

North Bay Rowing Club presents

The 21st Petaluma River Marathon and Half-Marathon

Sunday, 31 August 2025

[2025 Petaluma River Marathon/Half-Marathon – North Bay Rowing](#)



Overview

Since 2004, the Petaluma River Marathon has served as the West Coast flat-water marathon/half marathon championship. It is one of the most beautiful and fun races on the west coast. Participants have ranged in age from 13 to near 80, in experience from ocean rowers, Olympians, and super paddlers to enthusiastic beginners, and *joie de vivre* as demonstrated by two Frenchmen with a fully stocked picnic hamper aboard their canoe. Bring plenty of water and food to get you through the race, then we'll relax together afterwards on the adjacent Foundry Wharf green with a potluck feast. The race takes advantage of:

- **Excellent conditions:** Typically cool with flat water at the start, and minimal interference with motorboat wakes.
- **Beautiful venue:** The picture above of the bends near the halfway point does not exaggerate the unique character of the river. For most of its course, the river flows through a nature preserve that conveys an impression of early California. In the foreground, competitors are amidst native plants and wildlife of a large wetland, and in the background the California coastal range rises to define the horizon.
- **Course:** The river stretches 13.1 miles from the NBRC dock near downtown Petaluma to the 100+ year-old railroad bridge near the entrance to San Pablo Bay. Accordingly, those navigating from the NBRC dock to this bridge and back will cover the standard marathon distance of 26.2 miles. Half Marathon participants will reverse their course around an orange buoy anchored that morning in the center of the river at the halfway point.

Celebration: As always, we'll recover together over shared our potluck feast and awards ceremony and, of course, hear the stories.

Eligible Craft: Practically any rowed or paddled craft as follows:

Rowing: Sliding-seat (8+, 4+, 4x, 2+, 2x, 1x), both flat and open water designs

Paddling: Kayaks (ocean & flat water); surfskis; canoes; 1, 2, and 6-person outrigger canoes; and, for the half-marathon only, stand-up paddleboards

Registration and Entry Fees: Registration dates and details are all online at [Regatta Central](#).

Waiver: All participants (or, for Juniors, their parents) **MUST READ and SIGN a [waiver](#)**. You can collect signatures for your ENTIRE boat on one form. Please print and bring with you OR we will have a copy available at check-in. No boat will receive their bow number without a completed waiver.

Boat Rentals:

A limited fleet of boats are available to rent on request. Please inquire at PetalumaRiverMarathon@gmail.com

Parking:

There is ample parking for athletes and car toppers in the Parking lot of the **Foundry Wharf 625 2nd Street, Petaluma, CA**. Our few spots for boat trailers will be reserved in the order requested (Email: PetalumaRiverMarathon@gmail.com). If you arrive before the day of the race and would like to go out to practice on Friday or Saturday, please contact PetalumaRiverMarathon@gmail.com

Directions to NBRC boatyard:

From San Francisco & Marin County (Northbound 101)

Take exit 472A Kastania Rd to Petaluma Blvd South. Use the middle lane to turn right on Kastania. Immediate left on Petaluma Blvd S. Follow along the river, through the traffic circle and continue along the boulevard. Right on H St. (just after the Buckhorn Tavern). Right on 2nd St. Parking lot to the Foundry Wharf is on the left hand side at the end of the block.

From Sonoma County and North (Southbound 101)

Take exit for Lakeville Highway/CA-116. Right at Lakeville off the exit ramp. Left at East D Street, cross over the train tracks and the Petaluma River. Turn left on 2nd St. Parking lot to the Foundry Wharf is on the left hand side at the end of the block.

Spectators:

There is limited space to view the regatta within the boatyard. We respectfully request any spectators stay out of the boatyard due to congestion. Only NBRC volunteers and boat entries will be allowed on the dock.

We have many walking trails along the river should you want to enjoy the river from the shore.

[Petaluma River Park](#) is just around the corner at D St & Copeland. Park and walk along the river trail. You will have a viewing of the start/finish line from the opposite side of the river from NBRC.

[Alman Marsh](#) is located just past the Sheraton at 745 Baywood Drive, Petaluma, CA, 94954 will offer views of the river just past the train bridge.

[Shollenberger Park](#) at 1400 Cader Lane, Petaluma, CA, 94954 also offers views of the river from the river trail.

