



O U R C s

Captain's Meeting Minutes

7pm, Thursday 8th week Hilary Term 2021

11th March 2021

Chair: Alexander Bebb (OUBC President)

1. Register and Welcome

Attendance:

College Clubs: 78 (64 voting)

Squads: 2

OURCs Committee: 9

Total Voting Body: 75

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- Available at: <https://ourcs.co.uk/organisation/meetings/>

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Transfers under A1.2 – Beth Carter to speak

Objections may only be made on the grounds that:

- *Athlete is not a member of the college they are transferring from*
- *Athlete has never been a member of the college they are transferring to*
- Nick Elkington: Linacre to Christ Church (papers in order)

No objections. Ratified.

5. Bumps Updates: Jack Woodward to speak

- Torpids Rules, Smaller Division Sizes
- Spectators
- Repercussions for rowing with COVID symptoms
- Online briefings
- Live Streaming
- Earlier Entries Closing Date

The secretary explained that due to envisioned COVID restrictions and safety concerns related to lack of experience due to training interruptions over the last two-years, the format of potential bumps racing next year will be different to a usual Trinity term.

Firstly, Torpids rules will be used as they encourage safer racing and early concessions from crews. Furthermore, divisions are likely to be smaller in size than a usual year, but there will be more of them. Crews will be spread evenly across 13 divisions to maximise participation and minimise the risk of raft/boathouse clashes and on-water accidents.

Clubs will be asked to strongly discourage spectators due to COVID concerns, and OURCs are exploring ways to minimise spectators on the towpath. Some of these options include seeking permission from the local council to close the towpath during racing (other than competitors travelling to their boathouses) and having extra marshals/security at entrance and exit points or along the stretch to move people along. If at any point during the day the number of spectators is too large, racing will be halted until people have moved along.

If any athlete is found to be competing knowing that they have symptoms of COVID there will be severe consequences. If aware, the crew will be disqualified from racing, the club/competitor will be fined, and the college senior member will be contacted.

All briefings for this event will be online. Given spectators will not be permitted, OURCs are exploring live streaming options to discourage spectators from coming to the meadows whilst ensuring that people can still watch the event if they wish.

The entries closing date will be earlier than usual so that competitors know when they will be racing and can plan around that (individual timings may be different due to crews being split evenly across divisions).

6. Temporary Amendments to Rules of Racing: Jack Woodward to speak

New Section - Temporary Rule Changes Currently in Place

Please note: all rules with the prefix 'TEMP' Take priority in the case of contradictions within these rules.

TEMP 1: The bumps races occurring in Trinity Term 2021 will be held in 7th week, from Tuesday to Friday, with Rowing On occurring on Saturday of 6th week.

TEMP 2: For the bumps races in Trinity Term 2021, the sizes of the divisions and which crews are required to row on will be determined by the OURCs secretary after the close of entries, in conjunction with the SUs. There will be 13 divisions regardless of which bumps charts are used.

TEMP 3: The substitution rules (A3.5.a-e) will not be in place in the bumps races of Trinity Term 2021. Instead, the rules will be determined by the OURCs and the SUs closer to the event date, taking into account the envisioned COVID restrictions at the time. These will be circulated prior to the entries closing.

TEMP 4: The bumps races occurring in Trinity Term 2021 will follow the Torpids format of crews continuing racing after being bumped, whilst the crew that has bumped them winds down and stops racing, however people who have been selected for a university squad boat will not be prohibited from racing.

Proposed: Jack Woodward (OURCs/Worcester)

Seconded: Beth Carter (OURCs)

TEMP 5: In the bumps races occurring in Trinity Term 2021, coxes will be permitted to cox more than one boat, if this is the safer course of action and complies with the substitution rules determined by the college.

TEMP 6: In the bumps races occurring in Trinity Term 2021, associate coxes in fixed divisions will be at the discretion of the event committee.

Proposed: Jack Woodward (Worcester/OURCs)

Seconded: Thomas Surridge (Mansfield/OURCs)

TEMP 7: The bumps races taking place in Trinity Term 2021 will use and inform the Torpids bumps charts (using the final finishing order with re-insertions from Torpids 2019).

OR

The bumps races taking place in Trinity Term 2021 will use and inform the Summer Eights bumps charts (using the final finishing order with re-insertions from Summer Eights 2019).

