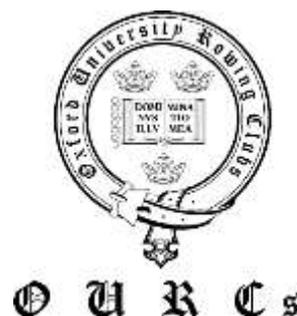


# Oxford University Rowing Clubs

## Event And Safety Plan Isis Winter League

### 2021-22



### **Introduction**

The Isis Winter League is a series of races held each academic year in order to provide regular competition for colleges. Two races have been held in Michaelmas Term, three more are typically run in Hilary Term, on Sunday afternoons. It is hoped that these races will help provide focus for crews through the winter, aiding retention of in particular senior oarspeople. The ability to train coxes and OURCs Marshals is expected to aid the smooth running of Bumps Races.

This academic year, three more will be held, subject to conditions, on the following dates:

- C. Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 (2<sup>nd</sup> Week Hilary Term)
- D. Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (4<sup>th</sup> Week Hilary Term)
- E. Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (6<sup>th</sup> Week Hilary Term)

Non-college clubs will be eligible to row. This event is open to adaptive rowers. Adaptive athletes are asked to declare relevant health conditions to the Race Secretary using [British Rowing Pre-Activity Questionnaire](#). Clubs entering adaptive athletes are asked to confirm that all adaptive boats comply with relevant British Rowing Rules of Racing.

Racing will occur from 1pm until approximately 5pm. The race course is upstream within the stretch from Iffley Lock to Folly Bridge. Racing is split into divisions of about 6-18 boats, racing at approximately 30 minute intervals. Division size and intervals are to be decided by consultation with the Senior Umpire.

The race is a Head Race: boats are set off one at a time with roughly 20 seconds between each boat, and each boat rows the full length of the course. The aim of racing is to row the length of the course in the fastest possible time, measured by two timers at the start and finish respectively. Competitors are subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety as specified by the Event Committee.

The race is run by the OURCs committee using the following system:

- **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.
- **Event Committee** - help the Race Secretary with the coordination of racing and event safety.
- **Race Desk** - Located at Longbridges Boat House, will oversee the marshals and assists the Senior Umpire. An Event Committee member, usually the Race Secretary, will be present at Race Desk at all times. They can be contacted by mobile phone or by two-way radio.
- **Senior Umpire** (SU, wearing a yellow jacket) – with the Event Committee, they ensure the safe and timely start of the races;

- **Marshals** – (wearing yellow bibs) work with Race Secretary and SU to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event. Details of their individual roles are given below.
- **Timers** - act as impartial race observers at the Start and Finish lines and record the time each crew passes their position.

The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.

## **COVID-19**

Planned COVID-19 mitigation measures are based on the current Event Management Health and Safety Guidance from Oxford University (current as of date of submission: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021). These are shown in detail in the Risk Assessment to avoid duplication. The Event Committee take responsibility for communicating and encouraging COVID-sensible behaviour in all those attending the event. Some areas where COVID risk mitigation measures will apply (for example inside boathouses) are the province of colleges and clubs. Mitigation measures detailed in the Risk Assessment follow the guidance of British Rowing, the sport's National Governing Body, who recommend that all elements of rowing, including competitions, are carried out at 'Rowing Level 2': largely normal rowing activity with implementation of British Rowing guidance.

Should Oxford be targeted for surge testing, additional directions from the Government and local authorities will be followed.

## ***Race Organisation***

### **Race Secretary**

The Race Secretary is the event organiser and has overall responsibility for the safe running of the event, in accordance with the event plan. The event plan does not restrict the Race Secretary 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 Umpires and members of the Event Committee. 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 Event 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 seek contact details for the EA for the day of the race.

### **Senior Umpire**

Senior Umpires are appointed by the Race Secretary, and are selected from the general ratified pool of SUs (as ratified by the captains of OURCs), or from the ratified pool of IWL-only SUs if such a pool is in existence (also ratified by the captains of OURCs). The Race Secretary 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.

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. 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 head 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 suitably clear of racing traffic, non-racing traffic, debris or any other obstruction.
- Whether the safety launch(es) and first aiders 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 course.

