



# Oxford University Rowing Clubs

## Event and Safety Plan

### Torpids 2020

#### Introduction

Torpids is a rowing event comprising four days racing from Wednesday to Saturday of 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> week in Hilary term (depending on the date of the Women's Head of the River Race), with a qualifying session (Rowing On) held the preceding Friday. This year Torpids will ideally occur from the 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> February, with Rowing On ideally held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February.

We would also ask for several provisional dates should conditions be unsuitable on the ideal dates:

Rowing On: Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

8<sup>th</sup> Week Torpids: 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March

If conditions are unsuitable on both Rowing On dates, Torpids shall run without Rowing On divisions.

The 8<sup>th</sup> week Torpids dates shall only be used if no racing has occurred during the ideal Torpids dates.

Competitors are subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety as specified by the Senior Umpires and Race Secretary.

**Rowing On:** This is a timed race from Longbridges to Christ Church Meadow. The event is run as a processional race, with crews set off at regular intervals in divisions (subject to entry levels), with the first division usually starting at 1:30pm. The fastest crews covering the course then qualify for Torpids proper.

**Torpids:** Racing occurs between 12 noon and 5.30pm. The course is upstream within the stretch from Iffley Lock to Folly Bridge. Racing is split into 11 divisions, normally each of 13 boats, racing at approximately 30 minute intervals. The aim of racing is to catch up with the boat in front and gain a 'bump'. On gaining a bump, crews move out of the way and cease racing. Boats which are bumped or fail to gain a bump must continue racing until the finish line.

This plan details the logistics of both events - Rowing On and Torpids - and the precautions taken to ensure smooth and safe running. Precautions are made based on Risk Assessments which identify all possible hazards and resulting risks, highlight the controls in place to reduce the risks, and identify those responsible for ensuring the controls are in place.

These Risk Assessments are attached as *Appendix A* (Rowing On) and *Appendix B* (Torpids) of this Event Plan.

This event plan exists in addition to the OURCs General Rules of Racing and rules of Bumping Races. The event plan and risk assessments will be reviewed annually by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer, Race Secretary, and the Senior Umpires before submission to the University of Oxford authorities and the Environment Agency.

#### Race Management

##### Summary of Race Officials

The races – both Rowing On and Torpids - are run by the OURCs Committee, using the following system:

- i) **Race Secretary** - coordinates racing and is responsible for event and race safety. For this event, the Race Secretary will be Joe Lord, who can be contacted on **07341-500865** or [secretary@ourcs.co.uk](mailto:secretary@ourcs.co.uk).
- ii) **Event Committee** - help the Race Secretary with coordination of racing and event safety.
- iii) **Race Desk** – located Longbridges Boat House, will oversee the marshals and assist the SU. An Event Committee member, usually the Race Secretary, will be present at Race Desk at all times, and can be contacted by mobile phone (**07341-500865**) or by two-way radio.
- iv) **Post-Incident Coordinator (PIC)** — Typically the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (**07917-643030**). The IC coordinates post-incident operations (See Emergency Action Plan, Appendix E). Responsibilities to include working in close cooperation with the following people:
  - Injured person (if applicable). Their welfare, liaising with the regatta medical staff, Senior Umpires, marshals and other relevant parties (e.g. EMS, family or friends of injured party, taxi) and to gather information that must be included in the incident record and possible legal reports
  - Other involved persons such as witnesses and medical staff - To gather additional information that must be included in the incident record and possible legal reports
  - Where applicable, to ensure incident is duly reported to appropriate bodies/persons such as Sports Safety Officer, College if student, and British Rowing.
- v) **Senior Umpire (SU)** — situated near the start line for Rowing On, and in the bunglines area for Torpids. Ensures the safe and timely start of races, and oversees safety on the water during racing hours, and collaborates with the Race Secretary on the safe running of the event.
- vi) **Incident-Coordinator (IC)** – Either the on-duty Senior Umpire or someone to whom they have delegated the role, such as a non-duty SU or a senior member of the Event Committee. The IC coordinates the resolution of any on-water incidents or those which have temporarily obstructed water traffic. This may include rescuing non-injured crew members in broken or stuck boats, removing and repatriating boats stuck in the bank, and deciding when normal river traffic, including warm-up for the next race, may recommence in any area of the river.
- vii) **Marshals** — work with the Race Secretary and the SU to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event. Details of the role of the marshals are given below.
- viii) **[Rowing On] Timers** — act as impartial race observers for Rowing On at the Start and Finish lines and record the time each crew passes their position.
- ix) **[Torpids] Umpires** - act as impartial race observers for the bumping races.

The SU, marshals, and umpires will be marked out by coloured bibs, usually:

- yellow high-visibility for the SU
- yellow high-visibility river marshals
- orange high-visibility for towpath marshals *[Torpids only]*
- red for the umpires.

