before you dip your paddle in the mighty Yukon. It's part survival manual, part rulebook, and part friendly reminder that the river doesn't care how many followers you have. It just keeps flowing north, cold and beautiful, for 715 kilometers.

We've tried to keep it simple, clear, and sprinkled with a bit of Yukon personality because this race isn't just about getting from Whitehorse to Dawson. It's about testing yourself against the wild, making friends who understand the smell of wet clothes, and discovering just how much instant mashed potato a person can handle.

So grab your paddle, your sense of humour, and maybe an extra pair of dry socks.

The river's waiting, let's do this!

The Yukon River Quest takes racers through the land and waters of five First Nations: **Kwanlin Dün, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Little Salmon Carmacks, Selkirk and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.**

Our race honours their culture and those who have lived off the river and nurtured it and continue to do so today.

The Yukon River Quest is an annual paddling race travelling 715km downstream from Whitehorse to Dawson and boasts a rich heritage dating back to the first Quest, which celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the 1897-1899 Klondike Gold Rush. The first race, in 1998, ran from Dyea, Alaska to Dawson City in the Yukon and re-created that gold rush feeling.

Known as "The Race to the Midnight Sun," the Yukon River Quest is scheduled at a time of year when the northern sky does not get dark, allowing racers the unique experience of being on the river 24 hours a day with no sunset or sunrise.

The Yukon River Quest is a race with wild river and wilderness experience that draws people from around the world.

Author: Yukon River Marathon Paddling Association

This Handbook is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated via the event newsletter, website, and Facebook.  
Version 2 May 2026



# ALL ABOUT THE RACE

## Statement of Intent

For racers, it is assumed that you have read this handbook thoroughly and understood and digested the content. Your paid and confirmed entry constitutes your team's intent to enter the race and further acknowledges that each team member understands and agrees to comply with YRO Rules.

## Participate at your own risk

Racers in this event are participating entirely at their own risk. Your decision to participate in the race, or continue racing once you have started, is yours alone. By participating in this event, each racer releases the race organizers and officials from any and all liability associated with the racer's participation in this event to the fullest extent permitted by the law.

## Safe Respectful Environment

The Yukon River Marathon Paddling Association is the organization responsible for the YRO. The Board of Directors is fully committed to providing a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for all our racers, support crews, volunteers and officials, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, or disability.

## We cannot emphasize enough that this is a wilderness race in Northern Canada.

The temperature of the water is around 13 C, and air temperatures range from 8 C to 29 C in June. We encourage you to research and prepare to the fullest extent. Racers must be aware that, however good they are at paddling, things can and do go wrong: damaged shoulders, overused wrists, blistered hands, exhaustion, blazing heat, cold weather, rain-induced hypothermia, heat-promoted hyperthermia, or just getting tired and not wanting to continue.

Be prepared. Do your research. Be capable of immediate self-preservation. Be equipped so you can be self-sufficient for a couple of days if necessary.

## The Race

The Yukon River Quest is a 715 km race which starts in Whitehorse and ends in Dawson City, Yukon.

The YRO 300 is a shorter race that begins in Whitehorse and ends in Carmacks. The same start time and rules apply, unless otherwise noted.

The Dawson Dash is a new 415 km race for 2026. It starts in Carmacks and finishes in Dawson. The same rules apply, unless otherwise noted.

## Language of the Race

The race language is English and at least one racer per boat and at least one of your Support Crew are required to be proficient in spoken English.

# DATES AND RACE WEEK CALENDAR

Dates and times of the race are always communicated in Yukon time.

## Registration & Paperwork

<b>1 November 2025</b>	<b>10am</b>	Registration Opens
<b>1 March 2026</b>	<b>11:59pm</b>	50% refund deadline
<b>13 May</b>	<b>11:59pm</b>	Registration Closes
<b>1 June</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	Deadline to purchase YRQ Support Crew
<b>1 June</b>	<b>11:59pm</b>	Communication devices must be received and confirmed as working with YRQ Comms

## Whitehorse Events

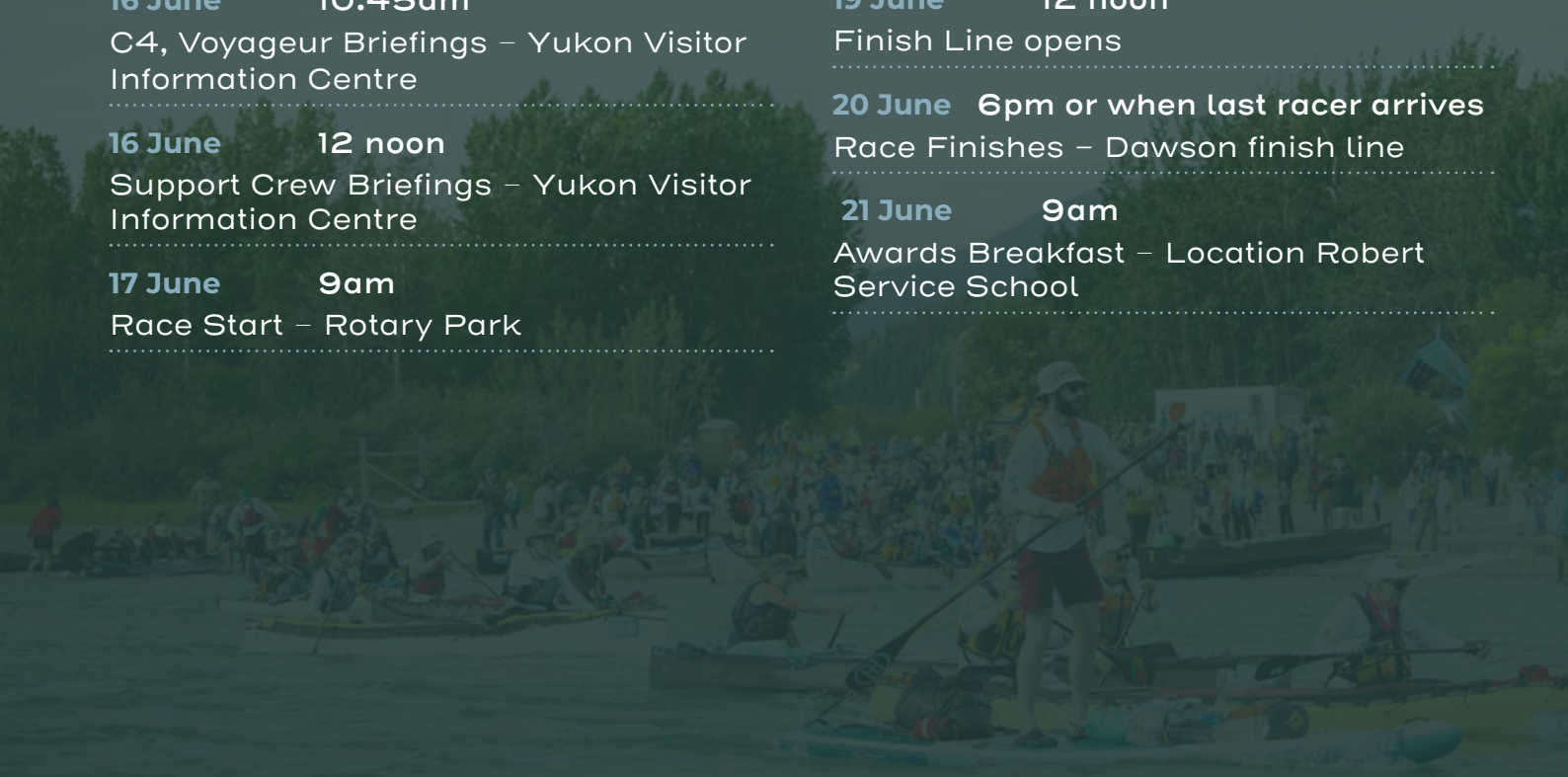
<b>14 June</b>	<b>Morning onwards</b>	Training runs – Kanoe People
<b>15 June</b>	<b>From 8am onwards</b>	Mandatory Check-in & Gear Check – Yukon Visitor Information Centre
<b>15 June</b>	<b>Welcome to Race Week</b>	Location Old Fire Hall
<b>16 June</b>	<b>9am</b>	Tandem & Solo Briefings – Yukon Visitor Information Centre
<b>16 June</b>	<b>10:45am</b>	C4, Voyageur Briefings – Yukon Visitor Information Centre
<b>16 June</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	Support Crew Briefings – Yukon Visitor Information Centre
<b>17 June</b>	<b>9am</b>	Race Start – Rotary Park

