



O U R C s

Oxford University Rowing Clubs Torpids 2025

Event and Safety Plan

Introduction

Torpids is a rowing event for Oxford college clubs comprising four days racing from Wednesday to Saturday of 6th or 7th Week of 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 or Sunday.

This year Torpids will occur from Wednesday 26th of February to Saturday 1st of March, with Rowing On ideally held on Friday 21st February. We would also ask for a provisional Rowing On date should conditions be unsuitable on the ideal date: Sunday 23rd February. If conditions are unsuitable on both Rowing On dates, Torpids shall run without Rowing On divisions.

Rowing On

This is a timed race from Longbridges to Christ Church Meadow. The event is run as a head 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 25 crews for each category covering the course then qualify for Torpids proper.

Torpids

Racing occurs between 11:45 am and 5:45 pm (last race starts at 5:15pm). Racing is split into 12 divisions, normally each of 13 boats, racing at approximately 30-minute intervals. The course is upstream within the stretch from Iffley Lock to Folly Bridge. 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 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. The Risk Assessments are attached as *Appendix A* (Rowing On) and *Appendix B* (Torpids) to this event plan.

This event plan exists in addition to the OURCs General Rules of Racing and Rules of Bumps Racing.

The Event Plan and Risk Assessments will be reviewed annually by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer, Race Secretary and Senior Umpires before submission to the University of Oxford authorities and the Environment Agency (EA).

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 the overall organisation of the event, consulting with the Senior Umpire about safety matters and logistical changes which affect race timings. For this event the Race Secretary will be Jack Davies, who can be contacted at secretary@ourcs.co.uk.
- ii. **Event Committee** – help the Race Secretary with coordination of racing and event safety.
- iii. **Race Desk** – normally located at Longbridges Boat House, oversees the marshals and assists 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. **Incident Coordinator (IC)** – typically the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (07917-643030). The IC coordinates post-incident operations. If appropriate, e.g. in a medical emergency, either the IC or Senior Umpire may declare a serious incident, having consulted with the other if communication restraints allow (see *Appendix E, Emergency Action Plan*). The IC must have due regard for the demands of data protection and confidentiality; 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 post-incident reports.
 - Other involved persons such as witnesses and medical staff – to gather additional information that must be included in the incident record and possible post-incident reports.
 - Where applicable, to ensure the incident is duly reported to appropriate bodies/persons such as Sports Safety Officer (call ASAP for severe incidents/injuries including immersion of a non-rower), College if a student, and British Rowing.

For this event, the Incident Coordinator will be Oscar Hayden.

- 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, oversees safety on the water during racing hours, and collaborates with the Race Secretary and Event Committee on the safe running of the event. If appropriate, e.g. in a medical emergency, either the SU or Incident Coordinator may declare a serious incident, having consulted with the other if communication restraints allow (see *Appendix E, Emergency Action Plan*).
- vi. **Incident Manager** – either the on-duty Senior Umpire or someone to whom they have delegated the role, such as an off-duty SU or a senior member of the Event Committee. The Incident Manager 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 jackets/bibs, usually:

- yellow high-visibility with 'Senior Umpire' printed on the back for the SU,
- yellow high-visibility for river marshals,
- orange high-visibility for towpath marshals *[Torpids Main 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 follow 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 the Senior Umpire (as below) and members of the Event Committee.

The Race Secretary is responsible for coordinating racing and so should direct members of the Event Committee, tasking them as needed and as appropriate. The Race Secretary may delegate responsibilities as 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, after guidance from the Coordinating Senior Umpire who arranges the SU roster. 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 Rules of Racing, 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 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:

- 1) The local stream conditions
- 2) The local weather conditions
- 3) Whether the racecourse is sufficiently clear of racing traffic, non-racing traffic, debris or any other obstruction.
- 4) Whether the safety launches and first aiders are in a suitable position and ready to respond.
- 5) Whether sufficient marshals are in place and in communication with the SU and Race Desk, to provide full coverage of the course.