*The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.*

## **Race Secretary**

The Race Secretary is the event organiser and has overall responsibility for the event, in accordance with this event plan, which they must do safely. This event plan does not restrict the Race Secretary, working with the Senior Umpire, from halting racing at any time or from making necessary alterations to ensure the safety of competitors, organisers and members of the public.

The Race Secretary, as event organiser, should appoint each and every Senior Umpire and member of Event Committee. The Race Secretary may exclude any individual from being a race official, and is expected to manage the officials, removing them from individual tasks if necessary. The Race Secretary shall inform other river groups of the event.

The Race Secretary is responsible for coordinating racing and so should direct members of race committee; tasking them as needed and as appropriate. The Race Secretary may delegate responsibilities as is appropriate. The Race Secretary consults with the SU about issues and risk mitigation affecting the safe running of the races.

The Race Secretary should make contact with the Environment Agency (EA) if they are at the river on the day of the race. The Coordinating Senior Umpire will have contact details for the EA if they are not at the river.

## **Senior Umpire**

Senior Umpires are appointed by the Race Secretary, from those who have been ratified in an OURCs Captains' Meeting in the current academic year. This ensures that those appointed have the necessary skill and experience to conduct their duties. Given the nature of the event, there is no formal qualification appropriate to the task, but the existing team of Senior Umpires will make sure sufficient new members are recruited to cover the job, and will ensure that new recruits are fully briefed and trained in the role. A ratified trainee Senior Umpire may control races and act as Senior Umpire under the direct supervision of a fully qualified SU.

The principal duty of the Senior Umpire is to ensure that each race is safe to start, and then to start that race in a safe fashion under the OURCs racing rules, and to ensure that racing only continues while conditions are sufficiently safe. To this end, the Senior Umpire on duty will conduct river checks as appropriate, using the marshals to report any traffic on the river or any obstruction in the river. The SU will conduct a full river check at least once before each race begins and repeat at their discretion sufficiently to ensure that they are satisfied the river is clear to start the race. The SU will consider the following (below) when starting each race, and will relate it to the nature of bumps racing and the quality and competence of the crews involved, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- The local stream conditions
- The local weather conditions
- Whether the race course is sufficiently clear of racing traffic, non-racing traffic, debris or any other obstruction
- Whether the safety launches are in a suitable position and ready to respond
- Whether sufficient marshals are in place and in communication with the SU and race desk, to provide full coverage of the stretch

The SU has the full operational responsibility of starting racing, and so will try to start each division in a timely fashion in accordance with the rules of racing, where circumstances and safety allow. Any other party (including but not limited to the Race Secretary, the Environment Agency and the University) which believes that there is a good reason not to start a race, should be encouraged to inform the SU immediately. The SU may halt racing on the grounds of safety and recommend any mitigating action to the Race Secretary which might allow racing to continue.

The first Senior Umpire of the day has responsibility for checking and approving the river as sufficiently safe to open to crews for their warm-up, at a point approximately half an hour before the first division. If at any point in the day the SU considers the river to be unsafe even for warming-up crews, s/he will close the river to student traffic and suspend racing. Before opening the river, the first SU of the day will be satisfied that:

1. Sufficient marshals are in place and providing full coverage of the stretch with working two-way radios.
2. The stream conditions are sufficiently safe.
3. The weather conditions are sufficiently safe.
4. First Aid cover is available at the river.
5. Any non-racing traffic already on the stretch has been spoken to and is aware of the event and circulation pattern.
6. The Race Secretary and his/her team are ready and happy that the river be opened.

In the same manner, the final SU of the day will close the river at the end of racing, will dismiss the marshals (in stages) once they are satisfied that all racing traffic is clear of the relevant areas, and will reopen the river to non-racing circulation.

As part of the preparations for the regatta, the coordinating SU for the team will liaise with the Environment Agency, the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (in his/her safety role) and the Race Secretary, to determine any special measures to be taken to allow racing under the risk assessment in more challenging conditions such as high stream or wind. These measures may include, but are not limited to:- restrictions on coxing status; use of higher bunglines; restrictions on racing divisions; use of half-divisions; changes in warm-up time between divisions; and provision of extra safety launches. The coordinating SU will consult with the whole SU team as available to bring their collective experience to bear in making such decisions. The coordinating SU will ensure that the decisions are agreed with the Event Committee (via the Race Sec. and/or Rowing Sabbatical) and will communicate them in a timely fashion to the racing clubs. The Rowing Sabbatical Officer will ensure that other interested parties (such as the Proctors and/or Sports Federation and the boatmen) are kept informed of the measures being used, as far as necessary, and that information on the measures is available to all college boat club members, including Senior Members. The coordinating SU will also ensure that the race secretary has a copy of the SU roster and mobile phone numbers. During the event, a coordinating SU will be appointed each night to coordinate overnight decisions and coordinate the team for any appeals or changes in conditions.