## Carmacks Events

<b>18 June</b>	<b>6am or earlier</b>	Carmacks Checkpoint opens for first racers
<b>18 June</b>	<b>Likely evening</b>	Dawson Dash race start
<b>19 June</b>	<b>At or before 6am</b>	Carmacks Checkpoint closes after the last racer leaves

## Dawson Events

<b>19 June</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	Finish Line opens
<b>20 June</b>	<b>6pm or when last racer arrives</b>	Race Finishes – Dawson finish line
<b>21 June</b>	<b>9am</b>	Awards Breakfast – Location Robert Service School



# RACING CLASSES AND DIVISIONS

## Classes

The racing classes in the YRQ are:

- ◆ SUP,
- ◆ solo canoe (C1) or kayak (K1),
- ◆ tandem canoes (C2) and kayaks (K2),
- ◆ 4-person canoes (C4s), and
- ◆ Voyageur canoes (6 to 10 people)

Each craft must comply with the YRQ Craft Specifications.

Canoes – include C4s and Voyageurs, SUPs, kayaks must be raced with a canoe, SUP or kayak paddle respectively.

## Divisions

The divisions of YRQ are: Open, Women and Mixed.

In the Mixed division at least 1/3 of the team must be women.

The Open category is respectful of gender expression and gender diversity and welcomes transwomen, transmen and non-binary or gender-queer persons. On the registration form, the person may indicate their identified gender, select 'non-binary,' or prefer not to say.

# THE RULES

Our rules are intended to support you, the environment we paddle in, your fellow competitors, support crews, volunteers and in the spirit of the Yukon River Quest.

If you are in breach of any of the Rules, the YRMPA and Race Officials may assign time penalties, or you may be disqualified. For very serious breaches, the YRMPA will consider banning individuals from future races.

## Respect for the River

The Yukon River has been called “the world’s longest museum” and is the site of many historical artifacts and properties. Removal of, or interference with, any artifacts will result in disqualification.

The YRQ is a ‘no trace’ event. Littering of any kind, along the river and its banks, is not tolerated. This includes the dropping of food, litter or items by racers and support crews. If no facility is available, be prepared to dispose of human waste in a proper cathole or pack it out with you.

## Respect for other racers

If you see another team in distress and can help them, you are required to render assistance. You may be eligible for this time to be returned to you. If you cannot get to a team without endangering yourself, send a message to the YRQ Comms centre.

Any unsporting behaviour may result in a penalty.

We recognize that discrimination, prejudice and victimization on the basis of personal attributes, including gender identity and expression, is a violation of human rights and will not be tolerated.

## Respect for the Volunteers

The Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Race. Without them, the Race could not happen. It is expected that racers and their support crews will treat all volunteers with respect. Any occurrences of disrespect will be reported to the Race Marshal and penalties may be imposed.

## Mandatory attendance

All racers must attend Race Check-in and Gear check in Whitehorse on Monday, and Racer Briefing on Tuesday of race week. Failure to attend both will result in a disqualification at the discretion of race officials.



# THE RULES CONTINUED

## Tracking & communications

Each team must have and be familiar with the functions of satellite communicators e.g. Garmin, Spot, Zoleo. This device must be capable of two-way communications used that way in the race. It must be attached to a PFD, easily accessible during the race and registered with the YRQ Comms team by the time race entry closes.

The YRQ will provide a dedicated tracker for each team from YB Tracking for the 2026 race. This tracking device must be attached in front of the bow paddler for the duration of the race. If the YB tracker is lost, you will be charged for a full replacement.

## Craft specifications

All craft must comply with YRQ Craft Specifications. If the craft you are using has not been used by anyone in the YRQ before, we will need to see this craft at Gear Check. If you are unsure, contact the race organisers before-hand. If you turn up at Gear Check and your craft does not pass our craft specifications, you will not be allowed to use it in the race and you will have full responsibility.

Do not change your craft at any point during the race. A damaged boat may be replaced with another of the same class upon prior approval of the Race Marshal, with a time penalty of two hours.

