



O U R C s

Captains' Meeting Minutes

7pm Monday 5th week Hilary Term

17th February 2020

Habakkuk Room, Jesus College

Chair: Tina Christmann, OUWBC President

1. Welcome

Attendance:

College Boat Clubs: 64

Squads: 4

Senior Umpires: 1

OURCs Committee: 11

Additional observers (no voting rights): 19

Total voting body: 80

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- Available at <http://ourcs.co.uk/>

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising

4. Torpids Discussion – Joe Lord and Rachel Quarrell to speak

40mm of rain was predicted over the weekend. Only half of that actually happened, but it's still about twice the amount that will definitely be gone from the river in time for racing. If the flow doesn't drop low enough for the locks to come off red boards, the moored houseboats on the bungline stretch can't move. The Harbour Master's Notice to move them comes into effect on Tuesday. If the boats haven't managed to leave by then and it is still red boards, they probably won't be able to be moved. We can clear a couple of boats from the very top of the stretch to clear the normal top two bunglines, and run with the five higher bungline locations to still have half division racing if that happens. We should have a decent idea of whether the boats will be able to move by Sunday or just after.

As was emailed out on Monday, there is no chance of the river being low enough for racing by Friday for Rowing On, so it has been cancelled. On the off-chance that it is rowable by Sunday, the contingency Rowing On date, it was felt that the training time would be of more use to clubs to make their own decisions about safety than running Friendly Rowing On. Therefore Rowing On will not be running on Sunday either.

If the moored boats are able to move and the conditions (and number of entries) allow, there is a possibility of running some full divisions and some half divisions with higher crews racing in larger divisions. However, this depends on the conditions during the week. The stream needs to drop for this to be possible. The current prediction for 6th week is quite windy at the moment. If

the conditions dictate, the racing will have to be in half divisions and potentially with only Senior status coxes. For the purposes of coxing eligibility in high stream, Novice coxes who have been granted permission to race Torpids will be grouped with X status coxes (i.e. not allowed to cox on very high stream).

If the move is made to go completely to half divisions (which is very likely), expect them to run half-hourly from 12pm-5pm. If there are below 31 entered (and not withdrawn) crews for each gender, all divisions will be half divisions, even if the conditions would allow the higher divs to be full divisions. There are spaces for 11 divisions, which will be the top two divisions and top half of the third division for both genders (referred to as 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 3a). The gender with more entries will also have division 3b run (the bottom half of division 3) as the 11th division. If the numbers of entries are so low that divisions have no-one in, the racing would still start at 12pm but would finish earlier to use the light better and leave the boatmen more time to fix any damaged equipment overnight.

If the vote is for “Pseudo-Torpids”, the Senior Umpires will only run it in half divisions.

Any changes to the plan will be communicated two days in advance of racing. The aim will be for 48 hours’ notice (announcements at 10am on Monday for the Wednesday and so forth), but this may depend on the availability of individuals such as the EA Lock Keeper at Iffley Lock who need to be consulted on changes. Decisions should be made and communicated out by early afternoon.

5. Pseudo-Torpids rule insertion

Motion for consideration by the captains: friendly amendments will be entertained

In A3.17. Finishing Order

- a. *The finishing order of a division, subject to revisions following the awarding of penalty bumps, technical bumps, and technical row-overs, shall be:*
 - i. *In Torpids, the same as the starting order except that any crews which have been bumped are moved below the crew(s) which have bumped them*
 - ii. *In Eights, the same as the starting order except that the two boats involved in each bump shall exchange places.*
- b. *The final finishing order for the event should include crews that were ‘not entered’ or withdrawn as set out in [A3.8](#) reinserted with the correct number of places forfeited and other crews moved down the necessary number of places. In the event of there being more than one crew to reinsert, the crews should be reinserted starting from the Head of the River and working downwards.*
- c. *Composite crews shall be removed from the final finishing order with any non-composite crews moved up in order to fill their place.*

Insert A3.17.a.iii. For Torpids 2020, the same as the starting order, adjusted for any penalty bumps issued to crews during Torpids 2020 by means of placing a crew one place lower in the finish order than the start order for each penalty bump suffered. This rule will expire after the publication of the Finish Order for Torpids 2020.