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) 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 that 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:

- Sufficient marshals are in place and providing full coverage of the stretch with working two-way radios.
- The stream conditions are sufficiently safe.
- The weather conditions are sufficiently safe.
- First Aid cover is available at the river, and safety launches are afloat and ready.
- Any non-racing traffic already on the stretch has been spoken to and is aware of the event and circulation pattern.
- The Race Secretary and their 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 event, the coordinating SU for the team 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. These measures may include, but are not limited to: restrictions on coxing status; restrictions on racing divisions; use of smaller divisions; changes in the intervals between divisions; and provision of extra safety launches.

The SU will ensure that the decisions are agreed with the Race Secretary 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) 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.

## **Marshals**

All marshals are issued with a High Visibility jacket, a two-way radio and a copy of the starting order. Marshals in key positions are also given megaphones as appropriate. Marshals will be provided with summary notes of specific duties for their marshalling position where appropriate.

All marshals shall be briefed prior to the start of their duties by a member of the Event Committee. The brief will cover individual duties and safety procedures. If relevant, depending on the needs of entrants, marshals will also be briefed on how to effectively give instructions to hearing impaired crews, or those with learning disabilities.

Marshals are responsible for ensuring that the race proceeds safely and that all river traffic, including race traffic, is in the right place and aware of where they are going. Before the start of each division the Senior Umpire will ask certain marshals (outlined below) to confirm that the course is clear of any obstructions that may impact racing. Marshals should report to Race Desk if any significant number of pedestrians or bystanders are present, and to request support if appropriate.

During the race itself the marshals are observers, ensuring a safe and fair contest, they will also warn any bystanders or members of the public of approaching cyclists, although this duty may be taken by a Bike Marshal if present.

In the event of the river being blocked to imminent oncoming crews during racing the marshals will sound their safety klaxons to halt racing and radio for all others to do the same. A division should also be klaxoned in the event that someone has fallen in the water where they may be in danger from racing crews, or if First Aid is immediately required to be transported via safety launch to attend to an incident.

Crews hearing a klaxon will stop racing immediately, and listen carefully for further instructions from the marshals, giving way to the safety launches.

## **Positions and individual duties**

Key: ▼ - Marshal has a Megaphone † - Marshal performs river checks with the SU

1. Head ▼ †: Approximately 50m upstream of the finish line. Instructs crews to move upstream to clear the finish line and instructs crews when to spin; Communicates with other river traffic entering the course.
2. Finish ▼ †: At the finish (between the upstream end of Boat House Island and the Cox Stone) Instructs crews to clear the finish line; informs crews that they have completed the race course.
3. Boathouses A †: Upstream half of Boat House Island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to BR and EA regulations.
4. Boathouses B †: Downstream half of Boat House Island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to BR and EA regulations; monitors river traffic emerging from the Cherwell cut.
5. Univ †: Outside University College Boat House Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to BR and EA regulations.
6. [optional] Green Banks †: Approximately mid-way between Univ and Longbridges. Monitors that crews are keeping to the circulation pattern; checks for river traffic emerging from the Cherwell Cut.
7. Longbridges †: Outside Longbridges Boat House. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to BR and EA regulations.
8. Top Gut ▼ †: Mouth of the gut. Keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start.
9. Bottom Gut ▼ †: Downstream end of the gut. Monitors that crews are keeping to the correct circulation pattern.
10. Donnington Bridge †: On the non-towpath side, roams between Falcon Raft and City of Oxford Rowing Club Raft as required. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to BR and EA regulations; Communicates with other river users in the area.
11. Start #1: Upstream section of the marshalling area. Assists the SU marshalling crews before the start
12. Start #2 ▼ †: Downstream section of the marshalling area. Assists the SU marshalling crews before the start; warns and informs other river traffic of the circulation pattern to prevent obstruction of the course.
13. [optional] Bike Marshal: Cycles ahead of each division. Provides early warning to bystanders and the general public on the towpath of the upcoming race.

The Race Desk oversees the Marshals and assists the SU. Operational decision on the deployment of additional Marshals will lie with the Event Committee and the SU.

The Senior Umpire will be situated a short distance below the designated start line.

A River Check is the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. The SU shall call for a River Check by the Marshals (marked †) before each division. The Marshals are instructed to look out for and report boats, swans and floating debris. The race will only be started by the SU when they are satisfied that the course is suitably clear of obstructions.