## Checkpoints and Timing

Checkpoints are spaced out along the race to offer emergency-related stopping points and to monitor progress of the racers. Each team must call their number out and be heard at Policemans' Point and Lower Laberge

Carmacks is the mandatory, 10-hour layover point for all teams. This is the only place and time in the race that teams are allowed planned external support or help from their Support Crews. Suspicion of, or planned help may result in penalties.

Teams must meet the following time limits for the following checkpoints. If teams fail to meet this requirement, they may be disqualified or asked to withdraw by race officials.

- ◆ Pass Policeman's point by 5 hours from start,
- ◆ Pass Lower Lake Laberge by 15 hours,
- ◆ Arrive at Carmacks by 36 hours and leave by 46 hours after the start,
- ◆ Cross the finish line at Dawson City in 81 hours.

## Finish Line

The finish line in Dawson City is marked by a cone on the river-right. A horn will sound when the team crosses this timing line. The race is officially closed 3 days and 9 hours (81 hours) from the start time.

A team's official time will be the elapsed time on the river, not including mandatory layovers, plus any penalty or adjustment by the Race Marshal.

## Support Crew

You must have at least one Support Crew person identified to the race organisers before race entries close. We recommend a maximum Support Crew – 8 for a Voyageur, 6 for C4, 4 for tandems and 3 people for solo.

If you do not have someone helping you out, you can purchase YRQ Support Crew Services.

## Winners and prizes

The principle of awarding prize money for the Yukon River Quest is based on the number of teams registered by race entry close date. Prize money listed here is based on 100 teams registered and for 1st and 2nd place crossing the line in each class. There is no minimum threshold of entries per class. If fewer than 60 teams are paid up when race entry closes prize money may not be awarded. There will be no prize money given for the YRQ 300 or the Dawson Dash 415km.

### Solo classes

1st place = \$630                      2nd place = \$312

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### Tandem classes

1st place = \$1,200                      2nd place = \$564

.....

### C4 classes

1st place = \$1,440                      2nd place = \$720

.....

### Voyageur classes

1st place = \$2,160                      2nd place = \$1,080

.....

Prize money will be paid to the Team Captain or designated person, as one sum. The YRQ fastest team overall receives free entry in the following year's race and their names are added to the permanent trophy. If the team members change, new racers must pay their proportion of the race entry fee.

## Withdrawals

Withdrawal is considered to have occurred when;

- ◆ A team has pressed their SOS button and engaged in emergency measures.
- ◆ A team has called their support crew or the YRQ to request assistance for themselves. Doing so results in the team incurring reasonable evacuation costs or a fee of \$500, whichever is greater.
- ◆ A team has not arrived by the cutoff time for the Checkpoint.
- ◆ A team has decided they can no longer continue to race.

## Continuing as "tourist":

If the team feels it is at no immediate risk, and is adequately equipped and provisioned to continue paddling, they may inform the Race Marshal that they will continue to paddle as 'tourists'. The team will notify their Support Crew and will agree to indemnify YRMPA from any liability for their well-being. They are required to notify race officials of their



intended destination and arrival time and how any borrowed equipment will be returned. They will no longer be tracked by the YRQ.

When a team withdraws, the Race Officials must be informed and a completed and signed YRQ withdrawal form submitted to the official or at the nearest Checkpoint.

- ◆ Failure to complete a withdrawal form results in disqualification.
- ◆ If withdrawing at Carmacks, a team must also complete the withdrawal form.
- ◆ If Race Officials are not notified of a team's withdrawal at Carmacks before the Checkpoint closes, there is a \$100 penalty per team.

## Substitution of Team Members

Teams may substitute members after entry has been accepted, up until midnight of the day before mandatory Check-in. No team may replace all its members. Replacement of all team members is considered a withdrawal, requiring a new entry.

The entire starting team must finish to be eligible for prizes.

## Race Officials & Protests

Race Officials consist of the Race Marshal and Race Judges. There may be a Deputy Race Marshal.

The Race Marshal is responsible for the entire race, from the pre-race meeting to the awards presentation. They have authority over procedures and rules, can penalise or disqualify teams, and receive advice from Race Judges. All decisions by the Race Marshal are final. A decision of the Race Marshal may only be contested by filing a Protest Statement.

The Race Judges can be non-competing YRMPA Board members, former racers, or someone chosen by YRMPA or the Race Marshal. They advise the Race Marshal and assist with decisions.

The Race Committee includes two Race Judges and the Race Marshal. They handle disputes and decide on Protests.

## Protests

Any protest towards a decision or action of the Race Marshal or race processes or another team must be made in writing, within one hour of the official end of the race and accompanied by a \$50 fee.

On receipt of a Protest Statement the Race Committee will review and dismiss or investigate further. If further investigation is determined, and if the protest includes allegations against another team, that team captain is provided a copy of the written protest statement.

The team captain may submit a written response to the Race Committee within 2 hours of being provided the Protest Statement.

- ◆ The Race Committee may then review the Statements, interview witnesses, review photos, videos and consider any other available information.

The Race Committee can take the following actions:

- ◆ Dismiss the protest.
- ◆ Determine any rules infraction, issue penalties including time penalties, disqualification, future race bans, make statements on behalf of the race and take any other actions necessary to address the matter.

The decision of the Race Committee is final.

## Insurance

Each racer must purchase fully comprehensive travel insurance. YRMPA shall have no liability to the paddler or any third party for any losses suffered, or costs incurred, by the paddler or any third party due to the failure of the paddler to purchase or otherwise put in place fully comprehensive travel insurance appropriate to the risks involved in travelling to and from, and participating in, the Yukon River Quest. Each paddler must purchase medical insurance, which shall, as a minimum, cover the paddler from the point of medical treatment back to the home country, and cover the costs of the transport of any mortal remains back to the home country.

## Waiver of Liability, Photo Release, etc

Each racer, support crew member and volunteer shall sign the waiver of liability. Each racer shall sign all photo release documents or promotional material requested by YRMPA prior to, or at the mandatory pre-race briefing. YRMPA has the unqualified and unrestricted authority to permit the race sponsor(s) to photograph and otherwise collect information for advertising, public relations, or other publicity purposes.

## General Rules

Drafting (wake-riding) is permitted so long as it is respectful and courteous. If there are any issues, these must be brought to the attention of the Race Marshal as soon as possible.

Pace boats are prohibited.

Teams may not carry firearms during the race.