The SU has the full operational responsibility of starting racing and 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) that 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, they 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, providing full coverage of the stretch with working two-way radios with a 'river check' carried out;
- 2) the stream conditions are sufficiently safe;
- 3) the weather conditions are sufficiently safe;
- 4) First Aid cover is available at the river and safety launches are afloat and ready;
- 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 their team are ready and happy that the river can be opened; and
- 7) sufficient towpath marshals (in Torpids only, and depending on weather conditions and number of spectators) are in place to encourage safe use of the towpath.

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 will liaise with the Environment Agency, the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (in their 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. In unusual situations they may also consult other relevant parties, such as the college boatmen. 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 either the Coordinating SU or Race Secretary 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 managing any appeals escalated to them 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

An initial marshal briefing, covering individual marshalling duties, safety procedures, and summary notes of specific duties, where appropriate, will be provided through Microsoft Teams meetings, featuring a presentation. Marshals must have attended this Teams marshal briefing prior to the start of Torpids.

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. Marshals will also be provided with summary notes of specific duties for their

marshalling position where appropriate. This does not substitute, but instead refreshes, the material delivered through the Teams marshal briefing.

Equipment

All river marshals are issued with a yellow high-visibility jacket, a two-way radio, a copy of the circulation plan and a starting order. River marshals on the racecourse are issued a klaxon/emergency gas horn. All towpath marshals are issued with an orange high-visibility jacket. Personnel in key positions are also given a megaphone.

General Duties

Marshals are responsible for ensuring that racing proceeds safely and that all river traffic, including race traffic, is in the right place and aware of where they are going. 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 for racing 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. In the event of a non-working klaxon, marshals radio “klaxon, klaxon, klaxon” to alert other marshals to fire their klaxon. On hearing a klaxon over the radios or anywhere on the course, all marshals sound their klaxons.

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 if First Aid is immediately required to be transported, via safety launch, to attend an incident. As crews hear the klaxons, they will stop racing immediately, as instructed in the coxing briefing meeting (see ‘Event Management’ 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 or a marshal directs them to move to clear a free path for the launch.

All marshals monitor crews on the water and ensure they 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 Launch back to their boathouse in non-racing circulation.

A secondary role is to report to Race Desk any crews on the water where the boat is lacking a bow ball (or similar safety implements on the boat), 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 which might risk blocking the towpath, or if members of the public are harassing competitors or officials, 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. When time permits, they feed short sharp commentary on the race to the radio network.

Duties for Raft Marshals (Boathouses A and B, Univ, Longbridges, [Donnington Bridge])

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, backstays are present and correctly affixed, that the boat has hatch covers if appropriate, and that the cox has their lifejacket fastened over their outermost layer. They may also be asked to perform random crew checks to ensure everyone in the boat has passed a swim test.

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 requiring 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.

Positions and 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 Torpids Placement of Marshals map, attached as *Appendix D* to this plan). These stations ensure that the marshals' line of sight provides full coverage of the race course. Additional marshals may be stationed on the day by the Event Committee and/or SU as needs dictate.

Key: ▼ - marshal normally given a megaphone.
† - marshal performs river checks with the SU.

- 1) **Head (of the River) ▼†**: (by the grey footbridge) communicates with river traffic entering the course from under Folly Bridge, asking them to moor temporarily at Mooring Point A if necessary, 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 Cox's stone or slightly downstream if conditions dictate more room is needed above the finish) operates the finish clacker on 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 Brasenose inclusive) acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Boathouse Island; communicates with river traffic entering the course from under the humpback bridge leading to Christ Church Meadow and liaises with the SU about this.
- 4) **Boathouse B †**: (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses on the downstream end of the Island, approximately from Oriel 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 Boat House and liaises with the SU about this.
- 5) **Univ †**: (outside Univ Boat House) acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Univ; monitors the raft and instructs crews to move any equipment on the raft that may impede racing.

