

Lee Valley Legacy Project

Recommended Clothing & Equipment Guide

Saturday 14th March 2026

Early March conditions can be cold, and all paddlers should expect to get wet — whether through normal white water paddling, spray, or capsizing.

Our priority is that everyone stays **safe, warm, and comfortable** throughout the day.

This guide outlines what we recommend bringing.

Key Principle: Layering

Build warm layers that you are comfortable paddling in — but remember:

- Clothing **will likely get wet**
- Avoid heavy, water-absorbing materials (e.g. thick cotton hoodies)
- Bring **spare dry layers**
- Always have warm clothing ready for after paddling

The warmer you are before and after sessions, the better your experience will be.

Clothing for Paddling

You do not need specialist kayaking thermals — although they are excellent if you have them. Many items from other sports work perfectly well.

Base & Mid Layers (for warmth)

Synthetic materials are best. Avoid cotton where possible.

- Gym thermals / compression tops
- Running base layers
- Football or rugby undershirts
- Winter running sleeves
- Thermal leggings or gym tights
- Football socks or long sports socks
- Fleece (thin, close-fitting layers work best)

Build layers that allow you to move freely while staying warm.

Wetsuits & Drysuits

If you already own a wetsuit or drysuit from another sport (surfing, open water swimming, triathlon, sailing, etc.), it is a good idea to bring it.

This is especially recommended if:

- You have little or no moving water experience
- You are new to white water
- You would feel more confident with extra insulation

Wetsuits and drysuits are not ideal for racing performance, but they are excellent for training sessions where multiple swims are possible. Staying warm builds confidence and allows you to focus on learning rather than the cold.

If in doubt — bring it.

Cagouls (Cag's)

If you own a paddling cagoul, please bring it.
We will have some spare cags available if needed.

Canoe Shoes (Mandatory for Paddling)

Footwear must be worn at all times when paddling.

Rule: The upper must be thicker than the sole.

Recommended:

- Neoprene pool/beach/surf shoes (cheap and ideal — widely available in outdoor stores and supermarkets)
- Plimsolls (school-style gym shoes)

Not suitable:

- Heavy trainers
- Bulky shoes
- Highly water-absorbent footwear

Glasses

If you wear glasses, please use:

- An elasticated or neoprene retaining band

Most floating straps will help prevent loss in the event of a capsize (check before purchasing).

Bankside & Between Sessions

You will spend time standing around observing, helping, and racing. Staying warm between paddles is essential.

Please bring:

- Thick socks
- Warm hat
- Gloves
- Fleece / jumpers
- Waterproof jacket (for warmth and possible rain)
- Warm coat
- Comfortable shoes for walking around the Lee Valley site and grass areas

Layers are essential. You cool down quickly after paddling.

After Paddling

- Large towel
- Full change of warm, dry clothes
- Extra socks
- Spare base layers

There are showers and changing facilities on site.

Final Checklist

Before leaving home, ask yourself:

- ✓ Do I have warm layers for paddling?
 - ✓ Do I have spare dry clothing?
 - ✓ Do I have proper paddling footwear?
 - ✓ Do I have warm bankside clothing?
 - ✓ Do I have a towel?
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The Goal

This event is about development, confidence, and enjoyment on white water. Being properly equipped ensures you can focus on paddling — not the cold.

If you are unsure about anything, please ask in advance.

Let's be prepared, stay warm, and enjoy the day safely.