



07 06 2025

LITHUANIAN WATER TOURISM MARATHON “MERKIS MARATHON 2025” REGULATIONS

1. Objectives

To promote paddling as a sport, leisure and healthy lifestyle, to identify the strongest crews in different classes, to attract participants from abroad and to promote the name of the Republic of Lithuania internationally, to introduce the participants of the marathon to the beauty of the Dzūkija National Park and the Varena District.

2. Definitions

2.1 Merkys Marathon - a paddling race in which crews in different classes compete to find out who can cover the distance from the start to the finish line the fastest.

2.2 The marathon course - the course of the River Merkys from the start line to the finish line.

2.3 Crew – one competitor racing in a single boat or several competitors racing together in one boat.

2.4 Class of competitors – crews are divided into classes based on the number of paddlers on board, gender, and type of boat.

2.5 Start time – the time recorded by the umpire when the crew crosses the start line and begins the race.

2.6 Finish time – the time recorded by the umpire when the crew crosses the finish line.

2.7 Course completion time – the time interval between the start and finish times during which the crew completed the marathon course.

2.8 A boat - a kayak, canoe, paddleboard, or other watercraft powered solely by the physical power of the crew.

2.9 The prize winners - the three crews with the best course times in each class of competitors.

2.10 Special prize winners – the youngest and the oldest competitor, regardless of gender, who have completed the entire marathon course and crossed the finish line.

2.11 Entry fee – a fixed fee per crew member.

3. Crew classes

3.1 All paddling enthusiasts are welcome to Merkys Marathon, regardless of age. Paddlers under the age of 18 must have parental or team leader consent, or race in the same crew with an adult competitor. As the number of participants increases and the need arises, the division into classes may be changed.

3.2 In order to promote paddling and provide an opportunity for crews with various experience to compete for prizes, they are divided into 15 classes. Kayak crews in narrower (faster) boats compete in the Elite classes for single women (K1W) and men (K1 M), double women (K2 W), double men (K2 M) and mixed (K2 Mix). Kayak crews in wider (slower) boats compete in the same Tourist classes. The widths of the kayak hulls are indicated in the table below.

Class	Crew	Boat	Start time
K1 Elite M	Men	any type of single kayak up to 51 cm wide	personal
K1 Elite W	Women	any type of single kayak up to 51 cm wide	personal
K2 Elite M	Two men	any type of double kayak up to 56 cm wide	personal
K2 Elite W	Two women	any type of double kayak up to 56 cm wide	personal
K2 Elite Mix	Women and men	any type of double kayak up to 56 cm wide	personal
K1 Tourist M	Men	any type of single kayak wider than 51 cm	12:04
K1 Tourist W	Women	any type of single kayak wider than 51 cm	12:04
K2 Tourist M	Two men	any type of double kayak wider than 56 cm	12:06

K2 Tourist W	Two women	any type of double kayak wider than 56 cm	12:06
K2 Tourist Mix	Women and men	any type of double kayak wider than 56 cm	12:06
SUP W	Women	any type of paddleboard	12:00
SUP M	Men	any type of paddleboard	12:00
C1	Women / men	any type of single canoe	12:08
C2	Women / men	any type of double canoe	12:08
UNK - unknown	Women / men	any type of boat with unlimited crew (raft, rowboat, homemade boat and other)	12:02

3.3 K1 and K2 kayaks can be paddled using only a two-bladed paddle. SUP, C1 and C2 canoes can be paddled using only a single-bladed paddle. All boats can be powered using only the physical strength of the crew. Kayaks cannot be modified in such a way as to obviously meet the requirements of another class, even though they could not be classified in that class based on their original characteristics.

3.4 The crew and boat cannot be changed during the race.

3.5 Crew may be disqualified for failure to comply with these rules.

4. Registration

4.1 Once the organizers announce the start of registration, the crew should submit pre-entry application. Applications can be submitted up until the day of the race, but the entry fee increases significantly if you register later.

4.2 Pre-entry application must clearly indicate: the name and surname of each crew member, year of birth, e-mail address, phone number, country represented, club, organization or team represented (optional), class in which they going to race, whether they will want to rent a kayak (only for Tourist class), whether they will need a shuttle service from the finish to the start (more information in the Logistics section). In case of any doubts, the crew can contact the organizers using the specified contacts for assistance. Crews still have the option to race without a pre-entry application, by arriving directly at the start registration, but paying a significantly higher start fee.

