



# Oxford University Rowing Clubs

## Isis Winter League 2023-24

### **Event and Safety Plan**

#### Introduction

The Isis Winter League is a series of races held each academic year in order to provide regular competition for colleges. Two races are typically 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 senior athletes in particular. The ability to train coxes, Race Desk staff and OURCs Marshals is expected to aid the smooth running of bumps races.

In academic years where a significant proportion of racing in the previous two terms has been cancelled, or only two IWL races were possible in Hilary Term due to the timing of Torpids, one or two 'Isis Spring League' races may be held in Trinity Term. The format is identical to the Isis Winter League races.

This academic year, IWL races are planned, subject to conditions, for the following dates:

- A: Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (4<sup>th</sup> Week Michaelmas Term);
- B: Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (8<sup>th</sup> Week Michaelmas Term);
- C: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024 (2<sup>nd</sup> Week Hilary Term);
- D: Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (4<sup>th</sup> Week Hilary Term);
- E: Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (6<sup>th</sup> Week Hilary Term); and
- ISL A: Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (2<sup>nd</sup> Week Trinity Term).

The river will be closed to normal training from 1pm until approximately 5pm, with racing expected to start at approximately 1:30pm. 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.

Non-Oxford-college clubs will be eligible to row. Non-Oxford-college club entries will not be covered by the University liability insurance and should ensure they have their own suitable cover in place.

Entrants from Oxford college clubs will be required to have passed an OURCs swim test and those entering in singles, pairs or doubles will further be required to have taken a capsized drill and have it registered on the OURCs database. Entries will be checked against the OURCs swim test/capsized drill database. Non-Oxford-college crews must enter a declaration of swimming ability or proof of passing an OURCs-standard swim test.

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

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, or larger boats prioritised. 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 the Isis Winter League.

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 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](mailto: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 Sports Safety Officer (call ASAP for severe incidents/injuries including immersion of a non-rower), College if a student, and British Rowing.
- v. **Senior Umpire** (SU, wearing a yellow high-visibility jacket with ‘Senior Umpire’ printed on the back) – situated a short distance below the designated start line. 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. **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.
  - vii. **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.***

## 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 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 member clubs), or from the ratified pool of IWL/ISL-only SUs if such a pool is in existence (also 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 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:

- 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 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 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;
- 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; 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 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 one of the two 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

### Briefing

All marshals shall be briefed prior to the start of their duties by a 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. 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.

### 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 gas 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 Bike Marshal, 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. 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 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 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 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 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) operates the finish clacker on the bow 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.
- 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) **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; 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) 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 so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start; helps liaise with river traffic planning to moor temporarily at Mooring Point B.
- 9) **Bottom Gut †:** (bottom end of the Gut, directly opposite Sea Scouts)

- 10) **Donnington Bridge †**: (by Donnington Bridge on the city side) acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Falcon or CORC; 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.
- 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; 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; warns non-event pedestrians and cyclists coming down the towpath that an event is occurring.
- 13) [*optional*] **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.

## 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.

## 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.

### 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. 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.) When they get to the Top Gut Marshal they should cross, if not already there, 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), giving way to other river traffic before doing so. Crews from the 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 one of the Start Marshals. Marshalling crews will be asked to keep tucked into a particular bank, as instructed by the Senior Umpire and Start Marshals. Crews will be started by the SU, and marshalling should move up towards the SU 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 hold their course to allow faster crews to overtake safely and may be subject to time penalties if they are deemed by an independent Race Committee to have caused an obstruction.

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, 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 from CORC or Falcon 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.

## **Other River Traffic**

Races are never started until the river is sufficiently clear of river traffic and other obstructions. 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. Marshals will be especially alert to increased levels of traffic during races taking place in Trinity Term. 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 Pattern (*Appendix B*) shows 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 launch following the division.

## 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. Following the practice of head racing, 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

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.

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 (Samuel McLoughlin) on 07917 643030. Otherwise the Sabbatical Officer can be contacted at [sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk](mailto:sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk).

## Adaptive Rowing Athletes

All adaptive rowing athletes entering the ISL are expected to be members of the City of Oxford Rowing Club (CORC) or Falcon Rowing Club adaptive squads; coaches of these squads provided advice and guidance when writing this Event Plan and Risk Assessment (*Appendix A*).

Adaptive rowing athletes are asked to declare relevant health conditions to the Race Secretary using the [British Rowing Pre-Activity Questionnaire](#). Entries may be expected from visually-impaired and hearing-impaired athletes, athletes with physical disabilities (as defined in the Risk Assessment) 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 rowing athlete will be shared with safety teams. These plans will be drawn up following the close of entries by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer and the athlete and/or coach, as appropriate.

Clubs entering adaptive rowing athletes in OURCs events should be reminded that such athletes ought to complete capsize drill training online and in the water, and to confirm that they meet British Rowing swim test requirements. If they do not meet both/either, then during their participation in OURCs racing they should wear a buoyancy aid and reduce the risk of capsize by having floats below the riggers of their boat or rowing in larger crew boats.

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

## 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, 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.

Clubs that have not submitted their British Rowing Safety Audit, or otherwise are 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 from Oxford college clubs will be required to have passed an OURCs swim test and those entering in singles, pairs or doubles will further be 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. Non-Oxford-college crews must enter a declaration of swimming ability or proof of passing an OURCs-standard swim test.

Coxes of OURCs crews will be OURCs registered; OURCs clubs entering coxless boats are responsible for providing a competent steersperson for each of those crews; non-OURCs clubs are responsible for providing a competent cox or steersperson for each of their crews entered.

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 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 (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, running smaller divisions 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. 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 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 not permitting any above-Gut crew to go through 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 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 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 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.

Racing may be continued or cancelled at the discretion of the Senior Umpire in conjunction with the Race Secretary. 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, 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 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 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. 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). All safety boats will be provided with an 'Individual Rescue Plan' for each adaptive rowing athlete, detailing the specific requirements of that athlete in the case of a capsize or falling out of the boat.

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 division or contact the Police as appropriate.

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.

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 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 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 [here](#). The Sports Safety Officer should also be advised in the event of any serious incident or near miss.

## **End of the Event**

At the end of racing, the Event Committee should prioritise announcing the times of the day's 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.