Proposed: Joe Lord (OURCs/Torpids Race Secretary)

Seconded: Rachel Quarrell (Senior Umpire)

Friendly Amendment: The new rule should be **A3.17.b.i.** as it was mistakenly suggested to be in the section regarding the daily finish order, rather than the final Finish Order.

The captains asked for the number of Penalty Bumps awarded in most years. It was anecdotally reported to be maybe 3-4, though it will be higher in years when there are many klaxons as "incompetence leading to a klaxon" is automatically a penalty bump. It was pointed out that there are fewer appeals etc. in half divisions. For example, on Saturday of Torpids 2018 (half divisions, X and S coxes only) there was only one appeal and no penalty bumps.

Concerns were raised that this would disincentivise racing as crews who do well still maintain their position, and crews who get penalty bumps move down. Therefore the only way crews can move is down. It was pointed out that penalty bumps are only given out for unsafe behaviour, so only crews who are unsafe would move down. Penalty bumps have exactly the same role as in competitive years in this way.

A query was raised about withdrawals of higher boats on the day: If, for example, a college's M1 wanted to withdraw on the day, could it do so and the M2 still race? The answer is yes, though for withdrawals on the day, the withdrawn crew will drop a number of places decided by the Event Committee. If the M1 were withdrawn on safety grounds but the M2 were still considered safe, it will possibly be hard to convince the Event Committee that M2 rowers could not be subbed into the M1 to make it safe.

Empty bunglines will not be left for withdrawn crews (unless they withdraw very late before the start. For withdrawals on the day, crews will be moved up to fill the gap and an empty bungline left at the bottom of the division. For crews withdrawing on the bungline, the crew will be moved out of the race area and their bungline left empty.) There is no universally accepted way of dealing with large numbers of withdrawals fairly. If, for example, the crew on bungline 2 withdraws, not leaving a gap makes it much easier for the crew on bungline 3 to bump the crew on bungline 1 than normal. On the other hand, leaving a gap makes it much harder for the crew on bungline 3 to get a bump. Taken to its most extreme case, leaving bunglines empty could lead to divisions with only one or two crews at opposite ends of the division who have no chance of catching the boat ahead.

Some captains wanted to know the number of crews withdrawing (and where) before voting on whether the results should count as bad crews who withdraw maintain their position, whereas borderline crews risk doing poorly and therefore won't enter. Others wanted to know whether the results would count before withdrawing. Captains were asked informally and in a non-binding way at the beginning of the meeting whether they would withdraw each of their eligible crews to attempt to cater to both of these wishes.

Men's crews (60 total): 15 withdraw, 8 might withdraw

Women's crews (48 total): 14 withdraw, 8 might withdraw

The only way to vote on this after the scratch deadline would be to call another Captains Meeting for the end of the week.

A request was made that the OURCs committee assess crews to see if they were unsafe, avoiding the possibility of tactical withdrawals. It was remarked that the usual request is for the OURCs Committee to be less involved with college boat clubs. There is also no feasible way of assessing all eligible crews. The clubs themselves know the most about the competence of their crews and are therefore the best placed to make those calls.

Some captains questioned the point of racing if the results don't matter (or can only be bad). Various others pointed out that for many people and many clubs, the results do not matter, they simply want the opportunity to race. This is the point of making the results this year unofficial: it

removes any tactical decision making based on the crews around and results and focusses instead simply on maximising safe racing.

Allowing crews to withdraw on safety grounds without penalty will not be re-discussed. The Senior Umpires have decided to permit it and it is not going to be reversed.

Questions of the precedent for results not counting were raised as previous years with limited racing, for example Torpids 2018 (Wednesday ran in full, Thursday and Friday were cancelled, Saturday ran in half divisions). The results counted in 2018. The precedent for results not counting are the war years, though there are other cases where no racing has happened due to high stream, but records indicate "informal racing occurred". Unfortunately these are from before OURCs existed, so we do not know what this informal racing consisted of. The difference between this year and previous is the training time. It is common to lose either Michaelmas or Hilary, losing both this dramatically is unprecedented in at least 30 years, probably the last 50 from talking to boatmen.