Under no circumstances shall a racer consume alcohol or marijuana during the race.

Racers are responsible for informing the race organizers about any pre-existing medical conditions and any and all medications you are taking for that.



# MANDATORY EQUIPMENT

Racers are required to carry basic survival gear and warm, dry clothes. All of these items must be carried the entire length of the racecourse. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

If any of these items are used or lost, they may be replaced at the Carmacks checkpoint.

Mandatory Gear	Quantity	Specifics	Usage & requirements
<b>Paddles – C1, C2, C4s, SUP, K1, K2</b>	1 per racer + 1 team spare		
<b>Paddles – Voyageurs</b>	1 per racer + 2 team spare		
<b>PFD</b>	1 per racer	Must provide a minimum of 50 Newtons of inherent buoyancy	<p>Racers are responsible for ensuring their PFD is approved for use in Canada and that it is in good condition. PFDs in poor condition may be rejected and the PFD approved at gear check is the only PFD that may be worn for the duration of the race.</p> <p>It is the racers responsibility to ensure their PFD is approved by the Canadian Department of Transport, Canadian Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or U.S. Coast Guard and is a minimum of 50 Newtons of inherent buoyancy. Non-Canadian racers may use a PFD if it conforms to the laws of their country and provides a minimum buoyancy of 50 Newtons as mentioned above.</p> <p>Self-inflatable PFDs are not allowed.</p>
<b>Sprayskirt / deck</b>	Craft dependant		<p>Solo and tandem canoes and kayaks are required to have full coverage spray skirts or decks that are fastened to the craft. These must be worn as a minimum, from Whitehorse to Lower Laberge and from Carmacks to Rink Rapids.</p> <p>C4s, as a minimum, are required to have a spray skirt/deck around the bow paddler, but full coverage is recommended.</p> <p>Voyageur: it is strongly recommended to have a spray skirt/deck around the bow paddler. All Voyageurs are required to have internal flotation.</p>
<b>Lines</b>	Craft dependant	Must be a buoyant line, ≥6mm diameter and ≥15m, attached to craft to aid Carmacks dock landing	<p>Solos must have one line attached to the bow</p> <p>SUPs line must have a quick release tether. SUP racers must also wear a quick release line (belt or anchor) attached to the SUP.</p> <p>All other craft must have two lines, bow and stern.</p>
<b>Repair kit – patch and pump</b>	Inflatable SUPs only		
<b>Tracking &amp; communications device</b>	1 per team minimum	Can carry separate device for each purpose	Racers must know how to operate these. Teams may carry a separate device for each purpose. All devices must be registered and confirmed as working with the YRQ Communications team by the date race entry closes.
<b>Robust zip-seal bag for rubbish</b>	1 per team		
<b>Stove, fuel &amp; pot</b>	1 per team 2 per Voyageur team		Pot must have capacity ≥0.4l



Mandatory Gear	Quantity	Specifics	Usage & requirements
Two additional warm clothing layers for top & bottoms	Per racer	Must be within a dry bag	
Rain gear, top & bottoms	Per racer		
Free standing tent	Per team	Must shelter all team members	No bivy bags
Sleeping bag rated to -5C	Per racer		
Watertight white light	Per team	Attached to either bow of craft or headlamp of bow paddler	
Race bibs	Per racer	Issued at Check-in	Pin to back of PFD
Hardcopy maps	Per team	In addition to any GPS	Rourke's River Map is recommended
Food & fluid	Per racer	Sustain throughout race + 24hrs extra	
Bailer or pump	Per team (not SUP)		
Whistle	Per racer	Must be attached to PFD	
Emergency bivy bag	Per racer	Must be attached to PFD	
Firestarter materials	Per racer	Must be attached to PFD	
Waterproof matches or light	Per racer	Must be attached to PFD	
Race decals	Per team	Issued at Check-In	Applied to either side of craft, unless shape requires more visible placement.
First aid kit	Per team	Adequate for bleeds, breaks, chafing, burns, bites, antiseptic, pain relief and super glue and spare sun cream as a minimum	

## Additional highly recommended gear

- ◆ Craft repair kit
- ◆ Money
- ◆ Flask
- ◆ Insect repellent
- ◆ Masks
- ◆ Bear spray
- ◆ Anti-diarrheal or gastro-intestinal medicine
- ◆ Knife
- ◆ Buff
- ◆ Duct tape
- ◆ Swimming goggles (in case of wildfire smoke)
- ◆ Eye drops
- ◆ Anti-inflammatory tablets
- ◆ Sunglasses

# FROM WHITEHORSE TO DAWSON

The full race is 715km from Whitehorse to Dawson. The flow rate, topography and weather are very unpredictable.

The recommended hardcopy map is Mike Rouke's Yukon River (Marsh Lake to Dawson City). Using that, and studying satellite imagery for more recent changes is HIGHLY recommended. Ice melt and high water have changed the currents and course considerably.

This is a wilderness race. You may face none, or all, of the following; ensure you are prepared and have a plan.

- ◆ Sleep deprivation, hypothermia, dehydration, injury, weather of every variety.
- ◆ Temperatures below freezing, wind, rain, fog, sunshine and heat at 30°C, lightning and thunderstorms.
- ◆ Cold water with significant current, riffles, snags, sweepers, strainers. The shoreline is often deep mud.
- ◆ Wildfire smoke and poor air quality
- ◆ Wildlife along the river, including bears or moose

Plan to be self-sufficient, including getting yourself off the river. That might mean drifting down to Dawson rather than racing hard. Or taking a nap somewhere before continuing to the finish.



# THE RACE

## Race start

YRQ and YRQ 300 races start on Wednesday 17 June 2026, Rotary Park, 9am.

Race day morning is busy and there are a lot of racers, support crew, cars and craft all needing to be in a small space in a managed way. We accept craft to the water start line at specific times. There is no parking at Rotary Park, only drop-off of craft, racers and gear. Have your support crew plan ahead for parking. There will be traffic control at Rotary Park. Please be aware, the park has a public path and cycle way, the Millenium Trail, running along the water so take care when driving or moving craft and gear.