## **Marshals**

This section will outline the marshalling for Torpids. The marshalling for Rowing On is slightly different and these differences are highlighted at the end of this section.

**Briefing:** Senior marshals from each college will attend a briefing meeting, held prior to the event, which covers individual marshalling duties and safety procedures, and will be given summary notes of specific duties where appropriate. These senior marshals are then responsible for briefing the marshals sent by their college, and should use the presentation provided by OURCs. The meeting will be open for additional persons to attend if they so wish.

**Overseeing of marshals:** A member of the Event Committee will give a short briefing to all marshals on the day, so that they are aware of their specific duties. This does not substitute but instead refreshes the briefing that should have been given by their college's senior marshal.

**Equipment:** All river marshals are issued with a high-visibility jacket, a radio, a klaxon and a starting order. All towpath marshals are issued with a high-visibility jacket.

Personnel in key positions are also given a megaphone.

**Stations:** Marshals will be stationed along the river at points marked on the Placement of Marshals maps, attached as *Appendix C* (Rowing On) and *Appendix D* (Torpids) of this plan. Additional marshals may be stationed on the day by the Event Committee and/or the SU as needs dictate. These stations ensure that the marshals' line of sight provides full coverage of the race course.

## **General duties**

All marshals listed below, except the Bike marshal and Towpath marshals, perform river checks, the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. In particular this process must be done, and show that the river is clear of obstructions, before a division can be started.

When a river check is called the marshals will look for non-racing boats, swans, floating debris, and anything else which would impede the safe running of racing on their stretch of the river. Then, in the order in which they are listed below, report back to the SU. During racing, marshals should radio and if necessary stop the race with the use of their klaxon should the course become unsafe to continue.

### **Marshals' primary role is the safe running of the event.**

In the event of the river becoming unsafe to continue racing for whatever reason, attending marshals will open their radios and sound the safety klaxons for at least 10 seconds in order to transmit the klaxon as rapidly as possible. Any marshal on hearing a klaxon should fire their klaxon for 10 seconds or until all racing crews around them have stopped (whichever takes longer). Races should be halted using the klaxons in any event that makes the continuation of racing unsafe, for example: the channel becoming blocked by racing or other traffic, a person in the water with racing crews approaching and putting them in danger, or an injury which requires First Aid. As crews hear the klaxons they will stop racing immediately

as instructed in the coxing meetings (see later section). Crews halted by klaxon should remain stationary to allow safe access by first aid personnel and Event Committee until the Senior Umpire gives permission for them to move.

All marshals monitor crews on the water are keeping to the circulation pattern, informing crews if they are in incorrect circulation. During racing marshals encourage crews who have bumped out to move so that there is a channel wide enough for racing crews to pass safely. Usually this will be asking crews to pull into one of the banks. Once the following launch has passed, marshals encourage crews to then paddle behind the following launch back to their boathouse.

A secondary role is to report to Race Desk any crews on the water where the boat is lacking a bow-ball or the cox is lacking a lifejacket over their outermost layer, and to instruct them to remedy this.

A tertiary role is to report to Race Desk if any significant numbers of pedestrians are present, and to request support if appropriate.

During the race itself, marshals act as observers, facilitating a safe and fair contest. They will also warn members of the public of approaching cyclists, although this role will primarily be taken by the Bike marshal.

### **Duties for raft marshals:**

Raft marshals perform checks on each boat to ensure they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations. In particular they are asked to check that each boat has a securely attached bow-ball, heel restraints are fitted correctly, and that the cox has their lifejacket fastened over their outermost layer.

The raft marshals should also check that suitable lights are attached when appropriate. The later divisions which require lights will be marked on the start order, but the SU may require lights for other divisions as well in the event of poor visibility.

The raft marshals facilitate the timely starting of divisions by encouraging launching crews to wait until the boats of the division two before theirs have landed and cleared the rafts before they put their shells on the water, and asking crews to push off promptly after the last racing crew has passed, so that the landing stages are clear for the returning crews.

Where possible, they keep track of which crews have pushed off from the rafts they are monitoring. They will often field questions from competitors, radioing Race Desk when they are unsure.

### **Particular duties:**

In addition to the general duties, each marshal has particular duties dependent on their designated position on the river bank, as detailed below (refer to the Placement of Marshals map, attached as Appendix D to this plan).

Marshals who are normally given a megaphone to assist with their duties are marked ▼, and those who take part in river checks are marked †.

**1) Head (of the River) ▼†:** (by the grey footbridge) Communicates with river traffic entering the course from under Folly Bridge, and liaises with the SU about this; instructs crews who have finished racing on where to wait to prevent a build-up of crews above the finish line and when to spin; ensures crews returning to their boathouses keep tucked into the City side bank; warns non-event pedestrians and cyclists coming down the towpath that an event is occurring.