## ***Circulation Pattern***

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of the event, a strict non racing circulation pattern is enforced. In the following explanatory notes, left and right refer to the course as seen by a coxswain, i.e. port (strokeside) and starboard (bowside) respectively.

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

Boat with bow-balls pointing downstream, keeping close to the bank from which they boated down to the entrance of the Gut. (Longbridges crews should proceed directly through the Gut.) When they get to the Top Gut marshal they should cross if necessary 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 start marshal. Marshalling crews will be asked to keep tucked into a particular bank, as instructed by the SU and start marshals. Crews will be started by the Senior Umpire, and marshalling should move up towards the Senior umpire as each crew is set off.

### **Racing crews**

During the race crews may take whatever line across the course that they wish, avoiding obstructions. Slower crews should give way to faster crews, and may be subject to time penalties if they are deemed by an independent Event Committee to have caused an obstruction. 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 marshals to make room for other crews. Crews should not spin until told to do so by the Finish 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.

## ***Other River Traffic***

During the period in which the Isis Winter League is held, there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear in the river. Cold weather is likely to deter swimmers and paddle boarders, despite the increasing popularity of these activities. As river craft approach the course there are warning signs posted, and they are informed of the circulation pattern by the head and start marshals.

The race is never started if other craft will obstruct the course. Craft are asked to proceed through the centre channel in between divisions and pass one another in accordance with the Regulations for Avoidance of Collisions.

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 obey these Regulations.

Craft proceeding along the course may be asked to moor at Longbridges, near the Isis Farmhouse, or near the Finish if a division is about to begin.

## ***Swans***

During summer events 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. Following the practice of head racing, crews may proceed up the course picking their own line, avoiding all obstacles, including wildlife.

## ***Communications***

Two-way radios are used for communication between race control, the marshals and the medical personnel (who also use their own communication equipment).

These are distributed as follows: A minimum of 13 radios for use by the marshals, plus one for each of: the Environment Agency, each Safety Boat, Race Desk, and the Senior Umpire. Call signs are assigned according to position, and are explained at the marshalling briefings.

In addition to radio communications, we have the use of a mobile phone held by Race Desk, the number will be published to competitors at least 1 week before the event, the Iffley lock keeper has a land-line (01865 777277) and the Christ Church Lodge is available if access to the meadow is required (01865 276150).

Enquiries can be dealt with by the Race Secretary via the Race Desk number, or by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (James Lucas) who will be available on the day of the event on 07341 500865, otherwise at [sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk](mailto:sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk).

## ***Adaptive athletes***

All adaptive athletes entering IWL will be members of the City of Oxford Rowing Club (CORC) adaptive squad; coaches of this squad provided advice and guidance when writing this Event Plan and Risk Assessment, which is tailored to the potential needs of this year's athletes.

Adaptive athletes are asked to declare relevant health conditions to the Race Secretary using [British Rowing Pre-Activity Questionnaire](#). This year, entries may be expected from visually impaired and hearing impaired athletes, and athletes with learning disabilities. All athletes will row in sliding-seat boats. Athletes with pre-existing conditions such as epilepsy are (along with their club) expected to be managing these in line with medical and BR guidance. Individualised accommodations will be made depending on the needs of each athlete, as detailed on the Risk Assessment: this includes making safety teams aware of relevant conditions, and may involve additional briefing of marshals. 'Individual rescue plans' for each adaptive athlete will be shared with Safety Teams. These plans will be drawn up following Entries by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer and the athlete and/or coach, as appropriate.

Access for adaptive athletes to the river will be through City of Oxford Rowing Club (their "home club"). The accessibility of facilities at CORC, as well as appropriate landing stages for launching and landing boats for adaptive athletes will therefore be managed by CORC in accordance with their existing Risk Assessments and Accessibility Plans.

## ***Safety***

### **Competitor Safety**

#### **Event Management**

Marshals are thoroughly briefed prior to the event on their duties (as described above) by members of the Event Committee and on the advice of a Senior Umpire. 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 marine air horns/klaxons, bringing all racing to an immediate halt. On hearing a klaxon over the radios or anywhere on the course, all marshals sound their klaxons.

Clubs that have not submitted a safety audit to the BR may not race. Crews infringing OURCs rules or acting in an unsafe manner may be subject to fines, or disqualification from the event. Information for competitors will be published before the event, detailing the safety issues. Coxes of OURCs crews will be OURCs registered; non-OURCs clubs are responsible for providing a competent steersperson for each of their crews entered.