- 6) *[Optional]* **Greenbank** †: (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; monitors traffic exiting the Cherwell Cut next to Christ Church Boat House.
- 7) **Longbridges** †: (outside Longbridges Boat House) acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Longbridges; communicates with river traffic either passing through the Gut or planning to moor temporarily at Mooring Point B, and liaises with the SU about this.
- 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; helps liaise with river traffic planning to moor temporarily at Mooring Point B.
- 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** †: (bottom end of the Gut, directly opposite Sea Scouts) 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.
- 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; communicates with other river users in the area; deals with swans; can be asked by the SU to move to the towpath side or roam up and down the non-towpath bank if operational requirements dictate.
- 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, asking them to moor temporarily at Mooring Point C if necessary, 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.
The Bottom Bunglines marshal must also perform boat checks on crews boating from the Isis Boathouse during Torpids proper.
- 14) **Bike Marshal**: to cycle along the towpath 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 radios, to other race officials between races.
- 15) *[optional]* **Bike Marshal #2**: they will set off 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 endeavour to remain approximately 1 minute ahead of racing crews, delaying at Race Desk if necessary.

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. Secondly, 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

- i. at the Head (by the pedestrian footbridge upstream of the course),
- ii. just downstream of Univ Boat House 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), and
- v. at the Isis Farmhouse to keep an eye on pedestrians entering from the pub, the lock or across the fields.

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 travelling downstream, in particular around race start time, should be encouraged but not instructed to dismount or to delay their journey for a few minutes.

Marshal Changeover

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, during racing itself, or, in the case of a race being klaxoned, until the SU has given permission for crews to start moving again. Outgoing marshals are expected to marshal with their replacement for at least five minutes to pass on any experience or relevant information from their shift. At the end of the day, marshals must stay in place until the SU dismisses them.

Marshalling for Rowing On

A slightly different marshal line-up is used for Rowing On (for positions on the river bank, refer to the Rowing On Placement of Marshals map, attached as *Appendix C* to this plan). 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]* **Greenbank**

- 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) **Start:** (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 Marshal**

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, crews warming up 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 should pass each other in accordance with normal regulations. Crews warming up may overtake other crews, but coxes must be certain to check for oncoming river traffic, especially cruisers, both above and below the Gut. Any crew wishing to boat from CORC or Falcon should seek permission from the Race Secretary (in advance) or the Senior Umpire (on the day).

Racing crews may take whatever line across the course that they wish, avoiding obstructions, though are advised to keep to the ideal racing line.

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 proceed down to the entrance of the Gut. (Longbridges crews should proceed directly through the Gut. If instructed by the SU, Longbridges crews should boat with bow balls pointing upstream, pushing off only when it is clear, before spinning immediately and proceeding 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

Crews boating from CORC and Falcon are rare and generally limited to those transporting boats back to CORC or Falcon from elsewhere. Boat with bow balls pointing upstream. Crews regularly boat from the Isis Boathouse, and they should proceed upstream and join the traffic waiting to race.

Crews boating from CORC or 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 SU 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, move to the towpath side, and proceed upstream well clear of the finish line under the instruction of the Finish and Head Marshals to make room for other crews. Crews should not spin until told to do so by the Head or Finish Marshal and must remain upstream of the finish line until the last crew of the division has finished.

Return Circulation - crews landing on Boathouse Island

Crews returning to Boathouse 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 warm-up circulation. (Crews boating from CORC, Falcon or Isis Boathouse rafts should therefore spin below their raft when it is safe to do so). Crews landing below the Gut may be asked to wait at Longbridges if this is necessary to ensure that the next division runs on time.

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. The crossover point is at the upstream entrance of the Gut.

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.

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 in case cruisers are passing.

Crews warming up above the Gut should spin directly onto their bungline after proceeding through the Gut.

Any crew which boats from below the Gut must warm up below the Gut, regardless of which bungline they are on,

No crew may row upstream through the Gut during their warmup.

Spinning

Unlike during 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 must not spin below their bunglines.

During the Race

No vessels other than the racing boats and the Following 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 that 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 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. Boathouse Island 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 Brasenose, 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.