**2) Finish ▼†:** (by the Cox stone) Operates the finish clacker over the STERN of the boats to inform crews when they have finished racing; instructs crews to move upstream to clear the finish line, radios Race Desk when the last racing crew crosses the line; ensures crews returning to their boathouses keep tucked into the City side bank.

**3) Boathouse A †:** (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses on the upstream end of the island, approximately from St Anne's to Keble inclusive) Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Boathouse Island; Communicates with river traffic entering the course from under the humpback bridge, and liaises with the SU about this.

**4) Boathouse B †:** (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses on the downstream end of the island, approximately from Exeter to Christ Church inclusive) Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Boathouse Island; Communicates with river traffic entering the course from the Cherwell cut next to Christ Church Boathouse and liaises with the SU about this.

**5) Univ †:** (outside Univ Boathouse) Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Univ. Should also be monitoring the raft, and instruct crews to move any equipment on the raft that may impede racing.

**6) [Optional] Green Bank †:** (halfway between Univ and Longbridges Boathouses) Encourages crews warming up above the Gut to be through it with at least 5 minutes to go; ensures that crews that are paddling back after bumping out or returning to their boathouse stick to the circulation pattern. Monitor traffic exiting the Cherwell cut next to ChCh boathouse.

**7) Longbridges †:** (outside Longbridges Boathouse)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Longbridges.

**8) Top Gut ▼†:** (at the upstream Gut exit)

Keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream to be able to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start; it shouldn't be the case that crews are going through the Gut in opposite directions, but watches the Gut exit to ensure that crews change circulation pattern safely; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut.

**9) [Optional]: Middle Gut †:** (mid-way between Top Gut and Bottom Gut) Keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream. Pays particular attention during racing, as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; Encourages crews who have bumped out to move to ensure that there is room for racing crews to pass safely, which may mean the crew needs to paddle out of the Gut and pull in near Longbridges.

**10) Bottom Gut ▼†:** (on the bend between the Sea Scouts and Falcon) Pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut.

**11) Donnington Bridge †:** (by Donnington Bridge on the City Side) Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Falcon or CORC; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; deals with local river traffic and swans.

**12) Top Bunglines †:** (covering bunglines 1-7) monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up and checks that crews overtake sensibly; assists crews spinning onto their bunglines so as to keep the far bank clear for cruisers; keeps a record of which crews are attached to their bunglines; reports to the SU if the umpires have not shown up, or if there is no possible way for a crew in the section to get attached to their bungline; generally assists the SU as required. May also be required to communicate to crews any additional information such as delays. Will cover bunglines 1-4 if half-divisions are used.

**13) Bottom Bunglines ▼†:** (covering bunglines 8 and below) communicates with river traffic coming up through Iffley Lock, and liaises with the SU about this; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up and checks that crews overtake sensibly; assists crews spinning onto their bunglines so as to keep the far bank clear for cruisers; keeps a record of which crews are attached to their bunglines; reports to the SU if the umpires have not shown up, or if there is no possible way for a crew in the section to be attached to their bungline; generally assists the SU as required. May also be required to communicate to crews any additional information such as delays. Alerts cyclists and pedestrians coming up the towpath of an imminent division start and after the one minute gun politely advises cyclists to wait until the division has gone by before proceeding on their way. Will cover bunglines 5-7 if half-divisions are used.

**14/15) Bike Marshal:** advised to equip their bike with a bell and they wear a high visibility vest, to cycle along the Tow Path, cycles just ahead of the first boat of each division with the sole aim of providing additional warning to spectators and members of the general public on the towpath if significant numbers of pedestrians and bystanders are present. They should report to Race Desk between each division, and may be used to ferry equipment, such as a replacement radio, to

other race officials between races. The bike marshal to advise bank riders and umpires that their bikes are suitably equipped before each division commences.

## **Towpath Marshalling**

Additional marshals may be used as well as or instead of large signs to inform towpath users of racing and as a mitigating action against collisions with spectators. These marshals have a primary duty of communication with towpath users. Secondarily, they may support marshals nearby if required during an on-water incident. They will wear an orange high visibility jacket and may have a radio.

Marshals that may be used depending on the levels of towpath traffic are positioned as follows:

- i. At the Head (by the pedestrian footbridge upstream of the course),
- ii. Just downstream of Univ Boathouse by the footpath entrance to the towpath,
- iii. Just upstream of Donnington Bridge,
- iv. Just downstream of Donnington Bridge (these two at the entrances to the towpath)
- v. At the Isis Farmhouse to keep an eye on pedestrians entering from the pub, the lock or across the fields.

The Bottom Bunglines marshal will also be encouraged to speak to pedestrians when not engaged in their other duties, particularly when there is no towpath marshal present.

The Event Committee and Senior Umpires will assess the levels of towpath traffic throughout the day and deploy towpath marshals if they deem it to be required.

