



Autumn Fours 2025

Event and Safety Plan

Introduction

Autumn Fours is an annual inter-collegiate small boats competition that will be held on Sunday 9th November 2025. The river will be closed to normal training from 11:30 am until approximately 5pm, with racing expected to start at noon.

The competition will be run as a side-by-side knockout tournament: two crews will race alongside each other from Longbridges Boat House up to the Cox Stone (the bumps finish line). The winner (judged by the bows) will progress to the next round. Racing will occur from midday until all racing is completed, or the light conditions are deemed to be too low for safe racing to occur. In the event of a low number of entries, the event may be run as a “round robin” competition where the winner will be the one with the most wins. In the event of a tie, the winner will be the victor of the race between the tied boats.

There will be separate Men’s and Women’s tournaments. The competition shall contain events for Women’s and Men’s coxed fours. Additional races for smaller boats, including exhibition events for mixed boats (e.g. doubles), may be run if the Senior Umpire and Race Secretary agree there is space in the program, a sufficient number of entries, and that the weather and river conditions are good enough for the safe running of the races.

Competitors may be subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety, as specified by the Event Committee. Entries per club may be limited due to time constraints. This plan details the logistics of the event 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 Assessment is attached as *Appendix A* to this event plan.

This event plan exists in addition to the OURCs General Rules of Racing and Rules of Autumn Fours. All information within the Event Plan, Instructions to Competitors, and Risk assessments works in conjunction with the OURCs Rules of Racing and Code of Conduct, found at ourcs.co.uk.

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).

Entry Restrictions

Entry will be restricted to “non-novice”¹ college crews, and all entrants must be valid members of an OURCs member club as defined in 1.4 of the OURCs Constitution. Novice coxswains will be allowed to enter, but only if they have more than one term’s experience. In addition to the general eligibility requirements specified in the OURCs Rules of Racing A1.6, no athlete may be a member of two crews entered for the same competition. Honorary members of a boat club may enter, and each College Boat Club is permitted one seat filled with an associate member in its Men’s crews and one seat filled with an associate member in its Women’s crews.

Competitors may be subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety, as specified by the Event Committee. Entries per college may be limited due to time constraints.

¹ “Non-novice” crews are defined as those for which all crew members have at least one term’s experience or equivalent.

Race Management

Summary of Race Officials

The race is 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. The Race Secretary can generally be contacted via secretary@ourcs.co.uk.
- ii. **Event Committee** – help the Race Secretary with the 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 C, 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 the Sports Safety Officer (call ASAP for severe incidents/injuries including immersion of a non-rower), College if a student, and British Rowing.
 - Where it is necessary for different groups to be given information which the IC has collected on behalf of OURCs, they shall pass information to those required parties.
- v. **Senior Umpire (SU)**, wearing a yellow high-visibility jacket with ‘Senior Umpire’ printed on the back) – situated at the start. 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 C, 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** (wearing yellow high-visibility jackets) – 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.

The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.

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. This 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 (in consultation with the coordinating SU) and members of the Event Committee.

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 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 and are selected from the general ratified pool of SUs (as ratified by the captains of OURCs member clubs). 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 after significant breaks in racing and repeat at their discretion sufficiently to ensure that they are satisfied the river is clear to start racing. The SU will consider the following (below) when starting each race and will relate it to the nature of side-by-side 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 race course is suitably clear of racing traffic, non-racing traffic, debris or any other obstruction.
- 4) Whether the safety launch(es) 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 so will try to start each race 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 race. 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 college 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;
 - a. A klaxon demonstration has been carried out over the radio to all race marshals;
- 2) the stream conditions are safe;
- 3) the weather conditions are 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; and
- 6) 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, a 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. 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, restrictions on boat classes and provision of extra safety launches. The Coordinating SU will consult 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 Secretary and/or Rowing Sabbatical Officer) 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, Sports Federation, and/or boatmen) are kept informed of the measures being implemented, as far as necessary, and that information on the measures is available to all college boat club members, including Senior Members.