A suggestion was made of introducing a rule for when "Pseudo-Torpids" could be applicable as this decision could be taken to set precedent for future years. It was suggested this be dealt with in a later meeting.

It was remarked that the bad weather this year has exacerbated the general level of unfairness inherent in college rowing. For the most part, the crews who have been able to train are the ones that have the money to afford to train elsewhere, giving them a distinct advantage over poorer clubs who cannot train. Pseudo-Torpids makes it a little fairer as the results will not affect the yearly results. The OURCs Secretary requested that everyone vote for the good of college rowing as a whole, not just for the good of their own club.

The question was raised of whether Pseudo-Torpids was less safe than normal Torpids. There is the possibility of running normal Torpids with some full divisions, whereas Pseudo-Torpids would only run in half divisions. Racing with half divisions makes the whole thing hugely safer. The Senior Umpires will consider whether Pseudo Torpids could be safely run with half divisions and implement more safety contingencies (e.g. S coxes only) if needed.

The possibility of an 8th week contingency is still on the table but will only be considered if no racing (Pseudo or otherwise) takes place in 6th week. It is unlikely that the delay would make much difference to the competence of crews as they would have an absolute maximum of 9 days more training, likely less.

It was suggested that the results of Division 1 should count and the rest of the regatta run as Pseudo-Torpids. This raises an issue of what would happen to the Sandwich boat at the bottom of divisions and could lead to arbitrary barriers in the middle of divisions due to withdrawals, which crews could not move through.

The question of what would happen to crews in the bottom half of division 3 in the event of half divisions was raised. It was explained that half division racing would be for the 31/37 highest non-withdrawn crews, not just those finishing sufficiently high last year. If crews from the higher divisions withdraw, crews from lower divisions would shuffle up to fill their place. The point of half divisions is not to cut the lower divisions because being at the bottom of division 3 does not mean a crew is inherently unsafe. It is simply that there is not enough time to run all of the divisions as halves.

A request was made that lower boats that did not get the chance to race get a friendly race later in term. This is a possibility, but best discussed in a later meeting.

Clarification was requested as to just how far a crew could drop due to withdrawn crews. For example, if all of the boats who finished last year on bunglines 3-7 withdrew, the boat finishing on bungline 8 ("crew B") would start immediately behind the boat that finished on bungline 2 (Crew A"). If B bumped A, crew B would keep bungline 2, the withdrawn crews would be reinserted on bunglines 3-7 and crew A would finish on bungline 8. There is no limit on how far crews could fall from a single bump based on the number of withdrawn crews.

It was suggested that while crews in lower divisions do not want to drop 10 places, bumps in division 1 only happen every few years and it seems unfair to rob crews of such rare bumps. As such, an amendment was suggested that division 1 of each gender should count to the results, with division 2 and below being "Pseudo-Torpids".

Amendment declared Unfriendly.

The proposer and seconder were advised that careful thought needed to be given to whether "division 1" refers to the Finishing position from the previous year or the starting position, including any withdrawals.

Unfriendly Amendment: The top 12 crews from the 2019 Finish Order shall have their results count. All lower crews shall race Pseudo-Torpids. Withdrawals from the top 12 crews shall result in empty bunglines being left in the division. The crews finishing on bungline 1 of division 2 and below shall not move up into division 1, regardless of withdrawals.

Proposed: Alex Jobson (Pembroke)

Seconded: Edward Smith (Pembroke)

Votes in favour: 21

Opposed: 46

Abstentions: 13

Amendment fails

It was suggested that the Headship could still be awarded, even if the results did not carry over from year to year. This can be considered in a later meeting.

Final motion to be voted on:

Insert A3.17.b.i. For Torpids 2020, the finishing order shall be the same as the starting order, adjusted for any penalty bumps issued to crews during Torpids 2020 by means of placing a crew one place lower in the finish order than the start order for each penalty bump suffered. This rule will expire after the publication of the Finish Order for Torpids 2020.