The towpath marshals will talk politely to all towpath users, informing them of the event and, briefly, of the format of racing. They will encourage pedestrians to walk on the landward side of the towpath, or if they wish to spectate to stand on the bank, leaving the centre as clear as possible for cyclists. They will alert towpath users to the signage, the race times and the likelihood of cyclists following races, encouraging them to pause to allow the cyclists past. They will pay particular attention to warning any vulnerable users (e.g. the infirm or those with young children or dogs). Cyclists who are traveling downstream, in particular around race start time, should be encouraged but not instructed to dismount or to delay their journey for a few minutes.

Another measure to ensure safety on the towpath is that at busy times of racing and for the entirety of the Saturday of Torpids, a second bike marshal (see above) will be used. They will set off at approximately 1 minute before the 1 minute gun and proceed slowly up the towpath, taking time to stop and specifically caution groups, vulnerable users, or those who are milling over the path. This marshal will use best endeavours to remain approximately 1 minute ahead of racing crews, delaying at the race desk if necessary.

## **Marshalling for Rowing On:**

A slightly different marshal line-up is used for Rowing On. Most of their specific duties are the same as the Torpids marshals, the differences are stated below:

- 1) **Head (of the River)**
- 2) **Finish:** drops the clacker on the BOW of the boat
- 3) **Boathouse A**
- 4) **Boathouse B**
- 5) **Univ**
- 6) **[Optional] Green Bank**
- 7) **Longbridges**
- 8) **Top Gut:** rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews paddling from the marshalling area to the start line.

- 9) **Bottom Gut:** keeps a record of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area; rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews paddling from the marshalling area to the start line.
- 10) **Donnington Bridge:** keeps track of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area; rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews in the marshalling area.
- 11) **Spinning:** (located at the lowest point the SU will allow crews to spin) communicates with river traffic coming up through Iffley Lock, and liaises with the SU about this; stops crews spinning too low; marshals crews in the marshalling area; keeps a record of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area.
- 12) **[Optional] Bike**

## Changing Marshals

Marshals should not leave their posts unless their fully-briefed replacement is there waiting to take over. No changeover should occur within 10 minutes of the next racing division. Outgoing marshals are expected to pass on any experience or relevant information from their shift to their replacement. At the end of the day, marshals must stay in place until the SU dismisses them.

## Circulation Pattern

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of Rowing On and Torpids, strict non-racing circulation patterns are enforced. These are illustrated on the Circulation Pattern maps, attached as *Appendix C* (Rowing On) and *Appendix D* (Torpids) to this plan.

In the following explanatory notes, left and right refers to the course of the boat as seen by the coxswain, i.e. port (strokeside) and starboard (bowside) respectively.

For both Torpids and Rowing On warming up crews, and crews returning to their boathouses are expected to keep tight to the banks leaving a clear central passage for cruisers and other river traffic. For the avoidance of confusion, all other river traffic pass each other in accordance with normal regulations.

Warming up crews may overtake other crews, but coxes must be certain to check for oncoming river traffic, especially cruisers both above and below the Gut.

Racing crews may take whatever line across the course that they wish, avoiding obstructions.

## Other River Traffic:

Races are never started until the river is sufficiently clear of river traffic and other obstructions. During Torpids, there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. When the locks at either end of the stretch (Iffley Lock, downstream end, Osney Lock, upstream end) are manned, river traffic is given verbal notice from the EA as they approach the Isis. Marshals are briefed to speak to other river users who appear on the Isis and keep the SU notified of their appearance on the course.

Signs are displayed at the Head and Foot of the river to alert other river users to the regatta in progress in accordance to the EA guidance.

Craft proceeding along the course take the centre of the river and pass one another port side to port side. Marshals are briefed to monitor crews during the warm-up and make sure they stay clear of cruisers, and also to be ready to provide the SU with information as to the position of cruisers on the course. The Circulation Patterns (see *Appendix C & D*) show the positions of temporary mooring points. If it is the case that waiting for a craft to clear the course will delay the next race excessively, they will be asked to moor at one of these points, and wait until the division has passed before continuing. Craft proceeding upstream may be encouraged to follow a division, staying behind the following launch.

## Rowing On Circulation

For Rowing On crews may not do laps on the water to warm up. They should proceed through the Gut, and then spin and marshal in their correct position when it is safe to do so.

### **Warm up circulation - crews boating upstream of the Gut:**

Boat with bow-balls pointing downstream, keeping close to the bank from which they boated, and proceeding down to the entrance of the Gut. (Longbridges crews should proceed directly through the Gut.)

Once they get to the Top Gut marshal, crews boating from Boathouse Island should cross to the towpath side (bowside bank) when it is safe to do so.

They should proceed through the gut staying on the towpath side and then join the circulation pattern for crews boating from below the Gut.

Crews must not overtake while traversing the Gut.