### 06:00 – 08:30

Positioning of boats and final inspections at Rotary Park

### 06:00-6:45

Voyageurs and C4s

### 06:30-07:30

Canoes/kayaks/SUPs numbers 1-35

### 07:00-0830

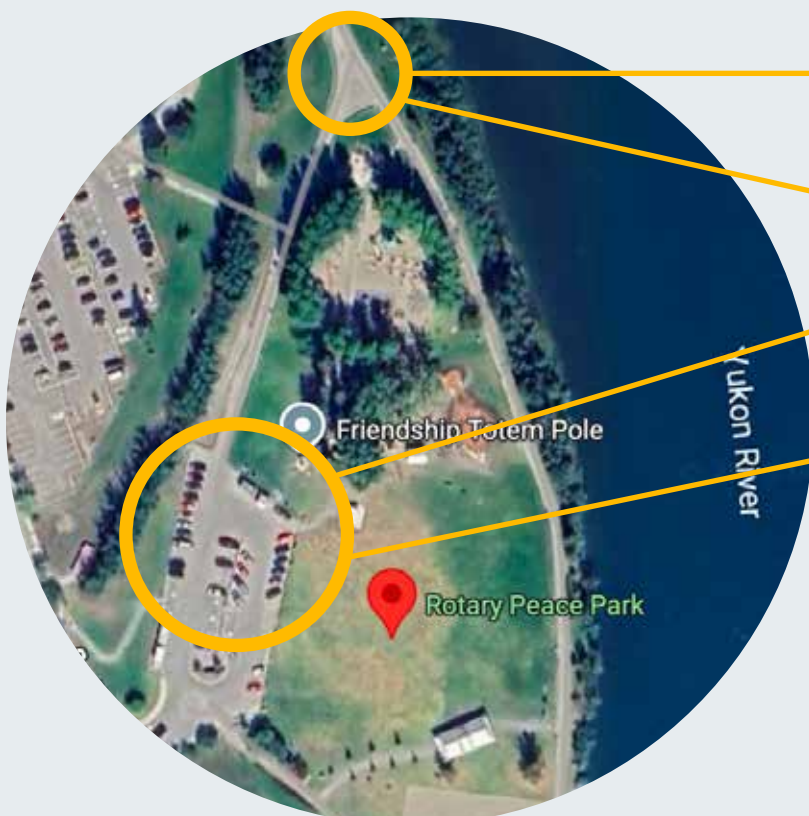
Canoes/ kayaks/SUPs numbers 36-74

During this time, we will also be conducting spot gear checks. You will be notified on arrival if this applies to you and if it does, load your gear into your craft after the gear check. You will not be allowed to start unless you have ALL mandatory gear.

If you have rented a craft locally, your outfitter will have communicated to you how and when your craft will arrive at Rotary Park.

At 8:30am, racers will be called to the start line in Rotary Park, near the Gazebo. Once the horn blasts at 9am, you have approximately 400m to run to your craft. This is on grass, pavement and pebbles. Wear shoes you are comfortable running or walking in. Be aware of everyone around you. One person from your Support Crew can remain at your craft to help push you off.

Once you push off and into the Yukon's current, you'll be moving quickly. Be very aware of other craft in front and behind you. You do not want to be that team that crashes into another craft. You may be penalised if you are held responsible for crashes. For those watching from the shore there are great viewpoints from the wharf and river path all the way down.



Drop off for big craft on trailers

Drop off for smaller craft

Drop off for racers and equipment (NO PARKING)



## Whitehorse to Lake Laberge

At Whitehorse, the river flow and levels depend on the dam release from Schwatka Lake. Generally there is a decent current through the Takhini River joining and beyond. As you get closer to Lake Laberge, the river has a narrow section due to a recent bank collapse near Burma Point.

The first Checkpoint, Policeman's Point, is on the left-hand bank before entering Lake Laberge. There are more details on how our Checkpoints operate in the next section. The entry to Lake Laberge can change each year depending on water levels. You will then continue on an angle to the eastern shore and stay right of any yellow buoys.

Lake Laberge is 49km long. In good weather with a fast team, it'll take 6-7 hours. Bad weather, needing to stop, slower teams can take 8-10 hours. If the wind comes up, it's generally from a southerly direction and can create waves from behind or off your quarter up to 2m. Pull off to the shore if you feel unsafe.

You will follow the shoreline up the lake and pass inside the yellow YRQ Buoys. Stay within 200m of the right-hand shore. You are allowed to cut across curving bays. There will be patrol boats in some areas of the lake, but they will not be right next to you if you capsize. Self-rescue skills are a must have. Once past the Narrows, you'll have sections where possible landing spots will be 1km apart. If there are waves rolling into shore, and you need to land, pick your spot carefully.

Racers are responsible for their own safety. If you do not reach Lower Laberge Checkpoint before 15 hours after race start, you may be asked to withdraw by the race organisers.

## Lower Laberge

The next Checkpoint is Lower Laberge. You need to be close enough to the right hand shore to call out your number and be heard by volunteers. If you want to stop here, there are volunteers and enough space to rest, change clothes, warm up. It will get colder through the evening as you paddle through 30 Mile so be prepared for that. This is a good place to do that.

## Lower 30 Mile

This section, from Lake Laberge to the Teslin River, is a national heritage river and part of the Klondike Gold Rush International Historical Park. The current speeds up and there are riffles, boils and eddies to be aware of. Between midnight to 4am you'll need to have your white light showing. The Checkpoint is on the left-hand side of the river.

## Big Salmon

The Check point can be on either the left or right-hand side of the river, near the Big Salmon river confluence. There are likely to be people here if you stop to rest. More information will be shared at Race Briefing.

## Little Salmon

The Checkpoint location here can vary slightly depending on the river, you will be updated at briefings. It is usually river right about 4.2km downstream from the mouth of the Little Salmon River. The area is part of the Little Salmon First Nation and we are grateful for their permission to access the river. Support Crews are not allowed here.

## Carmacks – Coal Mine Campground

Carmacks is a timing Checkpoint and is the location of the race's 10-hour mandatory rest stop. It is also the Finish Line for teams racing the YRQ 300.

Fast teams will take 18-20 hours to get here

Mid teams will take 22-24 hours to get here

Slow teams will take 26-30 hours to get here

It's a fantastic experience for Support Crews as they get to be an integral part of our race community. The official timing line is marked by orange flags and is 50m upstream of the landing dock. After crossing this line, teams should be within 5m of shore to avoid overshooting the dock. Current moves very quickly along this bank and teams need to be prepared to come to the dock safely. Please approach the dock with your bow pointing downstream, and slow down.