Proposer: Jack Woodward (Worcester/OURCs)

Seconded: Beth Carter (OURCs)

The secretary stated that, if passed, this new section will be inserted at the top of the 'Rules of Racing' to make it clear which temporary rules are in place, and to make it much easier to insert/remove temporary rules without compromising other areas of the document.

The Captain of Coxes explained the rationale behind some of the rule changes. As discussed in the previous agenda item, the event will be held on Tuesday-Friday of 7th week Trinity term in order to minimise the risk of crowds of spectators gathering, as Saturday is usually the busiest day. Substitution and rules regarding associates will be decided closer to the time depending on COVID guidance coming from the UK government and British Rowing, though this will be communicated well in advance of entries closing.

A captain asked why OURCs were not considering a pseudo event; as a small club a lot of their senior rowers are finalists and so will prioritise academic commitments over rowing, so they do not feel that it is safe for them to enter crews. The secretary responded that safety is more important than bumps races; a competitive event encourages crews to concede earlier and avoid further bumps or penalties given the potential impact on the start order for the next year, and earlier concessions reduce the likelihood of dangerous crashes.

Another captain stated that they believe that the event being held in 7th week (as opposed to 5th week) in a summer term provides plenty of time to enter safe crews. Given the extra training time in the afternoon/evenings and the extra 2 weeks before the event happens, they feel as though this will be sufficient. This captain further stated that their club would prefer to use the charts from Summer Eights 2019 given that the event is being held in Summer term and their club loses a lot of finalists relative to Hilary term, and so would struggle to compete in their Torpids division in this term.

A captain stated that they do not follow the safety argument for having a competitive event because the event would not be competitive in the same way as a typical year. They are more concerned about the whether the bumps will count, as this could have a longstanding impact on their club's

position on the river. Another captain responded that crews will have just as much experience as they would for a competitive Torpids (in a year which saw poor rowing conditions in Michaelmas term). The secretary also stated that the fact that there is a potential impact on bumps standings is exactly what encourages safer behaviour in these events, as crews will concede early to avoid being knocked off course and plummeting down the division and will also behave safely to avoid penalty bumps. It was raised that OURCs could consider giving penalty bumps which count in the official charts whilst still running a pseudo-event in order to encourage safe behaviour.

It was suggested that if the event runs with Torpids rules on Eights charts there could be a huge difference in the quality of adjacent crews which is some cause for safety concern, the captain suggested that this could also be risky in terms of encouraging late concessions as crews do not want to be over bumped, and so may be reluctant to concede in such cases.

A captain asked whether OURCs have considered allowing withdrawals based on safety grounds and whether this would carry a penalty or not. The secretary stated that this decision is completely at the discretion of the SUs who are not at the meeting to answer, however they imagine that the SUs will be understanding in such circumstances and may offer zero penalty withdrawals in some cases. A concern was raised which largely affects smaller clubs – with the uncertainty surrounding the number of students who will be allowed to return to university next term they are unsure whether they will actually be able to field a full crew for racing, they asked whether this would be sufficient grounds for a no-penalty withdrawal. The secretary responded that they cannot give a firm answer as the SUs are not present and they ultimately make the decision, and no-penalty withdrawals will be balanced against the fairness of having a crew being bumped once and dropping lots of places because a number of crews below them have not entered. However, if the circumstances surrounding a club not being able to field a crew are outside of their control (such as college not allowing students to return or limiting access to the boathouse), then they would hope that the SUs would be considerate. A member of the OURCs committee stated that the university is expecting to have the vast majority of students (with the exception of some international students) in residence by the beginning of Trinity term.

One of the captains raised the point that students have a lot of work in Trinity term, and assuming the weather facilitates on-water activity, they still do not think that this is enough time to get a crew together. The secretary responded that students do have other commitments in every competitive term, and with the extra 2 weeks of training time (if the weather cooperates) clubs should have enough training time. Another captain stated that their college is very reluctant to permit rowing in eights and so they may be limited to rowing in smaller boats and thus unable to enter. The sabbatical officer stated that if any clubs are having difficulty with persuading colleges to allow them to row in eights, or with negotiating boathouse or equipment access, they should get in touch and OURCs will make every effort to help them with this. If college persists and the club is unable to train in eights, then they imagine that the SUs will consider this for a no penalty withdrawal from a bumps event.