### **Warm up circulation - crews boating downstream of the Gut:**

Boat with bows pointing upstream. Crews from the Isis Boathouse should cross to the non-towpath side (their bowside bank). Crews from CORC and Falcon rafts should proceed upstream and spin in the area upstream of the Falcon raft.

After they have spun, when it is safe to do so, they should cross to the towpath bank and proceed keeping right of centre (to their bowside bank).

Crews may spin in either direction when it is safe to do so, and under the direction of the SU or a marshal. Marshalling crews will be asked to keep tucked into a particular bank, as instructed by the SU and marshals. Crews will be started by the Senior Umpire, and marshalling crews should move up towards the Senior Umpire as each crew is set off.

### **Racing crews:**

Slower crews should move to give way to a faster overtaking crew.

As they cross the finish line they should wind down and move to the towpath side and proceed upstream well clear of the finish line under the instruction of the Finish and Head marshal to make room for other crews. Crews should not spin until told to do so by the Head marshal.

### **Return Circulation - crews landing on Boat House Island:**

Crews returning to Boat House Island should stay on the non-towpath side and land downstream without doing any further laps.

### **Return Circulation - crews landing at Univ and Longbridges:**

Crews returning to Univ and Longbridges should cross to the towpath side immediately downstream of the finish line, and then proceed along the towpath bank to land downstream without doing any further laps. If there is a strong stream at Longbridges, then crews landing at Longbridges may spin upstream of their raft, and drift back to land.

### **Return circulation - crews landing below the Gut:**

Crews returning to boathouses downstream of the Gut should cross to the towpath side immediately downstream of the finish line. They should proceed through the Gut and then land in normal training circulation.

### **Torpids Circulation**

For Torpids, the basic circulation pattern between divisions is a figure of eight.

Above the Gut all crews observe reverse circulation thus keeping to the left of the river.

Below the Gut the normal pattern is followed and crews keep to the right.

### **Boating:**

Crews boating above the Gut should boat with their bow-ball pointing left (opposite to normal training). Crews boating from Longbridges may, if permission has been granted by the raft marshal, boat pointing

downstream if they are headed straight through the Gut. They must take extra care to check that the river is clear before pushing off.

Any crew stationed at Falcon or City of Oxford Rowing Club should boat as normal, unless the river is completely clear, in which case crews may boat downstream.

### **Warming up:**

Of the 13 crews in each division, the top 6 will warm up above the Gut and the bottom 6 below the Gut. The crew on bungline 7 may choose to warm up either above or below the Gut but not both. The change from left to right hand circulation happens at the top entrance to the Gut as crews move down toward the start, under direction of the Longbridges and Top Gut marshals. The Bungline marshals assist crews with spinning onto their bunglines; either reverse or normal spin is allowed with the aim of leaving the far bank clear if cruisers are passing.

Crews warming up above the Gut should spin directly onto their bungline after proceeding though the Gut. Any crew which is given permission by the Event Committee to boat from below the Gut must warm up between Falcon and Haystacks without entering the Gut until they are racing.

### **Spinning:**

Unlike normal training, crews may spin wherever they like provided they do not cause obstruction to oncoming river traffic, and so are advised not to spin in boating areas if possible. Below the Gut, crews warming up on the lower stretch may spin wherever it is safe to do so. Crews who warmed up above the Gut should not spin below their bunglines.

### **During the race:**

No vessels other than the racing boats and the following safety launch(es) will be on the course when a race is in progress. Crews may take whichever route up the river they choose. In Torpids, in the event of a 'bump', the crew gaining the bump moves to clear a channel for racing crews to safely pass and stops. Crews have not gained a bump race as far as the finish post, opposite Christ Church Meadow.

### **After racing:**

Once past the finish line, crews wind down and move upstream, clear of the finish, where they wait for instructions on spinning from the Head marshal. In Torpids, crews who 'bump out' follow the following safety launch up the river, observing the warm-up circulation pattern. Crews that bump out beyond their boathouse join the warm- up circulation pattern and land at their raft when they pass it on the correct side of the river. Crews bumping out before their boathouse may go straight in provided it is clear to do so and under instructions from the marshals, with the exception of the top half of Boathouse Island, St. Anne's to Keble, who must re-join the circulation pattern.

Crews for the next division may boat when the last racing crew passes their raft, as announced by the marshals and/or the public address system.

## **Communications**

At least 24 two-way radios are used for communication between Race Desk, the SU, the EA launch if present, Salter's Cruisers, Oxford River Cruisers (optional), the Iffley Lock keeper, the safety boats, the marshals and the First Aid personnel.

Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at the relevant marshalling meeting, and on the day at Race Desk.