Votes in favour: 45

Opposed: 24

Abstentions: 10

Motion passes

Torpids 2020 shall be run as "Pseudo-Torpids" and as such will run in half divisions.

6. COUR Rule Change discussion

2.7.r. Launches are forbidden to transit locks under red boards

i. Under 1.11.a.i., this rule cannot be changed or removed without the consent of COUR.

2.7.s. Launches may only transit locks under yellow boards following the submission and acceptance of a written risk assessment for the transit to the Rowing Sabbatical Officer. The Senior Member of the College Boat Club and the Bursar of the college must also receive a copy of the Risk Assessment.

i. Under 1.11.a.i., this rule cannot be changed or removed without the consent of COUR.

These rules were brought in by COUR at their meeting in 2nd week and cannot be altered other than by COUR, but any feedback from the Captains will be passed on at the next COUR meeting.

The RowSab will attempt to review any Risk Assessments as quickly as possible, but please give a decent amount of time for the review and acceptance of risk assessments (e.g. a Risk Assessment submitted the evening before a morning transit is not going to be approved in time). The boatmen have also requested that they be kept in the loop regarding transits etc.

No comments from Captains.

7. Transfers under A1.2a

Objections may only be made on the grounds that:

- *Athlete is not a member of the college they are transferring from*
- *Athlete has never been a member of the college they are transferring to*

- a. **William Bunce – Wadham to Brasenose**
- b. **Mark Verhagen – Linacre (Nuffield) to Trinity**
- c. **Sam Woor – Wolfson (St Cross) to Regent's Park**
- d. **Anna Carbery – LMH to Pembroke**

All papers in order

No objections

8. Transfers under A1.2a.v

A1.2a.v: Transfers have effect from the end of the Captain's Meeting at which they are announced by the OURCs Sabbatical Officer. The student will no longer be eligible to row with college A in OURCs events except as an associate member, unless they transfer back to the college where they are currently a bona fide student or visiting student.

Objections may only be made on the grounds that:

- *Athlete is not a member of the college they are transferring from*
- *Athlete has never been a member of the college they are transferring to*

- a. **Tom Commins – Jesus to Magdalen (papers in order)**

Tom is a current student at Magdalen College who transferred to Jesus Boat Club last academic year (under A1.2a) and now wishes to race with his current college's boat club.

No objections

9. Transfers under A1.2c

Requires no valid objections and simple majority to pass

Objections may only be made on the grounds that:

- *Athlete is not a bone fide student or visiting student of the college they are transferring from*
- *Athlete was a bone fide student (in accordance with University Statute II) of a different college during their time as an associate of the club they wish to transfer to*
- *Athlete had rowed previously to being an associate member of the club they wish to transfer to*
- *Athlete did not compete in an OURCs event for the club they wish to transfer to*

a. **Annika Möslein** – Univ to Balliol (*papers in order*)

Annika learned to row with Balliol as a visiting student. She is now a bone fide student under University Statute II of Univ and would like to transfer back to the club she learned with.

No objections

Votes in favour: 69

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 11

Transfer granted

10. Extension of Student Status

Simple majority to pass

- a. Luke Svasti (Linacre) expects to have his viva at some point in February. In the case of early Leave to Supplicate, he would like his student status extended so that he can race in Torpids as a full member. As their X status cox, he would hopefully be coxing their M1.

Proposed: Lauren Wilburn (Linacre)

Seconded: Martin Kraemer (Linacre)

- b. Michael Ben Yehuda (Lincoln) expects to receive Leave to Supplicate some time in February. He would like his student status extended so that he can race in Torpids as a full member. He is not entered into a crew for Torpids but the club would like to have as much flexibility for subs as possible.

Proposed: Martin Gazi (Lincoln)

Seconded: John Sheridan (Lincoln)

Voted on as a slate

Votes in favour: 71

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 9

Extension of student status granted

11. Permission for an Associate to row in a Senior Division

Simple majority to pass

- a. Katherine Ferris wishes to row in Trinity W1 (Division 2) in Torpids. Trinity only have enough rowers for one women's Eights, so W1 is their lowest women's crew.