Marshals

Briefing

All marshals shall be briefed prior to the start of their duties by a suitably experienced member of the Event Committee. The briefing will cover individual duties and safety procedures. Marshals will be provided with summary notes of specific duties for their marshalling position where appropriate.

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 race course are issued a klaxon/emergency air horn. 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 Crossing and Bike Marshals, perform river checks, the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. River checks are requested at the SU's discretion, and it is essential that the river be shown 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. 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.

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 where 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.

Duties for Raft Marshals (Boathouses A and B, Univ, Longbridges)

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. Coxes of bowloaded boats should be reminded that they may not wear an automatically inflating lifejacket. Raft marshals may also be asked to perform random crew checks to ensure racing crews are as entered on the entry system and therefore ensuring everyone in the boat has passed a swim test.

The raft marshals should also check that suitable lights are attached when appropriate. The later races which require lights will be marked on the draw, but the SU may require lights for additional races in the event of poor visibility.

The raft marshals facilitate the timely starting of races by asking crews to push off promptly in time for their race. 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 (for land/crew issues) or the SU (for river/racing issues) when they are unsure.

All boats will be checked by a marshal before boating.

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 Placement of Marshals map, attached as *Appendix B* 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 the Head (signed 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; 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) judges the finish on the bows of the boats, operates the finish clacker to inform crews when they have finished racing, and informs Race Desk of the result; instructs crews to move upstream to clear the finish line.
- 3) **Boathouses 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) **St John's Crossing**: (middle of Boathouse Island, just upstream of the Univ raft, near St John's/Corpus and Jesus/Keble boathouses) instructs crews coming downstream to land at Univ when it is safe to cross over and land downstream; does not take part in river checks, but has a radio.
- 5) [*optional at the end of the day*] **Univ Crossing ▼**: (upstream of the Univ raft on the towpath) instructs crews crossing to land at Univ and watches out for any safety issues with crossing; does not take part in river checks, but has a radio; late in the day, once all the boats have been checked, the Univ Raft Marshal may assume the Univ Crossing duties as well.
- 6) **Boathouses 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; takes over the Christ Church Crossing duties if the Christ Church Crossing Marshal is removed.
- 7) **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; radios SU to check the course is clear before allowing crews to push off; takes over the Univ Crossing duties if the Univ Crossing Marshal is removed.
- 8) [*optional at the end of the day*] **Christ Church Crossing**: (on Boathouse Island by Christ Church raft and the Cherwell Cut) controls the crossing point into the Greenbank transit lane in conjunction with Greenbank Crossing Marshal; communicates with river traffic entering the course from the Cherwell Cut next to Christ Church Boat House, and liaises with the SU about this; does not take part in river

checks, but has a radio; the Boathouses B Marshal takes over the Christ Church Crossing duties if the Christ Church Crossing Marshal is removed.

- 9) **Greenbank Crossing ▼**: (located slightly downstream of Univ Boat House) works with the Christ Church Crossing Marshal to control the crossing point into the Greenbank transit lane; does not take part in river checks, but has a radio.
- 10) **Longbridges †**: (outside Longbridges Boat House) acts as a **raft marshal** for crews boating from Longbridges; communicates with river traffic emerging from the Gut or planning to moor temporarily at Top Gut (signed Mooring Point B), and liaises with the SU about this.
- 11) **Top Gut †**: (mouth of the Gut) keeps note of boats that have passed downstream so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews ready to race; informs crews as they pass whether their opposition is already downstream; instructs paired crews to move up onto start stations, coordinating with the SU; helps liaise with river traffic planning to moor temporarily at Top Gut.
- 12) **Bottom Gut †**: (bottom end of the Gut, directly opposite Sea Scouts) makes sure that crews are keeping to the correct circulation pattern. Feeds paired crews through the Gut.
- 13) **Donnington Bridge †▼**: (by Donnington Bridge on the city side) informs crews warming up of any changes to the schedule and ensures crews are in the start area and paired up in ample time; controls crews spinning downstream of the Gut during their warm-up; should track crews to see if they are the first crew of a race to pass them or not, advising them to take an earlier or later spin to allow for pairing up; crews should be paired up once both crews are below the Gut and sent to the start as soon as practical; communicates with approaching river traffic, and liaises with the SU about this. **N.B. this should be an experienced marshal sufficiently briefed on appropriate viewing locations to see all river traffic.**
- 14) [optional] **Isis Boathouse/Bike Marshal**: cycles new radios or other equipment to marshals along the course as needed; may periodically cycle ahead of races to warn towpath users that a race is coming; able to cross to Falcon or City if crews are boating from there and act as a spare marshal. Will be briefed on boat checks to **raft marshal** if necessary, especially for crews boating from **Isis Boathouse**.