Dear friends, in our sincere efforts to organize the marathon in a quality manner, to ensure sufficient amount of prizes and meals, and organizing transportation for crews, we need to know the number of crews and their needs as early as possible. We kindly ask for your understanding and encourage you to register by submitting pre-entry application.

4.3 Upon arrival at the race start location, crews must register at the start registration, confirming their arrival, receiving a start number and information about their assigned start time.

5. Entry fee

5.1 After submitting pre-entry application, the crew pays a entry fee **for each crew member**. The pre-entry application becomes effective upon receipt of the payment order by the organizers. The Merkys Marathon is a non-profit event. The entry fee is required for partially cover the costs of event.

Entry fee per crew member	Pre-entry before 31 05 2025	25 eur
Entry fee per crew member	Pre-entry from 01 06 2025 to 06 06 2025	30 eur
Entry fee per crew member	Without pre-entry on 07 06 2025	40 eur

5.2 The entry fee should be paid by bank transfer to the account: IBAN account LT877300010116134650, "Swedbank" AB, Konstitucijos 20A, Vilnius, SWIFT code: HABALT22. The recipient - Active leisure club "4 ELEMENTS". The payment purpose must include First Name / Last Name / Merkys Marathon.

5.3 If the crew doesn't arrive to the race or disqualified, the entry fee will not be refunded.

6. Completing the course

6.1 The start line of the Merkys marathon - Old Varena Bridge (54.24564737464226, 24.553113451126393). The finish line - Puvočiai campsite near the village of Puvočiai, at the confluence of the Grūda and Merkys rivers, Varėna district municipality (54.12029674811841, 24.308471143711294). The length of the course is approximately 32 km.

6.2 Crews racing only in the Merkys River bed. No portages allowed. Any shortening of the course distance by the crew moving on land is prohibited. An exception may be made only if the river is blocked by fallen trees or other obstacles that cannot be overcome in any other way except by land.

6.3 Any assistance from outsiders or technical equipment to racing crews is not permitted.

6.4 Crews must organize their meals and liquids in such a way that no litter enters the river. Littering - strictly prohibited. Part of the Merkis River is located in the Dzūkija National Park.

6.5 Crews must race honourably and fairly. Unsportsmanlike conduct is prohibited. For unsportsmanlike conduct, the organizers may restrict the crew's ability to participate in the following year's Merkys Marathon, and may also impose a time penalty and adjust the final position.

7. Logistic and accommodation

7.1 For crews from further cities or countries, we recommend to arrive on Friday, 06 06 2025. Overnight stays are not allowed at the start location in Senoji Varena. Overnight stays are allowed at the finish location, at the Puvočiai campsite (We ask to purchase a Dzūkija National Park visitor ticket).

You can do this: <https://dnp.lrv.lt/lt/informacija-lankytojams/lankytoju-bilietas/>

7.2 On the morning of the race, crews arriving at the start location in Senoji Varėna, to the lower car park by the river, next to the church (54.24587988036156, 24.55229246474036). The lower car park next to the start zone is very small, so please arrive earlier, and after unloading your boat please move your car to the upper car park on Vytauto Street. See Appendix No. 1. ***If your boat is light enough and you can carry it about 350 meters to the start zone, we kindly ask you to park your cars immediately in the upper car park on Vytauto Street.***

7.3 Crews are advised to have their own car drivers who will be able to drive your cars from the start to the finish. Crews that do not have drivers can drive their cars from the start to the finish (Puvočiai campsite) themselves and return to the start point using the organizers' transport.

7.4 Crews or their drivers at the finish shall follow Appendix No. 3.

7.5 Crew fans can support the paddlers with smiles and applause in Perloja, near the pedestrian bridge (54.21207824265636, 24.420435742744285), where the crews will have covered about 13 km.

8. Preparation, start time and procedure

8.1 The Marathon will take place **on June 7, 2025. Starts begin at 12:00.**

8.2 Check-in at the start zone is compulsory for all crews and takes place from 8:00 to 11:30. At check-in, the crew receives a start number and is informed about its assigned start time. We recommend arrive and check-in earlier. This will help us avoid congestion and give you more time to prepare for the race, get to know and communicate with other crews.

8.3 Start numbers must be affixed by crews in such a way that they are clearly visible. If the number is glued, it must be glued to the left side of the boat. If the number is a T-shirt issued by the organizers, it must be worn by the crew member sitting at the front of the boat.

8.4 After check-in, crews with their own drivers shall bring their boats to the start zone from 8:00 to 11:30 and prepare for the start.