[Gilardi's Lakeville Marina](#) at 5684 Lakeville Highway, Petaluma is a good place to view the half-marathon turnaround as well as marathoners as they head out and back. Sundrop Sauna now has a semipermanent sauna and plunge out there. There's also a picnic table and restrooms.

You can also enjoy waterfront dining while waiting along the Petaluma River Turning Basin just upriver from NBRC.

Our post race potluck will be located on the Foundry Wharf Green at the North end of the parking lot. There is a small viewing point of the start/finish line at this location as well.

Contact: Email PetalumaRiverMarathon@gmail.com

RACE INFO

LIMITED ON-RIVER SUPPORT (3 launches, 13 miles). All participants must be fit, have proven ability to steer a proper course, and have the experience to safely handle any unexpected problems. First-time participants, are strongly advised **NOT** to attempt the **full marathon** unless they, including ALL members of their crew, have completed at least one training outing of that distance in less than 4.5 hours (note: the launch at the Full marathon turn around will return upstream beginning about 2.5 hours after the last full marathon boat starts: any remaining outbound participants will be required, without exception, to turn home as they are met by the launch). Similarly, Half Marathon SUP entrants must be able to paddle 13 miles in less than 3.5 hours.

All crews must carry a cell phone in a waterproof pouch. Please take note of the numbers below.

General regatta assistance [Jon Long \(415\) 609-6445](#)

Medical assistance [Kevin Hamann \(707\) 494-7342](#)

2025 Petaluma River Marathon

Check in opens at 5:30 am at North Bay Rowing Club.

Park and prepare boats in the **Foundry Wharf lot (625 2nd Street, Petaluma, CA)**

NBRC will provide bow numbers to affix to your boat. You will also receive a bib to affix to your bow person. **Please take note of your number. It will aid greatly in start timing and accurate time keeping.**

For the benefit of the Full Marathon participants, we operate the race in two shifts. Barring delay due heavy fog the schedule will be as follows . . .

Full Marathon: Safety Meeting at 6:10am, launching immediately thereafter.

Half Marathon: Safety Meeting at 7:00am, launching after in groups as directed.

Safety Meeting:

In addition to 2 in-person safety meetings the morning of the regatta, **we will also be offering a zoom safety meeting at 7pm on Wednesday August 27th.** All materials presented and a recording will be posted for review at your convenience.

Course: (please reference maps at end of packet)

Launch & Warm Up: (Figure 2) Space will be limited on the dock. We ask that everyone wait in the yard until they are called to the dock to launch to avoid congestion (and having to hold your boat for an extended time). Please make as many adjustments as possible before heading to the dock. **Boats will launch heading upstream towards the D Street Bridge and Turning Basin. Please stay on the dock side of the river after launching and give way to any boats proceeding towards the start line.** Once you are clear, proceed upriver for a brief warm up turning either before the D Street Bridge or in the Turning Basin. Boats must approach the start line in bow number order for accurate time keeping. Once you have passed the start line and the dock, make your way to the correct side of the river.

Our river has many curves that can surprise even the most skilled navigator, especially for the first two miles of the course. Please refer to maps at the end of the packet for visuals.

Full Marathoners: Proceed to the rotating historic railroad bridge at 38.11194 N, 122.50145 W (~13.1 miles downstream) and return.

Half Marathoners: Proceed to the orange buoy in the center of the channel at 38.1831 N, 122.5437 W (~6.5 miles downstream of NBRC, and ~1 mile downstream of Lakeville) and return.

Traffic pattern: **KEEP STARBOARD SIDE NEAR SHORE AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING TURNS TO PORT**, and avoid the middle of the river. Be prepared to give a wide berth to tugs/barges without hesitation (although never seen in action on Labor Day Weekend). Yield to any passing marathon boats. Watch for blind turns and be mindful of each other.

Finish: Proceed through the finish line past the dock staying on the far side of the river for time keeping. You can turn safely past the finish line and proceed to the dock. There will be help to carry equipment back up to the boatyard if needed.

The finish will be marked with a horn. Please keep going past the dock until you hear the horn sound.

On Water Support: We will have course monitors/launches on the river to help at ~ miles 3, 6.5, and 13.

Tides & Weather:

Please reference [Rowing Conditions – North Bay Rowing](#) for local tide & weather conditions.