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. The SU and/or Rowing Sabbatical Officer will liaise with other river users before the event to make them aware of when racing will be held.

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 with the EA guidance. When the locks at either end of the stretch (Iffley Lock downstream; Osney Lock upstream) are manned, river traffic is given verbal notice from the EA as they approach the Isis.

Craft are asked to proceed through the centre channel in between divisions and to pass one another port side to port side. Crews stick to the sides of the river but, in the event of a crew meeting a cruiser in mutual water, both crew and cruiser should 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 (*Appendix C & Appendix 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.

Swans

During Summer Eights arrangements are made to have the swans on the Isis removed from the river for the duration of the races. This should not be an issue during the autumn and winter as there are generally no swans on the Isis. Crews may proceed up the course picking their own line, avoiding all obstacles, including wildlife. If any swans are present, marshals report them to the SU in river checks and will draw them away from the ideal racing line before a division is started. The safety launches may also be used to help move swans clear of the racing line. If swans approach the racing line during racing, marshals will warn oncoming crews. If a collision with a swan is imminent, or otherwise unavoidable, marshals will sound klaxons to bring racing to a halt.

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 briefing 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**); Incident Coordinator (Sabbatical's mobile: **07917-643030**); the SU and the first aiders. The Iffley Lock keeper also has a landline (01865-777277). 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 Boat House. During Torpids, pre-scripted notices over the public address system will be used to highlight the impending races to towpath users.

Enquiries on the day of the event can be dealt with by the Race Secretary via the Race Desk Phone on 07341 500865, or by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (Oscar Hayden) on 07917 643030. Otherwise the Sabbatical Officer can be contacted at sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk.

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 through a Microsoft Teams briefing presentation 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/emergency gas horns (as described above), 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 their British Rowing Safety Audit, or otherwise are suspended for any reason, may not race. Crews infringing these rules or acting in an unsafe manner may be subject to fines, penalty bumps, removal of unsafe crew members or bank riders, or disqualification from the event. Information for competitors will be published before the event detailing the safety issues.

Entrants are required to have passed an OURCs swim test and entries will be checked against the OURCs swim test database

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 30 minutes) for all coxes, covering essential safety information; and a second section, for coxes new to Oxford-college bumps racing or wanting a refresher, to cover all aspects of coxing in the event, including Rowing On.

Novice coxes must have a bank rider unless exempted by the Senior Umpire or OURCs Captain of Coxes, other coxes may not. All crews are limited to a single bankrider at most.

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 OURCs Rules of Racing. 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 being damaged, and/or blocking the river or being stuck in the bank, the Incident Manager 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 who may include the Iffley Lock keeper, the Race Secretary, the OURCs Captain of Coxes, the boatmen and the EA to decide how to proceed. The SU must consider the proximity between racing crews and the Iffley Lock weirs, (or Hinksey Stream 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, *Appendix A & Appendix B*, and elaborated in *Appendix F, Stream Contingency Plans*). Options include, but are not limited to, moving the bunlines further away from the lock, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with Experienced/Senior coxes, running part divisions, or cancelling the entire day's racing.

In the event of high stream (and/or strong wind), boats should remain pointing upstream while waiting to make controlling the boat easier. After the finish, marshals will instruct crews to spin only once the division has finished, or shortly before if necessary. In windy or high stream conditions, the finish area may be extended/the course shortened to allow crews more room to navigate while waiting in the finish area.

Weather Conditions

The SU will monitor weather conditions, both by reference to weather forecasts before the event and to the weather as the event proceeds. If they consider it necessary to take the weather conditions into account, they will act accordingly. The entire day's racing may be cancelled if the SU deems conditions bad enough.

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. Strong wind will trigger contingency plans (included in the attached Risk Assessments, *Appendix A & Appendix B*). Options include, but are not limited to, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with Experienced/Senior coxes, running part divisions, or cancelling the entire day's racing.