SUPs approach kneeling down. All craft with rudders, please raise them.

Your bow line needs to be accessible to your bow paddler who will throw this to the volunteers on the dock and they will assist you. C4s and Voyageurs should be ready to throw their stern lines as well. In the case of more than one team coming into the docks at the same time, you may be directed to the second dock. Be aware, watch and listen to the volunteers as you approach.

Support Crew need to be at Carmacks before their team arrives with time to set up racer tents in the Quiet Area and be ready to support racers. It takes 3.5 hours to drive to Carmacks from Whitehorse.

C4s and Voyageurs will be tied up alongside the shore. If there isn't enough shoreline, some C4s may be store on land.

Carmacks things to do for racers;

- ◆ Charge all devices
- ◆ Clean craft, re-fill water, replace food supplies
- ◆ Check mandatory gear and replace any missing
- ◆ Get them to sleep and wake them up

You may also be selected for a mandatory gear check. Your Support Crew will be told this before you arrive and so should be prepared. The race timers will place a timing sticker on your craft which will tell you the exact time you can leave. If you want to take longer than 10 hours you can, but you must leave 46 hrs from the race start time.

Teams will be counted off the dock to continue racing by our race officials. A sticker will be placed on the craft with the time you are allowed to leave. C4s and Voyageurs can leave from the bank or come to the dock to load the team depending on how many other craft are arriving or leaving at that time.

If you have decided you are not continuing the race to Dawson you must officially withdraw by written notification, to our race officials.

## Campground layout and your plan

The Quiet Area is for racers. It is VERY important this space is as quiet as possible as it's this rest time that could make the difference between a team finishing, or them getting into trouble further down the river. Sound travels – so no parties, noise, cars, generators, cooking or general chatting in this area.

Support Crews set up any base, camping or cooking areas on the opposite side of the craft staging areas. Garbage must be placed into bins on site or taken away with you. Practice good bear etiquette as regards food. Have bug repellent and sunscreen ready.

There will be first aid on site for any minor injuries or patching up. For anything more serious, please talk to the race officials.

The showers take \$1 'loonies' and \$2 'toonies'. There is also laundry available. There is wifi but of limited capacity. There is limited RV parking and you'll be directed by volunteers. Trailers will be parked separately.

We recommend bringing the food you need and drinking water for your whole team and Support Crew from Whitehorse.

You have the option at Carmacks to stay at the Carmacks hotel or in the campground. If you are not bringing your own Support Crew, and are purchasing this service from the race organisers, (YRQ Support Crew Services) they will support you at the Campground only. They will not drive you to the hotel or into town. This would have to be organised separately by you as a racer.

## Five Finger and Rink rapids

2-3 hours after Carmacks, teams will go through two sets of rapids. Five Fingers must be taken on the right-hand side channel. Conditions there depend on water levels and can change rapidly. There will be eddies before and after the channel, standing waves, holes and reverb off the cliffs. Support Crew can walk down to the rapids from the road to see their teams go through. Support Crew cannot go to Tatchun Creek to help teams.

There will be a power boat stationed at Five Fingers that will assist you if you capsize. They can help you to shore, or to Tatchun Creek camp around the bend. You will almost certainly get wet, so think about what you are wearing and tie all your gear to your craft so you don't lose it if you capsize. This is called The Five Fingers Club. Be prepared to self-rescue or swim yourself to shore.

You will hear Rink rapids before you see them. They stretch across most of the river. You will get a pretty clear run if you stick to the right-hand bank. Depending on water levels, Rink can have big holes, curling and standing waves. Unlike Five Fingers, Rink has rocks across it that can be exposed. Be smart – stay right! If you capsize here, you may have a very long swim in cold water. There are historic strainers in Rink rapids; we do not suggest running these anywhere other than the right hand line.

## Minto

This is the last road access to the Yukon River until Dawson and is owned by the Selkirk First Nation.

As you approach Minto, you may see a barge crossing the river. If it is underway, you must wait until it is safe to pass.

From Carmacks to Dawson it can take teams anywhere from 22-40 hours.

## Fort Selkirk

This is not a Checkpoint but if you need to land, you can. It is a former trading post and most of the buildings remain. Before that, it was used by First Nations people for at least 8,000 years. Fort Selkirk is owned and managed jointly by the Selkirk First Nation and Yukon Government. It's quite likely there will be First Nations caretakers there. If you do need a break, it's recommended to land at the furthest end of the shingle area for ease.

## Coffee Creek

The Checkpoint landing is river left, off the racing line. It is on the traditional territory of the Trondek Hewch'in and the home of Fuerte Mine. It is a little over halfway from Carmacks to Dawson City if you need to take a break.

# THE RACE CONTINUED

## 60 Mile

This is the last Checkpoint before Dawson. The exact location can vary depending on water levels. It is on river left, on a small island across from Sixty Mile river confluence. From here, it's 4-6 hours to Dawson.

## Dawson and The Finish

Once you see Moosehide Slide, you are pretty close! As you round the last bend, the Klondike River comes in from the right, avoid being near this, it can be very shallow.

You'll start to see buildings; look out for the square yellow building. The timing line is just upstream of this, marked with flags and cones. You can either ferry glide across or get a bit closer to shore once you've passed the Klondike confluence. There will be a crowd there, even in the wee early hours. A horn will blow when you cross the line, don't stop paddling until you hear it!

The takeout is about 100m past the finish line so start to move to the right quickly to ensure you make that landing.

There will be markers, volunteers and your Support Crew waiting for you!

This is a special moment, you've finished the Yukon River Quest! Make sure you take this moment in.

For the Support Crew, the volunteers will direct you where

to put your racers' craft. You'll have time to celebrate and look after your racer. And then you will need to move the craft away from the finish line as it's limited in space. If the weather has been bad, or your racers arrive in the wee hours of the morning, they may have hypothermia, they are certainly at risk of that happening. Be ready with hot or cold drinks, snacks and maybe blankets.

Times will be recorded at the finish line and written onto the physical leaderboard. Dawson Checkpoint opens at 12 noon on Friday and closes at 6pm on Saturday, or earlier if the last team arrives before then.

Don't leave craft at the finish line as volunteers are not responsible for watching them. If you have rented a craft from an outfitter, make sure you know what they want you to do with them at the finish. It's expected you look after any rented craft throughout the race, at any stop, and at the finish, as carefully as you would your own craft. It should be cleaned before loading on the trailer.