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 start time 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 together with their replacement for at least five minutes, including at least one race, 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.

Circulation Pattern

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of the event, a strict non-racing circulation pattern is enforced. This is illustrated on the Circulation Pattern map, attached as *Appendix B* to this plan.

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. There will be two stations which will be preassigned to each crew: “County” being the station closest to the towpath and “City” being on the Boathouse Island side.

Crews boating from Boathouse Island

Crews based on Boathouse Island should boat from rafts at the downstream end of the island to allow crews room to land, with bow-balls pointing downstream. They will then be held at Christ Church raft by the Christ Church Crossing or Boathouses B Marshal before being allowed to cross, when the river is clear, over to Univ and down the Greenbank transit lane as directed by the Greenbank Crossing Marshal. On returning, via the transit lane on the City side of the river, crews should land on the upstream end of Boathouse Island.

Crews boating from Univ Raft

Crews based at Univ will boat with bow-balls pointing downstream and push off immediately after a race has passed, having received confirmation that it is clear from the Univ Marshal, and go straight into the Greenbank transit lane moving down straight into the Gut. On returning from racing, crews intending to land at Univ raft will progress down the transit lane on the City side of the river until the middle of Boathouse Island, roughly level with St John's/Corpus Christi Boat House. There they will wait in the transit lane on the City side under the control of the St John's Crossing Marshal until instructed. When it is safe to do so, the St John's Crossing Marshal will instruct crews to cross over and the Univ Crossing Marshal will monitor them until they land at Univ, facing downstream, as quickly as possible.

Crews boating from Longbridges

Crews boating from Longbridges will 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. After racing, crews will move down the City-side transit lane and will wait at the Christ Church raft to receive permission from the Christ Church Crossing or Boathouses B Marshal to cross to the County side. They will then go down the Greenbank transit lane and land pointing downstream at Longbridges.

Crews boating from Isis Boathouse

Crews boating from the Isis Boathouse will proceed upstream from their landing stage and join the boats queuing to race. When returning from the finish, they will use the transit lanes and be held at Christ Church raft by the Christ Church Crossing or Boathouses B Marshal before being allowed to cross, when the river is clear, over to Univ and down the Greenbank transit lane as directed by the Greenbank Crossing Marshal. They will then remain on the county side of the river below the gut, spin and land upstream as normal.

Warming Up

Crews will warm up below the Gut, only spinning to go back downstream after checking with the Donnington Bridge Marshal. The Top Gut Marshal will pair up crews just inside the Gut and then call up the pairs when necessary towards the start stations (City side or County side). Each racing crew will race up a buoyed lane from Longbridges to the finish.

Other River Traffic

When Autumn Fours is held, there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. Cold weather is likely to deter swimmers and paddle boarders, despite the increasing popularity of these activities. Races are never started until the river is sufficiently clear of river traffic and other obstructions. The Coordinating SU and/or Rowing Sabbatical Officer will liaise with other regular 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, advised on how to observe the Harbour Master's Notice, and instructed to 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.