In addition to radio communication, OURCs has the use of mobile phones held by: Race Desk (race secretary's mobile: **07341-500865**, Sabbatical's Mobile **07917-643030**), the SU and First Aid. The Iffley Lock keeper also has a land line (01865-777277). An emergency (999 calls only) telephone is located in the back of Longbridges Boathouse. Mobile phones can also be used for emergency calls. The phone number of Christ Church Lodge (01865-276150) will be kept at Race Desk to secure emergency access to Christ Church Meadow.

A public address system based at Race Desk can address all competitors and bystanders from Christ Church Meadow to Longbridges Boathouse. **During Torpids, pre-scripted notices over the public address system will be used to highlight the impending races to towpath users.**

## Safety

### **Event Management:**

***Note – In the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix E) should be followed.***

Marshals are thoroughly briefed on their duties (as described above) prior to the event at a meeting for senior marshals from each participating boat club (organised by the OURCs Secretary), and also given a refresher briefing on the day, by members of the Event Committee. The SU is responsible for ensuring that racing starts only when conditions are safe, subject to satisfactory reports from the marshals and Race Desk. If any incident occurs that could potentially jeopardise the safety of crews, marshals sound klaxons, bringing all racing to an immediate halt.

All participating crews shall observe the OURCs rules, which encompass the safety advice of British Rowing and EA regulations. Clubs that have not submitted a safety audit may not race. Crews infringing these rules or acting in an unsafe manner may be subject to fines, penalty bumps, or disqualification from the event.

Coxes of all crews must attend a briefing meeting (organised by the OURCs Captain of Coxes) covering the event and safety management issues covered in this document. If any cox does not attend, they will not be permitted to compete unless given express permission by the OURCs Captain of Coxes. The meeting will be split into two parts: the first (approximately 15 minutes) for all coxes, covering essential safety information; and a second section, for coxes new to Bumps racing, or for those wanting a refresher, to cover all aspects of coxing in the event.

### **Race Start – Cannon Use:**

The races will be started by means of a cannon which is fired twice to give warning of the start (at five and one minutes to go) and a third time to signal the start of the race. The cannon is fired by the Senior Umpire giving a visual signal to a competent person who is in charge of the cannons. The senior umpire retains complete control of the starting sequence and may delay or abort it at any time in accordance with the race rules. An aborted start shall be restarted from the one minute gun. The cannons are held under the control of a competent person and their operation is supervised by a firearms licence holder. The transport, storage, maintenance and usage of the cannons is done under the direction of a firearms licence holder and they retain responsibility for ensuring that all regulations are adhered to.

### **Complex racing incidents:**

In the event of a racing or warm-up on-water incident resulting in boats damaged and/or blocking the river or stuck in the bank, the Incident Coordinator will go to the site of the incident and immediately take control of resolution to help speed treatment of any casualties, liberation of boats and reduction of confusion.

## Weather

### **Stream Conditions:**

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with people including the Iffley Lock keeper, the Race Secretary, the boatmen and the EA to decide how to proceed. The SU must consider the proximity between racing crews and the weirs at Iffley Lock, (or Hinksey if appropriate), as well as the competence of the crews to deal with the conditions. OURCs has developed a contingency plan to allow some racing to continue (included in the attached Risk Assessments). Options include

moving the bunglines further away from the lock, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, running part divisions and cancelling the entire day's racing.

### **Precipitation & Cold:**

Rain will not typically halt racing, but the SU must consider if it threatens to swamp racing crews or pose a significant risk of hypothermia. Snow and cold conditions pose a further threat that might jeopardise the safety of competitors and so halting racing. Hail is particularly dangerous given the injury that can be done to equipment and persons. The SU must decide whether it is possible for competitors to complete the race, including warm-up and warm-down, in a safe fashion, considering the facilities available to them. The heightened risk involved with any participant entering the water must also be considered.

### **Poor Visibility:**

In the instance of poor visibility the SU will make the decision as to whether racing may start or continue. The SU will, as a matter of course, state which divisions should boat with two static bright white lights on their boat at bow and stern. These lights must each be visible though at least 180°. Marshals will check this as part of the boat checks.

### **High Winds:**

High winds make navigation difficult for crews and may also threaten swamping, although the Isis stretch of the Thames is rarely affected by any significant disturbance of the surface of the water. The SU must consider if enforcing only experienced/senior coxes is appropriate, or other mitigating action.

### **Lightning:**

All marshals and race officials will be responsible for watching out for lightning and if it is seen it will be reported to Race Desk. Race Desk will then approximate the distance of the storm by using the "30 – 30 rule" (comparing the time difference between lightning and thunder). If the storm is felt to be within approximately 10km (30 seconds between lightning and thunder) then crews will be taken off the water as soon as possible and advised to seek proper shelter in the boathouses.

Once all crews have returned to their boathouses, a river check will be co-ordinated by Race Desk. Once all crews are off the water the marshals will be advised to seek shelter. Launches will return to the nearest raft and the drivers should seek shelter in the nearest boathouse. The public address system will be used to warn spectators and other competitors.