If you have bear spray or gas canisters that you can't take home or on further travels with you, please do leave those with race officials for next year.



# EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Checkpoints

We have Checkpoints (CPs) through the race course. All of these are manned by volunteers from the Yukon communities. We are incredibly grateful for their time and resources. You must call out your team number at 2 Checkpoints ONLY. Policeman's Point and Lower Laberge. Paddle close enough to be heard by the volunteers. You will be recorded as passing by and we take your time.

While we try to have first aid experience at our CPs, this cannot be assumed. If you choose to stop, our volunteers will do their utmost to help and encourage you in your race. There will probably be a spot to lie down and sleep, stretch or have a chat and re-invigorate yourselves to carry on to Dawson. Do not rely on our CPs to have a power boat, fire, tents or water to spare for racers. You should have everything you need in your craft with you.

If there are known changes to GPS locations these will be shared at Race Briefing in Whitehorse. Depending on volunteers and water levels, we may not have all Checkpoints active. They will be as close to previous locations as possible; however, as the river changes course, islands change shape, we may have to alter Checkpoints even up to the time our volunteer crew goes down the river to set-up.

Checkpoint	Monitor point	GPS
Policeman's Point		60°57'0.00"N, 135°5'3.50"W
	Cather's	61°7'3.87"N, 135°5'58.79"W
Lower Laberge		61°23'30.90"N, 135°13'52.20"W
	30 Mile	61°34'01.0"N, 134°59'23.0"W
	Big Salmon	61°52'50.00"N, 134°55'25.00"W
	Little Salmon	62° 3'10.00"N, 135°40'50.00"W
Carmacks		62° 6'43.00"N, 136°16'1.00"W
	Five Fingers	62°16'11.70"N, 136°21'20.70"W
	Fort Selkirk	62°46'34.80"N, 137°23'32.30"W
60 Mile		63°33'46.20"N, 139°45'23.90"W
Dawson		64° 3'46.80"N, 139°26'9.30"W

# EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Emergency & Communications

For 2026 the YRQ has switched to using YB Tracking and will be providing a tracker for each team. This will be set-up and provided at gear check. It is your responsibility to ensure your assigned tracker is always working.

We require that you bring one two-way communications device per team. This must be easily accessible, attached to a PFD, and audible to that person for the duration of the race. This device must be registered with the YRQ Comms centre by the date race entry closes.

If you need non-emergency assistance, for you or another team, always send a message to the YRQ Comms centre. Calls will be relayed to the nearest patrol boat. HOWEVER, do not assume a power boat will be able to reach you immediately, or carry you out. This is a wilderness race, and outside assistance could be 8-12 hours away. Your best help is likely to come from other racers. Be prepared to be self-sufficient.

Your two-way communications device must have an SOS button. This should only be used in a true life and death situation. If that happens, emergency response will be under the RCMP.

When you register, we will have your team captain's email address. The Race will send direct communications to that address only. Team Captains should forward these emails and messages onto their teams and Support Crew. We also use our Facebook group to share key information, so it's strongly suggested you join this – YRQ 2026. There is also an unofficial racer forum for supporting each other - YRQ racer forum.

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## Check-in and Gear Check

Check-in and gear check is mandatory for all racers and support crew, regardless of whether they have not raced before or have raced multiple times. You are not required to bring all food and drinks to check-in, but we will want to see how you have planned this and talk about what you are taking. We suggest taking a picture.

If you have rented a craft from an outfitter, you do not need to bring this to gear check. We will expect to see all mandatory gear, including how your PFD gear is attached.

At check-in, we will also be taking team race photos and video.

## Craft rental

You will need to book this separately from the race entry and through the outfitters directly. The main outfitter for the YRQ is the Yukon Race Fleet. You can also rent from Kanoe People and Up North. Ensure you know the terms and conditions, and your responsibilities in the care and cleanliness of your rented craft. The YRMPA has no responsibility for your craft rental.

## Winners & Prizes

The principle of awarding prize money for the Yukon River Quest is based on the number of teams registered by race entry close date as stated in our Rules section. Bonus prize money may be added if a team breaks a record in its class for the full YRQ.

Each team member who finishes the Dawson Dash, YRQ 300 or full YRQ receives an official Finisher Pin.

Sponsors may award top solo racers, top Yukoners, Spirit of the Yukon, and the "Red Lantern" award to the next to last team to finish before the cut-off time for the YRQ.

The YRMPA recognizes Great River Club members who have paddled 5000 kms and 10000 kms in YRQ races. Other awards may be added by YRMPA.

## Support Crew

Support Crew are a vital part of our race, for you and us. We strongly recommend you work out what you, as a racer, need to do to work with your Support Crew. They are integral to your success so plan with them!

Your Support Crew Captain needs to be pre-registered with the race organisers as part of your entry. If there are specific support communications from the race organisers, they will be sent to your Support Crew Captain only.



If you do not have your own Support Crew coming with you to race, you can purchase this service from YRQ. Please do this online and refer to Appendix 1 for details on what this service includes. We STRONGLY recommend you bring your own Support Crew.

There is a specific Support Crew briefing in Whitehorse. We will also be setting up specific Support Crew communications which are likely to be using Whatsapp during Race Week. That will be the main way the race organisers will communicate during that race itself so please ensure you have this on your phone and that you have shared your details with the race organisers before entry closes. As you prepare for the race with your racer, make sure you also join our Facebook group – Yukon River Quest 2026 as we'll share news and actions here.

Your Support Crew needs to come along to Check-in and Gear Check with you as we need them to be registered with us. They will be given coloured bands and only those people with those bands will be to help you at the water's edge for the start and on Carmacks docks.

## Weather, fire and floods

The Yukon, like many northern communities, is experiencing the effects of climate change. Over the last few years, we've seen higher flood levels than in the previous 100 years, and two years of earlier wildfire seasons. While the winter snowpack can be an indicator of potential water levels, the timing of the melt, the spring temperatures and rain will also have an impact. Peak wildfire season in the Yukon is in early July, so we have moved the 2026 race start earlier. We still need to be aware that summer fires can happen at any time, and anywhere and the YRMPA continues to work closely with the local experts and stakeholders to give us the best chance to race safely all the way to Dawson City.