*Particular attention is paid to rules covering the use of life jackets, bow balls and heel restraints and other safety equipment in the risk assessment.*

#### **Bank Riders**

Novice coxes must have a bank rider unless exempted by the Senior Umpire or Captain of Coxes. Other coxes may choose to or not. Coxless boats should use discretion based on the experience of the steersman and stream conditions whether to use a bank rider or not, although it is recommended that a bank rider is present.

## **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. OURCs has developed a contingency plan to allow some racing to continue (detailed in the Risk Assessment). Options include but are not limited to moving the start positions further away from the lock, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, running smaller divisions and cancelling the entire day's racing.

In the event of the EA displaying Amber or Red Boards at the local locks (indicating a strong or rising stream), it is understood that the EA must be consulted and their recommendations adhered to.

## **Lightning**

In the event of a lightning storm, all racing will cease and competitors instructed to take suitable cover at the first available moment. The fastest way of achieving this might be to complete a division if racing is about to begin. Racing may be continued or cancelled at the discretion of the Senior Umpire in conjunction with the Race Secretary.

## **Medical Emergency**

### **First Aid**

First aid cover for the event will be provided by a minimum of two medical professionals, through Epione Medical Services Ltd (EMS). EMS are responsible for checking relevant qualifications are in place and up to date. EMS 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 assessment made available to them. All EMS staff 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 the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

First Aid kits are present in all boathouses and safety launches. Defibrillators are available at Balliol Boathouse (///ally.pilots.cloth) and University Boathouse (///nation.bunks.levels).

The designated point to transfer a casualty to an ambulance is at Riverside Centre off Donnington Bridge (postcode - OX4 4AZ, ///copy.bath.ridge). In case this is not possible, access to Christ Church meadow (///scrap.wiring.mixed) and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the slip road from Donnington Bridge (///causes.gets.scars) is kept at the Race Desk, and barriers normally preventing access to Christ Church Meadow are lowered by arrangement. The Rowing Sabbatical Officer will be available by telephone 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 Boats**

At least two powerboats are used by OURCs during the event. At least one boat will be used to give First Aid the quickest possible access to an incident. This may be the boat used to follow the race, depending on conditions and the choice of the First Aid Unit. All safety boats will be driven at all times by a qualified driver (RYA Level 2, or equivalent e.g. BSAC). All safety boats will be provided

with an 'individual rescue plan' for each adaptive athlete, detailing the specific requirements of that athlete in the case of a capsize.

If there are sufficient launches for a 'spare launch', this may be used for duties that do not include transporting medical personnel or assisting crews (such as transporting equipment, or removing debris from the river), and, outside the hours of racing, may be driven by a launch driver who has been trained in and demonstrated the required competencies to safely handle a launch in this role and river conditions. During the hours of racing the spare launch must be driven by a RYA Level 2 qualified driver (or equivalent e.g. BSAC).

## **Bystander Safety**

Due to the very low number of bystanders expected, the handling of their safety will rest with the Marshals. As well as reporting to the SU on the state of the river prior to racing, Marshals will also report on numbers of pedestrians to the Race Desk. Marshals and the use of clear signs at entry points onto the towpath will warn pedestrians of oncoming races. In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, Marshals will report to the Race Desk, who may postpone the start of a division or contact the Police as appropriate.

Numbers of cyclists accompanying divisions will be strictly controlled. One coach only shall accompany each boat, with sanctions being applied to clubs that disobey this rule. Cyclists must not interfere with the public enjoyment of the public right of way. Occasional permission may be granted for an additional cyclist to accompany a crew by an Event Committee member or the SU - for example to assist in training a novice cox.

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, and sanctions will be employed in the case of dangerous or inappropriate behaviour. In the event of an accident, Marshals will report to the Race desk, which will take appropriate action.

Crews will be reminded by e-mail before the event of the need for accompanying cyclists to give way to pedestrians and make safety a priority.

## ***End of Event***

At the end of racing the Event Committee should prioritise announcing the times of the days racing. These times should be posted on the OURCs website within 24 hours of the end of racing. The Senior Umpire and the Event Committee will have a short debrief after each event with the aim of promoting the smooth running of future events.