Time Keeping & Results: Results will be posted on CrewTimer.

Course Records: We do our best to capture new race records [here](#).

Medals & Awards:

1st place medals will be awarded per category regardless of number of entries.

2nd & 3rd place medals will ONLY be awarded if you beat another entry (ie. 3rd place awarded if there are 4 boats or more entered in category).

Each athlete completing the FULL marathon will receive a commemorative glass.

Nutrition and Hydration: The half marathon can be as short at 1.5 hours for an elite single sculler to twice that for a recreational paddler in a sea kayak. Double these times for the full marathon. The physical challenge is linked strongly to the athlete's fitness, nutrition, and critically on race day, ample hydration. Make sure to bring enough food and water. Five quarts or more of water and one to two thousand calories may be necessary during the full marathon.

For more in depth information on nutrition, hydration, and preparation please see US Rowing's [Heat & Safety Guidelines](#) as well as this [article](#) by Elizabeth (Izzie) Brown, M.S., R.D., C.S.C.S. prepared for the 2007 Petaluma River Marathon.

Thank you for joining us for this unique regatta! We hope you love the character and beauty of the Petaluma River as much as we do. It is a pleasure to call this our North Bay Rowing Club home.

COURSE MAPS

Figure 1 - Full Course Overview

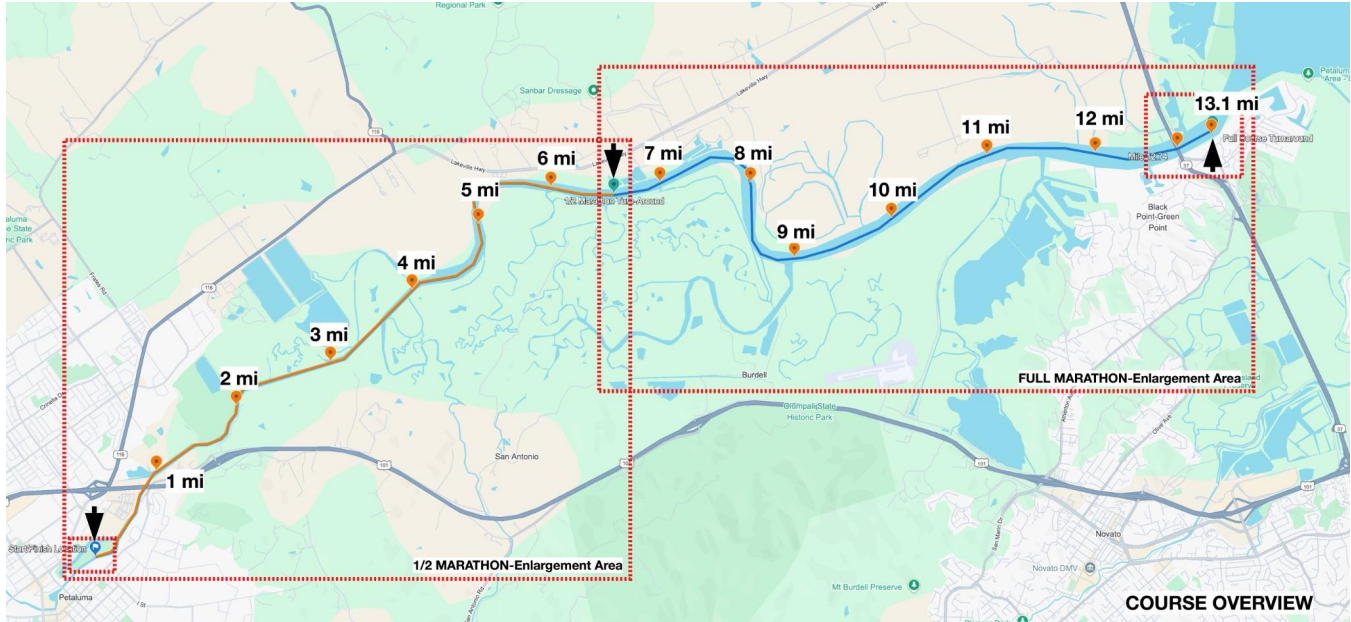


Figure 2 - Launch & Warm Up - Boats will launch heading upstream towards the D Street Bridge and Turning Basin. Please stay on the dock side of the river after launching and give way to any boats proceeding towards the start line. Once you have passed the start line and the dock, make your way to the correct side of the river. Continue past the dock to finish and turn to dock once you are clear of the finish line.