A captain asked why crews wouldn't be placed multiple bunglines apart when crews have dropped out – why would crews be placed on adjacent bunglines? The secretary stated that in order to maximise participation and COVID safety the plan is to spread crews evenly across 13 divisions, therefore filling gaps created by withdrawals so that you won't have some divisions being completely full and some being empty.

One of the captains asked why it was safe to consider pseudo torpids last year but not this year. The secretary stated that last year there was a big disparity between colleges with respect to on-water training time which was due to the relative wealth of clubs (i.e. some could afford racks on other

stretches of river/could afford to train at Dorney), whereas this year the vast majority of clubs are in the same situation and have had a similar level of access to training, and so a competitive event would not be as unfair. It was also argued that we will know more about the number of students returning and access to training facilities/COVID restrictions next term – if all goes well then clubs should have enough time to field safe crews, though this can be reconsidered at a later date. Furthermore, the secretary stated that OURCs is not considering bringing a motion to have a pseudo-bumps because they, in conjunction with the SUs, do not feel this is the safest option. The secretary reminded the captains that they do have the power to bring this motion to a meeting, but that they are sceptical that the SUs will agree to run a pseudo-bumps event.

Following discussions, it was decided to vote on TEMP1 -6 as a slate, and then vote for the use of Torpids or Eights charts separately.

Voting:

Captains were asked how they vote on items '**TEMP1-6**' as an amendment to the Rules of Racing.

Vote For – **52 votes**

Vote Against – **17 votes**

Abstention – **5 votes**

The items labelled **TEMP 1-6** in the above motion will be added to the Rules of Racing.

'Would you prefer to use the bumps charts from Torpids 2019 or Eights 2019?'

Torpids 2019 – **37 votes**

Eights 2019 – **28 votes**

Abstention – **9 votes**

The following will be added to the Rules of Racing: '**TEMP 7**: The bumps races taking place in Trinity Term 2021 will use and inform the Torpids bumps charts (using the final finishing order with re-insertions from Torpids 2019).'

7. Return to Rowing and Swim-tests – Beth Carter to speak

If the current road map out of lockdown is followed, we can expect swimtests to resume from the 14th April. Currently, OURCs has booked 9 sessions at the pool for swimtests, which will hopefully be enough to cover all those who need a swimtest. If there is more demand, more sessions will be booked. The majority of sessions are booked between -1st and 2nd week to ensure that athletes do not have to miss out on further training during term time. The slots will be made available on the booking site as soon as the exact number of slots per session is confirmed by the assessors. Captains will be notified of this by email, as was the case in Michaelmas term.

OURCs did bring a motion to COUR to ask them to temporarily extend the outing allowance pre-swimtest, however, this was denied. Therefore, all athletes can only take part in up to 5 on-water outings before they are required to complete a swimtest.

8. Safety/Reminders – Beth Carter to speak

- COVID

The sabbatical officer reminded captains to refresh their risk assessments and obtain permission to return to training from their colleges/senior members before resuming

activity from the 29th March. If any club would like assistance with this (or advice on any COVID/safety matter), they should get in touch at sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk.

9. AOB

- College Contacts - Caitlin Armstrong to speak
Caitlin is the incoming Regional Representative to British Rowing for our region. She stated that her college contacts are out of date. Please could representatives from each club contact her on Caitlin.armstrong@hotmail.com with their preferred correspondence address to make all future communications as easy and efficient as possible.
- Kaitlyn Davies – OUWBC
OUWBC is currently gaging interest for this year's Development Squad, most of the training for this will be online this year.

For anyone interested, an initial sign up to register interest is attached below. This is only to be added to the mailing list, not a confirmation of any attendance and there are no requirements (including rowing experience) for signing up.

The Development squad is a community for likeminded sportswomen from all sports who are interested in trying out for the university rowing team. The idea is to bridge the gap between current routines and training routines required of those in the team as well as offer some insight on training philosophy. You'll also have a point of contact with the coaching team for more individual feedback on training and other athletes on the OUWBC team for advice.

The Development squad is open to anyone wanting to give it a try, regardless of experience, but if you have any more questions or want to talk through how suitable it would be for you, get in touch with our Assistant Coach James.

Email: James.powell@ouwbc.org.uk

Sign-up sheet:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTfRE2niGSIYrWgDXUJZFddHSDITCNnEwlqIPer2G_6dVWAQ/viewform?usp=sf_link