If a race is in progress, large craft such as Salter's cruisers intending to proceed onto the course will be asked to moor at the Head (signed Mooring Point A) or Top Gut (signed Mooring Point B) until the race has finished. If, however, the craft insists on proceeding, the race will be stopped. Large craft take the centre of the river. Small craft, such as narrow boats or hire boats, may use the transit lanes to go downstream, holding at the Christ Church crossing point under marshal control until instructed to cross over. Small craft proceeding upstream will be instructed to follow a set of racing crews up the race course. 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.

Swans

Swans should not be an issue during Autumn Fours as there are generally none on the Isis by this point. If any swans are present, marshals report them to the SU in river checks. The safety launches may 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

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 launch, Race Desk and the Senior Umpire. The lock keeper and the local cruiser companies are provided with OURCs radios and chargers on a long-term loan basis.

Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at the marshalling briefings.

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.

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 (Sophie Kubik) on 07917 643030. Otherwise the Sabbatical Officer can be contacted at ourcs.sabbatical@sport.ox.ac.uk.

Safety

Event Management

Note – in the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix C) should be followed.

Marshals are thoroughly briefed beforehand 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. If any incident occurs that could potentially jeopardise the safety of crews, marshals sound klaxons/emergency air 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 which have not submitted their British Rowing Safety Audit, or which are otherwise suspended for any reason, 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.

Entrants are required to have passed an OURCs swim test within the last six years and those entering in singles, pairs or doubles are further required to have taken a capsize drill and have it registered on the OURCs database. Entries will be checked against the OURCs swim test/capsize drill database.

Coxes will be OURCs registered; OURCs clubs entering coxless boats are responsible for providing a competent steersperson for each of those crews.

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

Weather

Stream Conditions

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the Coordinating SU will liaise with 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 (included in the attached Risk Assessment, *Appendix A*). Options include, but are not limited to, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with Experienced/Senior coxes, and 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. 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 Coordinating 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 unsafe.

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 Assessment, (*Appendix A*). Options include, but are not limited to, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with Experienced/Senior coxes and shortening the course, with consideration given to forbidding any above-Gut crew from entering the Gut.

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 for which races crews

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 pose a significant risk of hypothermia. Snow and cold conditions pose a further threat that might jeopardise the safety of competitors and therefore racing may need 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, safely considering the facilities available to them. The heightened risk involved with any participant entering the water must also be considered, as must the safety of those cycling on the towpath.

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 believed 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.

Racing may be continued or cancelled at the discretion of the Coordinating Senior Umpire in conjunction with the Race Secretary. Racing may only resume at least 30 minutes after the last lightning seen less than 30 seconds before its thunder.

Medical Emergencies & First Aid

First Aid cover for the event will be provided by a minimum of two medical professionals, typically from Epione Medical, based 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 are engaged on the basis of their qualifications and professed skills. 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 15 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 C) 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 at Race Desk, 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

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. All safety boats will be driven at all times by a qualified driver (RYA Level 2, or equivalent).

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).

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 Race Desk. Marshals and/or signs at entry points onto the towpath will warn members of the public of oncoming races. In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, marshals will report this to Race Desk who may postpone the start of a race or contact the Police as appropriate.

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 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 C) is to be followed.

Numbers of cyclists accompanying racing 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.

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).

Cyclists involved in racing are advised to wear a helmet and to equip their bikes with bells. Cyclists involved in racing 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 involved in racing must pay sufficient attention to where they are going in order to avoid collisions and are prohibited from using any device (including hand-held cameras or phones) which prevents them from using all available hands on the handlebars of their bicycle and giving due care and attention to the path ahead.

During racing, any racing-related cyclist 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,

and the Incident Coordinator, via the marshal if the crew's cox is Novice. If the cox is Novice, the crew will be held at the finish 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.

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.

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 this [link](#). 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.

End of the Event

At the end of racing, the Event Committee should prioritise announcing the results of the day's racing, and these 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.