

Over a decade delivering sporting legacy

600,000

taken part in
paddle sports



Lee Valley White Water Centre opened to the public in 2011, transforming sporting opportunities in the region and beyond. We take a look at the story of Lee Valley White Water Centre – a shining example of London 2012’s enduring sporting legacy.

Where we started

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority’s vision for a white water centre dates back to 1999. The Authority already had plans developed with the British Canoe Union (now Paddle UK), the sport’s National Governing Body for a white water venue in Lee Valley to capitalise on interest in the sport in London and the surrounding region.

We were involved in every stage of the development of Lee Valley White Water Centre, from the earliest ideas through to construction, to ensure it would deliver a lasting legacy.

Learning the lessons of other Olympic white water centres, the Authority decided, in conjunction with British Canoe Union and partners, to create a second white water course which would broaden participation in white water sports and provide a development pathway to build the skills and experience to tackle the Olympic course.

Loved by athletes

often rated best
in the world



5,700+

participated in
funded programmes



1,500

free event tickets for
community groups



4

major international
events



An early legacy for London 2012

In April 2011, Lee Valley White Water Centre became the first and only brand new London 2012 venue to open before the Games, giving members of the public the unique opportunity to try an Olympic venue ahead of the Games.

That year alone the venue drew 155,000 visitors, welcomed over a hundred school groups and generated £2 million in revenue – setting the bar for London 2012's sporting legacy.

Legacy impact

Lee Valley White Water Centre made history for a second time when it re-opened to the public just six weeks after the Games.

Post London 2012 Lee Valley White Water Centre, set within the picturesque River Lee Country Park, established itself as a world class visitor attraction offering adrenalin charged sports, with white water rafting as the most popular activity, alongside canoeing and kayaking on the two courses.

The programme at the venue has expanded to offer a whole host of activities from Rodeo Rafting to Hydrospeeding, Paddleboarding, Hot Dog kayaking, an inflatable Water Wipeout course, open water swimming and fitness classes.

Accessibility

- World class facilities available to everyone, from complete beginners paddling on the still water of the lake, novices progressing to the 160m Legacy Loop and adrenalin charged experiences on the 300m Olympic Standard Competition Course.
- 90% of the programme at Lee Valley White Water Centre is for communities, schools and clubs
- Home to Paddle UK's canoe slalom and kayak cross world class programme, providing daily water time for the GB team and a hub for talent development
- Extensive funded programmes for schools, clubs and community groups introducing new audiences to paddlesports
- A busy programme of corporate activity including hundreds of companies and organisations coming for team building, reward days and entertaining customers and clients
- The venue has appeared in a number of prime time TV shows. This commercial activity, along with the hugely popular white water rafting programme helps to ensure that the venue is economically sustainable and facilitates discounted community access – paddling on the lake starts at £7.



Home grown talent

Lee Valley White Water Centre has been developing local talent for the past 11 years, with Paddle UK's development programmes propelling local school children to winning medals on the international stage. A number of home grown talented athletes are on the trajectory for the LA and Brisbane Olympic Games.



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Bringing fans face to face with their heroes

Lee Valley White Water Centre is host to a number of major events throughout the national and international calendar, attracting elite paddlers and large crowds including annual British Championships, the ICF 2014 and 2019 Canoe Slalom World Cup and the ICF 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships, which attracted 10,000 spectators.

Most recently the venue hosted the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships in which Team GB finished top of the medal table in front of a home audience of over 10,000 spectators.



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Ongoing investment

An almost continuous investment programme since opening to keep the venue best in class such as:

2013

As a result of the centre's early success, further investment was needed to help it keep pace with demand and further enhance the visitor offer. A £6.3 million transformation project funded by the Authority, Paddle UK and other organisations included a new outdoor classroom and café, first class athlete facilities including a gym and physiotherapy suite, office space for Paddle UK, more changing rooms and additional car parking and visitor facilities.

2023

£300,000 kayak cross starting ramp, the first of its kind anywhere in the world to be installed on a permanent basis. The ramp was funded by the Authority, Paddle UK, UK Sport and Sport England and ensures that our venue is at the forefront of this new discipline which debuted at the Paris 2024 Games and saw Team GB's Joe Clarke MBE and Kimberley Woods win silver and bronze medals.



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Venue facts

- **300m Olympic Standard Competition Course** used for rafting and other adrenalin charged activities as well as competitions and daily training for Paddle UK's slalom kayak cross team
- **160m Legacy Loop** designed to improve the skills of canoeists and kayakers so they can eventually graduate to performing at a higher level and navigate the more demanding Olympic Course
- **10,000m² lake** which feeds water to the two pumped courses and is where events and training sessions take place, particularly those aimed at novice paddlers
- Conference and meeting facilities plus a large café and bar
- Designed by FaulknerBrowns
- Designated London and South East base for Fire and Emergency Services to deliver water safety rescue training.



During the London 2012 Olympics, Lee Valley White Water Centre



Hosted 5 days of intense
canoe slalom events



Watched by
60,000 people



Team GB took Gold and Silver
in a sensational historic final
day of competition.

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Like more info?

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Bringing you

LV Lee Valley
For nature, sport and discovery