Proposed: Kate Adams (Trinity)

Seconded: Edward Staniforth (Trinity)

Votes in favour: 26

Opposed: 17

Abstentions: 37

Permission granted

- b. St Catherine's would like Giovanna Granata to row in W1 (Division 2) in Torpids. If the permission is not granted, then the other options are a novice who cannot row at high rates without the risk of catching a crab, or a rower with three terms of experience who has not rowed this year and is a little reluctant to race having not rowed in so long.

Proposed: Abby Hesse (St Catherine's)

Seconded: Shane McCarthy (St Catherine's)

Votes in favour: 14

Opposed: 24

Abstentions: 42

Permission denied

12. Ratification of OURCs Webmaster – Joe Lord to speak

- Ty Rallens (Merton/OURCs)

Abstentions: 1

Ratified

13. Strategy Subcommittee discussion – Joe Lord to speak

An unofficial subcommittee is being formed to come up with ideas as to how to maximise training in other years hit by floods (for example, boat sharing at off-Isis training locations). This will probably be less official than other subcommittees, possibly a Facebook group or similar. Please email the OURCs Secretary with any ideas.

14. Isis Spring League discussion – Jo Egan to speak

Due to the lack of training time and IWLs in Michaelmas and Hilary, OURCs will be attempting to run an "Isis Spring League" at the beginning of Trinity term to give crews and coxes practice of the racing line before Summer Eights.

When this has been run in previous years, it does not count for points and is run very cheaply – at cost or below. The aim would be to do the same thing this time.

The plan would be to run on Sunday of 2nd week (3rd May) or 3rd week (10th May). The 2nd week date is earlier in term and a more usual date for regattas, but does clash with Wallingford Regatta. Several clubs indicated they were considering racing at Wallingford.

A captain asked whether the event could be cancelled in favour of training time if the poor weather continued. The Senior Umpires and OURCs Committee will take it under consideration, though training time is always less of an issue in the summer than in the winter as all clubs can train in the evenings as much as they want. In addition, more crews can race on high flag than can train.

The captains indicated by informal show of hands they would prefer 3rd week to 2nd week.

Isis Spring League River Closure

Sunday 10th May (3rd Week Trinity) – 12:00 until Closing Time or End of Racing

Proposed: Jo Egan (OURCs)

Seconded: Joe Lord (St Benet's/OURCs)

Votes in favour: 74

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 6

Motion passes

15. AOB

- a. **OURCs Secretary Election** – Joe Lord to speak
Due to Finals, Joe Lord is stepping down as Secretary next term. Please talk to your clubs to see if anyone is interested in taking over. It would involve being Race Secretary for Summer Eights (and ISL if possible). Get them to email the Secretary to find out more.
- b. **RowSab Election** – Jo Egan to speak
The aim is to hold interviews later this term, with the election either at the end of this term or the beginning of next term depending on the exact timings of the interviews (to be confirmed soon). If anyone has any questions about the role or is interested, please get in touch with the Sab.
- c. **Torpids Racedesk** – Jo Egan to speak
Please come along and help out. If you think you might be interested on one of the roles but don't want to commit, come and see what Race Desk is like.
In particular, anyone who has an RYA Powerboat Level 2 qualification and would be interested in launch driving for the regatta, please get in touch with either Secretary or Sab – it can be as much or as little as you want to do.
- d. **World Class Start** – Ben Reed to speak
World Class Start is a BR programme to find people who have the potential to be Olympic rowers, in particular those not currently doing rowing as a sport. They would appreciate the help of clubs to find strong athletes (who are not rowers) who could transfer to rowing. Contact details for Ben Reed (based in Reading) are on the BR website. They are looking to organise testing days at Iffley Gym. The programme is open to heavyweight rowers with a minimum height of 178cm for women and 188cm for men.

e. **Reading rowing** – Ben Reed to speak

Reading Rowing Club are happy for competent crews to row at reading when the club is satisfied that conditions are rowable (i.e. the club is rowing). They have been training there for most of the winter when the Isis was not rowable. Get in touch with either Ben or the Sab (who has Ben's contact details) if clubs would like to organise training there.