Following the suspension of racing, racing will only resume 30 minutes after the last lightning. This will be announced over the public address system.

### **Medical Emergency - First Aid:**

First Aid cover is provided by Epione Medical Services who will provide a minimum of two appropriately qualified personnel, for such an event, with appropriate equipment. The First Aid unit will have a tent at Boat House Island but the launch set aside for the medical staff will be headquartered at Longbridges Boat House. The First Aid personnel will advise the SU and Race Secretary if they feel there is any medical reason why it is unsafe to continue. At least one safety boat is supplied for their use. First Aid personnel will remain at the event until 30 minutes after the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

The designated point for a casualty to be transferred to an ambulance is at the Riverside Centre. When this is not possible, access to Christ Church Meadow and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the west slip road from Donnington Bridge to Longbridges is held at Race Desk, and access to Christ Church Meadow will be arranged for emergency services. The emergency services will be made aware of the event and access will be communicated beforehand. The Event Committee are to be briefed before the event by the Race Secretary on procedure during an emergency and plans will be kept at Race Desk for guidance during an incident.

If a casualty who is a member of the University is taken to hospital, an official of the college (chosen under advice from the SU) will be contacted.

## **Safety Boats**

Each boat is driven at all times by qualified personnel (RYA level 2, or equivalent). During Rowing On and Torpids, a minimum of two launches are used by OURCs. The boats fulfil distinct roles:

Race Following Launch: which follows the races to the Christ Church Cut, or elsewhere as directed by the SU, which is ready to help participants. Between divisions this launch helps to marshal crews in the start area.

Response Launch: usually stationed at Longbridges Boat House, for the use of the First Aid team.

Spare Launch: OURCs will obtain a third launch, particularly if the racing is conducted under a high flag, to act as back-up.

## **Bystander Safety**

OURCs does not invite spectators to watch the event, nor take any responsibility for the safety of the public beyond ensuring that our event does not negatively impact their health or safety. All members of the public have a right to use the towpath as a public right-of-way and OURCs will not impede this in any way. Marshals will be briefed to report to the SU and Race Desk if they believe that the safety of members of the public may be compromised, particularly in the build-up of spectators along the Towpath. Should there be any imminent danger to members of the public if immersed (and/or river users), the nearest marshal is to be made aware immediately. **If this happens during racing, the klaxon is to be sounded to bring racing to an immediate halt.**

**In the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix E) is to be followed.**

The Race Secretary should consider the options available to minimize the risks of potential harm to members of the public and act accordingly. Possible solutions include using the nearest marshal to warn members of the public (as long as the safety of river users is in itself not compromised), additional tannoy announcement(s), sending a senior individual from the Event Committee to assess potential difficulties and, liaising with the Race Secretary and Senior Umpire, deal with accordingly.

Notices about the Regatta will be placed at entry points on the Isis for the benefit of water and towpath users. Large signs and/or Towpath marshals will be deployed at the main access points to the towpath to alert members of the public, including cycling commuters, about the event to mitigate potential risks from cyclists accompanying crews.

Tannoy announcements will be made along the race route warning towpath users (including spectators) that cyclists will be heading in an upstream on the towpath following the race. Such riders are advised to stay left. Bank Riders and Umpires are advised to equip their bikes with bells.

In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, marshals will report to the Race Desk, who will take action as per the Risk Assessment.

First Aid personnel will not be prevented from attending to members of the public. The EA normally chooses to exercise their rights under a Harbourmaster's notice to prohibit mooring and swimming along the course.

## **Incident De-Brief**

Following any significant safety incident the SU and Race Secretary should briefly discuss the causes for the incident and whether any action is appropriate. The SU and Race Secretary are expected to communicate regularly about concerns or any relevant information.

## Contingencies

### Towpath Contingencies

In the event that the towpath is unsafe or inaccessible for bikes, at the discretion of the SUs and Race Secretary, any of the following may be used:

- 1) The Race Secretary and other members of Event Committee may organise attempts to clear the towpath if possible
- 2) Bankriders may not be allowed on the towpath, switching to X and S coxes only if needed
- 3) Static Umpires may be used rather than Bike Umpires. Static Umpires are spread down the race course such that they can see the whole course between them, and report the results in by radio after each race.

### High Stream (“Curry”) Contingencies

In the case of fast stream conditions, a number of contingency programmes are available. These are designed to reduce the risks in the bungline area by:

- 1) limiting racing to more experienced crews, or
- 2) running smaller divisions so that boats can stay further away from the Iffley Lock weir

The exact choice of the two, or their combination, depends on the stream and wind conditions.

The timings and divisions for each contingency level are attached in Stream Contingencies (*Appendix F*).

### Non-Bumping Contingencies

If the Senior Umpires and Race Secretary decide that safe bumping racing cannot take place, one or more of the regatta days may be used to run Head races using the Isis Winter League documentation.