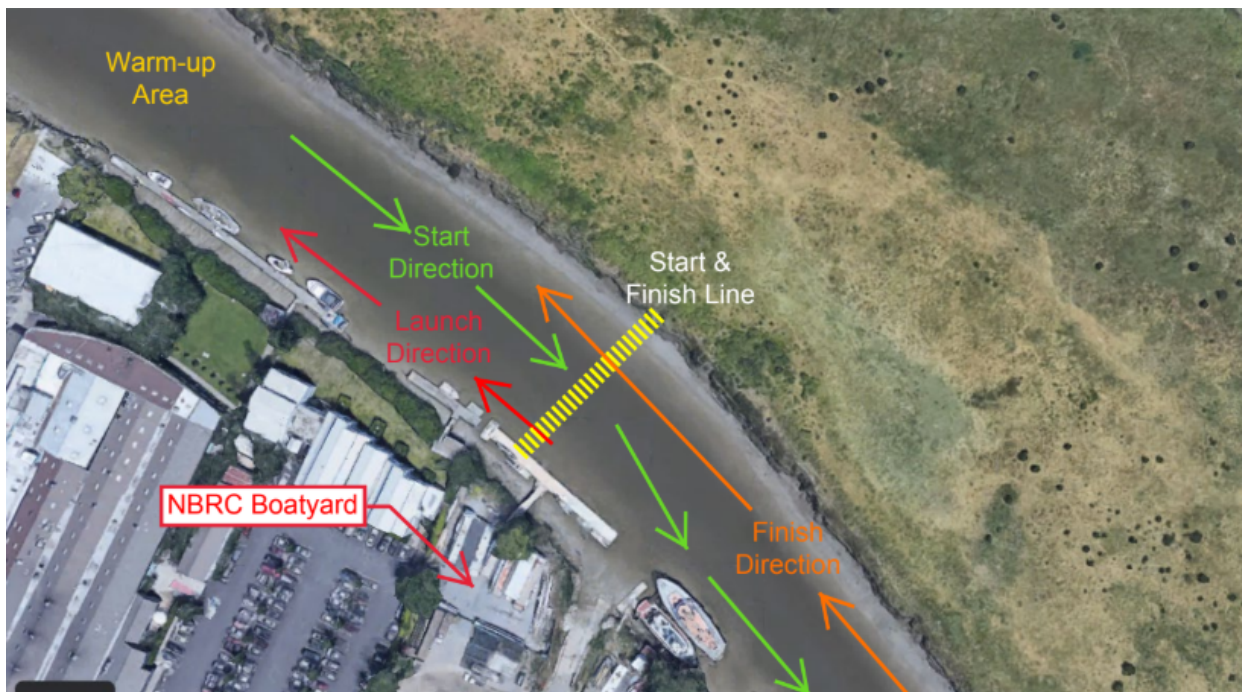


Figure 3 - Half Marathon Overview (first and last 6 miles of full)



Figure 4 - Enlargement of first 2 miles - the first 2 miles of the race require the most attention with potential obstacles/hazards.

Mile 1 - Watch for docks and fallen trees in the approach towards (and return from) the bridge. Do not cut the corner heading under the railroad bridge and watch for boat traffic from the Marina right past the bridge. Especially on your return, proceed past the Marina and back through the bridge. Make sure you don't accidentally turn up McNear Channel.

Mile 2 - There may be a large barge parked at the material yard and there is a fishing pier just beyond on the opposite side of the river. Give both a wide berth and watch out for fishing lines.



Approach to Highway 101 & the Train Bridge



Figure 5 - miles 2 - 6

There are several water outfalls in mile 3 that are especially of note for smaller boats. Allow enough space to not be caught in the current.

The ½ marathon turn around will be marked with a large orange buoy.

On the return, watch for the red nun buoys marking shallow water and stay to the river side.



Figure 6 - Overview of FULL marathon past mile 6



Figure 7 - Full marathon turn around - the full marathon will take you under Highway 37 and through the historic railroad bridge. Do NOT go past this point or you will end up in the Bay!





Turn Around point for the FULL marathon. You are halfway there!