Poor Visibility

In the instance of poor visibility, the SU will make the decision as to whether racing may start or continue. Fog will prevent racing if visibility is less than 100m. The SU will, as a matter of course, state which divisions should boat with bright white lights at bow and stern, which are visible through 360 degrees. Marshals will check this as part of the boat checks.

Precipitation & Cold

Rain will not typically halt racing, but the SU must consider if it threatens to swamp racing crews or poses a significant risk of hypothermia. Snow and cold conditions pose a further threat that might jeopardise the safety of competitors and therefore racing may have to be halted. 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.

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, by 'racing home' if appropriate, 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.

Racing may be continued or cancelled at the discretion of the Senior Umpire in conjunction with the Race Secretary. This will be announced over the public address system. Racing may only resume at least 30 minutes after the last lightning.

Medical Emergencies & First Aid

First Aid cover for the event will be provided by a minimum of two medical professionals. The First Aid unit will have a base on Boathouse Island, but the launch set aside for the medical staff will be headquartered at Longbridges Boat House. Emergency medical services are responsible for checking relevant qualifications are in place and up-to-date. Medical personnel will have First Aid response as their sole responsibility and will have full access to the facilities of Race Desk, including safety launches and radios, for the purposes of providing cover and response to an emergency. Medics will be informed through their agents of the nature of the event and have the Risk Assessments made available to them. All medical personnel engaged are done so on the basis of their qualification and professed skill. They are required to hold liability insurance of their own, or through their employer. They are responsible from when the SU declares the river open for racing until 30 minutes after the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

In the event of a medical emergency, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix E) is to be followed.

First Aid kits are present in all boathouses. Defibrillators are available at Pembroke Boat House (///glitz.actual.horn), Balliol Boat House (///speech.gums.stocks), University College Boat House (///nation.bunks.levels), Longbridges Boat House (///normal.when.sings), Falcon Boat House (///margin.rating.votes) and the Riverside Centre (///rider.burst.vouch).

The designated point to transfer a casualty to an ambulance is at the Riverside Centre off Donnington Bridge Rd (postcode - OX4 4AZ, ///copy.bath.ridge). In case this is not possible, access to Christ Church Meadow, University College Boat House and Longbridges Boat House for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: the key for the slip road from Donnington Bridge Rd to Longbridges (///causes.gets.scars) and the combination lock code for the track from Abingdon Rd to Univ (///pizza.cover.cult) are kept by the medical personnel, while barriers normally preventing access to Christ Church Meadow (///switch.caked.quest) are raised by arrangement. The Rowing Sabbatical Officer will be available by telephone (07917-643030) to give access advice.

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 Launches

During Rowing On and Torpids, a minimum of two powerboats are used by OURCs. The boats fulfil distinct roles:

Following Launch

Follows the races to the downstream end of Christ Church Meadow, or elsewhere as directed by the SU, which is ready to help participants and typically carries a member of the First Aid team. Between divisions the Following Launch helps to marshal crews in the start area. This launch must be driven at all times by qualified personnel (RYA level 2, or equivalent).

Responding Launch

Usually stationed at Longbridges Boat House for the use of the First Aid team. This launch must be driven at all times by qualified personnel (RYA level 2, or equivalent).

Spare Launch

OURCs may obtain a third launch, particularly if the racing is conducted under a high flag, to act as back-up and to carry out non-medical tasks as required, such as removing debris from the course, or transporting people or equipment. During the hours of racing, the Spare Launch must be driven by someone with an

RYA level 2 (or equivalent) qualification. Outside the hours of racing, in roles which do not involve transporting medical personnel or assisting crews, this launch may be driven by a launch driver who does not hold an RYA level 2 qualification but has been trained in and demonstrated the required competencies to safely handle a launch in this role and river conditions.

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 who are in the water (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 minimise 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 announcements during Torpids; and sending a senior individual from the Event Committee to assess potential difficulties and, liaising with the Race Secretary and Senior Umpire, deal with them accordingly.