8.5 After check-in, crews without their own drivers shall bring boats to the start zone from 8:00 to 10:00 and prepare for the start. One crew member must leave for the finish by their own car **no later than 10:00**. We recommend to go to the finish by the route marked in Appendix No. 2. Crews leave their cars at the finish car park. The bus from the Puvočiai campsite to the start departs at exactly 11:00. ***Please do not be late. We kindly ask crews to indicate the need for transportation in the pre-registration form, as the number of seats on the bus is limited. The organizers are not responsible for late crews.***

8.6 At 11:40, a short briefing for the crews will begin at the start zone. The start procedure will be explained again and information will be provided about obstacles and safety in the river.

8.7 After the briefing, at 11:45, the crews head to the river and line up in the warm-up zone according to their start times. ***Attention, the number of entry places is limited, please do not delay.***

8.8 To provide equal conditions for all crews, crews of different classes start race **at different times, in 2-minute intervals**. The crews will be informed about the start time on check-in. It is the crew's responsibility to start on time, to follow their start order, and not to start early. Lost time will be not compensated for crews who are late for the start. **Starts start at 12:00.**

8.9 The first SUP start at 12:00. Followed by: 12:02 - UNK, 12:04 - K1 Tourist, 12:06 - K2 Tourist, 12:08 - C1 and C2 crews. From 12:10, Elite classes start in groups of 5 crews, not divided into classes. The start order of Elite crews depends on their pre-registration order (the first registered crew starts first, the last registered crew starts last).

9. Safety requirements

9.1 The Merkys is a safe river, suitable for paddlers with less experience. However, crews must make adequate judgements about distance, weather conditions, skills, clothing, drinks, and food.

9.2 Crews take personal responsibility for their health and safe behaviour on the marathon course.

9.3 Crews take personal responsibility for ensuring that in case of a capsizing, their boats remain afloat, all items in them are properly secured, will not be and will not cause pollution. The organizers are not responsible for the consequences of incidents, lost or damaged items, or injuries sustained.

9.4 Life jackets are compulsory for all crews. Crews are responsible for providing their own life jackets. For Tourist classes in rented kayaks, life jackets may be provided by the rental company. Crews not wearing life jackets will be disqualified.

9.5 All crews must have at least one fully charged phone in waterproof case (in life jacket pocket) with saved organizers' phone number.

9.6 The consumption of alcohol and other intoxicating substances by crews before and during the marathon **is strictly prohibited**. If the organizers determine a crew member visibly intoxicated, the entire crew will be disqualified, no prizes will be awarded.

9.7 The race distance is accessible to everyone, but in the event of an unforeseen situation, the crew may finish the race earlier, without reaching the finish line. Any crew that decides to finish the race earlier must inform the organizers by phone and do so in settlements where access by car is available (Perloja, Milioniškės, Mardasavas). No prizes will be awarded to crews who do not finish the race.

10. Results and awards

10.1 The results of the crews are determined by the time they complete the course. All crews that complete the marathon course are awarded with exclusive Merkys Marathon medals.

10.2 All crews who complete the marathon course will be treated to refreshments.

10.2 Prize winners and special prize winners will be additionally awarded prizes established by the organizers, sponsors and the Varėna Education, Culture and Sports Department. The awards ceremony will begin at 17.00.

10.3 The time limit for completing the marathon course is 5 hours. If the crew exceeds on the course, the organizers have the right not to record the time taken by the crew to complete the course. Any crew that exceeds the time limit on the marathon course is requested to contact the organizers by phone.

10.4 Merkys Marathon course time record - 2 hours 3 minutes 57 seconds belongs to Vytautas Mažeika and Darius Styra. It was achieved in 2008 while racing in a tourist double kayak. The crew that breaks the record will be awarded a **special prize of 200 euros established by sponsors**. If several crews break the record, the prize will be awarded to the crew with the fastest time on the course. Crews that break the record gain the right to run the marathon for free the following year.

11. Mandatory for the marathon

Every crew member and supporter must bring a good mood, a smile, and a dose of positivity to the Merkys Marathon for themselves and a friend ;)

12. Consents

By registering for the marathon, crews agree that the organizers may, at their discretion, publicly publish race protocols (indicating the names, surnames, class in which the participants are racing, the country and team represented, and the results achieved), images and footage captured by video recording devices during the event.

13. Organizers

The marathon is organized by "Lithuanian Kayak Marathon Team", Active leisure club "4 ELEMENTS" (VŠĮ "4 Stichijos") and Varena Sports Center.

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