# APPENDIX 1

## YRQ SUPPORT CREW SERVICES

The YRQ offers paid support service to teams who do not have their own support crew.

Teams must register and pay for YRQ provided support before the date race entry closes through the YRQ organisers.

Fees are: \$100 per person

### Services provided:

Transportation of 2 gear bags per Racer from the Start Line in Whitehorse to Carmacks and the Finish Line in Dawson.

A gear bag drop zone at the Start line in Whitehorse. Bags must be identified with the Team number and Team name tags provided at Check-in.

Assistance in Carmacks to help remove racers from their boats onto the docks and lift the team's boat out of the water and carry it to its resting place during the 10-hour layover. All C4, and voyageur boats are secured at the shoreline.

Set-up of tent(s) in Carmacks. These tents must be provided by the Team. The tent(s) set up in Carmacks must be different from the mandatory tent(s) required to be carried in the boat by the team during the race. The gear bags will be placed inside the tent.

Orientation to the amenities at the Coal Mine Campground and Carmacks services related to the layover.

Assistance to get the boat back into the water in Carmacks before the set departure time. Packing up the tent and placing it inside one of the gear bags provided. Sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and other gear must have been packed by the Racers.

Transportation of the gear bags to the finish line in Dawson, (or sent back to the paddler if withdrawn and not proceeding to Dawson City.)

### Paid Support Crew services DO NOT provide:

Support in Whitehorse before the start of the race.

Driving of team vehicles to Carmacks and Dawson, unless mutually agreed upon between both parties.

The cleaning of boats, restocking of mandatory gear, cleaning any race gear or cooking food in Carmacks.

# APPENDIX 2

## YRQ CRAFT SPECIFICATIONS

The specifications below allow canoes, kayaks, SUPs, C4 canoes, and voyageur canoes capable of carrying the safety gear necessary for this wilderness race.

Boats not meeting the specifications below will be disqualified and not allowed to race.

Refer to how to measure your boat on the FAQ page on the YRQ website.

All boats must be powered and steered solely by human muscle power. Use of an illegal steering or propulsion device, including sails, will result in disqualification. No boat may be equipped with oarlocks, row-lock, tholepin, or outriggers.

Boat types must be recorded when registering. All boats are measured at registration and inspected again on the morning of the start. Do not bring a boat to this race unless you are ABSOLUTELY sure it fits within the YRQ specifications listed below. This is your responsibility.

### Tandem canoe – C2

The tandem canoe class allows a range of boats from stock recreational touring and wilderness tripping canoes to longer standard class canoes, including some models with concave lines. USCA cruisers are not allowed. No rudders or skegs are allowed.

<b>Max length</b>	18'6" stern to stern
<b>Min width (stock canoe)</b>	32" at widest point, midship at 4" waterline *
<b>Min width (if concave)</b>	33.5" at widest point, midship at 4" waterline*
<b>Centre gunnel min height</b>	12"
<b>Min height at bow</b>	16"
<b>Min height at stern</b>	16"

\*where gunnels are concave outwards at any point along the boat must be 33.5" wide at the 4" water line at the widest point.

Other C2s must be at least 32" wide at the 4" water line at the widest point.



This rule allows “stock” canoes such as the Clipper and Wenonah Jensen 18 models; “standard” canoes such as the Clipper Whitewater II, Wenonah Minnesota II, H2O Slingshot 222, Kisseynew Kisiskâciwan models; and “concave” canoes such as the Wenonah SCR, the Savage River Susquehanna and Blackhawk models.

## Solo canoe – C1

The solo canoe class allows a range of boats from half-decked touring and wilderness tripping canoes to performance touring canoes. This includes H2O Slingshot 202, Clipper Sea-1, Clipper Freedom, Swift Canoe Cruiser 16.8 and Cruiser 17.8, Savage River

Solo canoes without internal bulkhead sealed compartments must have additional buoyancy bags inside.

Canoes in the solo class may have a rudder.

Maximum 4” waterline length-width ratio: 9.7

C1s must flare to the 6” waterline for at least 6’ 6” in cumulative length over all sections of the hull.

## Kayaks – K1 and K2

This race is for recreation or expedition-style kayaks only. Sit-on-top kayaks are not allowed. Kayaks must have adequate internal storage compartment(s) for all the gear required for this race. Kayaks must have fore and aft water-tight storage compartments or flotation chambers.

The Yukon River Quest has adopted its own length-width ratio for determining the suitability of kayaks for this race. The simple length to width ratio is determined by dividing the total length of the kayak at the 4” waterline (not including rudder) by the mid-ship width at the 4” waterline. Do not rely on other published ratios. In addition, there is a minimum overall width.

	Max 4” waterline length-width ratio	Min overall width at the widest point
K1	10.8	20”
K2	10.2	26”

## SUPs

SUPs can be hardboard or inflatable. Fins and daggers are allowed. Foils are not allowed. The standard YRQ SUP max board length is 14’. Unlimited boards are not allowed.

Max length: 14’  
Min width: 24”

## C4s

Specifications for C4s fit most commercial models for racing canoes and the craft must have been specifically built by the manufacturer for 4 racers with a min weight of 55lbs. This includes Minnesota 4, Saranac and Slingshot Q. There can be no concavity in the longitudinal axis of the hull and no concave lines in the cross section (side to side). No hard-line transitions in the hull of the craft. The curve of the chine must be equal to at least the radius of a softball. With a max tumblehome of 2” per side.

Max length	23’1”
Min width at centre line, 4” waterline & gunnels	33”
Min width at 4” waterline – 4” from bow	16’4”
Min width at 4” waterline – 4” from stern	17”
Min depth at bow	20”
Min depth at centre	13.5”
Min depth at stern	17”

## Voyageur (6–10 racers)

The voyageur canoe class celebrates First Nations and Canadian heritage. Teams of 6 or more are allowed based on the following specifications. There are two main types, the heritage model with an upturned bow and stern and a more recent style of faster, leaner craft. The main example of the latter is Kisseynew Precipice. The heritage models include Clipper Langley and Voyageur II.

Overall length	24-42’
Min depth at gunnels	18”
Min width at 6” waterline for boat length 24-28’	36.25”
Min width at 6” waterline for boat length 28-34’	44”
Min width at 6” waterline for boat length 34-42’	48”



VISIT OUR SITE FOR MORE ABOUT THE RACE  
[yukonriverquest.com](http://yukonriverquest.com)