Notices about the Regatta will be placed at entry points to 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 in order to mitigate potential risks from cyclists accompanying crews.

In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, marshals will report to Race Desk, who may postpone the start of a division or contact the Police as appropriate.

First Aid personnel will not be prevented from attending to members of the public.

The EA normally chooses to exercise their rights under a Harbour Master's notice to prohibit mooring and swimming along the course.

Use of Bicycles

During Torpids, tannoy announcements will be made along the race route warning towpath users (including spectators) that cyclists will be heading in an upstream direction on the towpath following the race. Such riders are advised to stay left. A Bike Marshal will also cycle just ahead of the first boat of each division of Torpids with the sole aim of providing additional warning to towpath users.

Numbers of cyclists accompanying divisions will be strictly controlled. One bank rider only shall accompany each boat, with sanctions being applied to clubs that disobey this rule. Occasional permission may be granted for an additional bank rider to accompany a crew by an Event Committee member or the SU – for example to assist in training a Novice cox.

These bank riders must wear an authorised racing bib. Bank rider bibs will be issued only to bank riders who have either attended a pre-regatta safety and conduct briefing or have undertaken such a briefing individually with a suitable member of the Event Committee prior to their race. The names of bank riders who have been briefed will be recorded and they will need to be briefed every eighteen months. While bank riders will wish to closely accompany their crews, they are reminded that safety comes first, other towpath users have an equal right to use the towpath, and their personal conduct is subject to both OURCs rules

and national legislation (with cyclists retaining full personal responsibility for their choice to cycle alongside the race).

Bank riders, umpires and the Bike Marshal(s) are advised to wear a helmet and to equip their bikes with bells. Cyclists must have lights in low visibility, must have working brakes, and must not interfere with the public enjoyment of the public right of way.

Cyclists should have sufficient attention on where they are going to avoid collisions and are prohibited from using any device (including hand-held cameras or phones) which prevents them using all available hands on the handlebars of their bicycle and giving due care and attention to the path ahead.

During racing, any bank rider involved in an incident on the towpath must stop immediately and provide initial assistance and/or information as required, alerting the nearest marshal and informing Race Desk via the marshal if the crew's cox is Novice. If the cox is Novice, the crew will be held once they have finished racing until either the bank rider can join them to accompany them back to their raft (if no longer needed at the incident), or Race Desk can send a substitute bank rider. If the cox is not Novice, the crew can proceed unaccompanied while the bank rider ensures that their part in the incident has been logged, along with their contact details. Marshals will relay information via the radio network.

During warm-up and return to the boathouse, any bank rider involved in an incident on the towpath must stop at once, as must their crew. The bank rider must alert the nearest marshal and proceed as above, with Race Desk expediting the substitute bank rider if the crew is yet to race and the cox Novice.

Marshals shall be responsible for reporting unsafe behaviour of accompanying cyclists. Captains will be made aware that they are responsible for the conduct of their coaches/bank riders and sanctions will be employed in the case of dangerous or inappropriate behaviour. In the event of an incident, Marshals will report to Race Desk, which will take appropriate action.

Incident De-Brief

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

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones)

OURCs cannot be held responsible for the use of any UAVs/drones as the towpath is a public right of way and Boathouse Island/Christ Church Meadow is not University land, but will not (cannot) issue permission for UAVs/drones to be used anyhow.

Any drone use should have the permission of the land owner, with the 'controller' adhering to the CAA 'Drone and Model Aircraft Code', and appropriate flyer and/or operator ID and insurance cover in place. In the event of somebody using a drone in a dangerous way, Thames Valley Police should be called on 101 (as per CAA guidance). Also, in line with CAA guidance, serious incidents or near misses can be reported to the CAA via [here](#). The Sports Safety Officer should also be advised in the event of any serious incident or near miss.

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) Bank riders 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 weirs.

The exact choice of the two, or their combination, depends on the stream and wind conditions and is elaborated in *Appendix F, Stream Contingency Plans*.

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. Details are included in *Appendix F, Stream Contingency Plans*.