



Isis Winter League 2025-26

Instructions to Competitors

Format

The Isis Winter League and Isis Spring League are a series of head races run in Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Term. At each event, crews will be ordered in approximate speed order within divisions. The race takes place from Donnington Bridge to Cox's Stone on the Isis. Each race is a time trial from a rolling start and is timed on the bows.

The full Event Plan and appendices are available on the IWL page of the OURCs website.

Safety

All members of Oxford-college crews must be listed as swim-tested on the OURCs Entries System. Any Oxford-college athletes competing in small boats must also have passed a capsizing drill. Non-Oxford-college crews must have submitted a declaration of swimming ability. Oxford-college-crew coxes must be registered with OURCs. All coxes must be wearing a well-fitting, done-up lifejacket, including a correctly worn crotch-strap, as their outermost layer. Coxes in bow-loading boats must not wear lifejackets that inflate automatically.

Boats must meet all relevant EA and BR regulations, and must have bow balls, hatch covers, backstays on the foremost port and starboard riggers (except single sculls), heel restraints, and EA boat codes as appropriate. These will be checked before boating.

In low visibility conditions, such as low light or poor weather, boats must have bright white non-flashing lights on their bow and stern which are, together, visible through 360°. In adverse conditions, the Senior Umpire may limit entries to crews and coxes of a certain status or, at their discretion, cancel the day's racing at any point.

Health

Crew members are responsible for carrying their own medication if required (e.g. inhaler). Athletes with pre-existing conditions are (along with their club) expected to be managing these in line with medical and BR guidance and taking appropriate precautions.

Crews must be aware of the risk of gastrointestinal illness due to contact with poor quality river water. They should consider measures that can be taken to help prevent illness, such as covering any cuts or abrasions before boating, and washing hands, clothing and equipment, particularly the handles of oars, after racing. Coxes and coaches should remind their crews about these measures before and after racing.

Circulation

Oxford-college crews not racing must observe the college river closure from (effectively) 8am until End of Racing/Closing Time, whichever is sooner. The Harbourmaster's river restriction is in effect from 12-6pm. All competitors must wait until informed by a marshal that the river is open before boating.

Crews racing in the first division of the day may boat as soon as the Senior Umpire has opened the river to racing crews. Crews in subsequent divisions must boat when the following launch of the previous division has passed their raft.

All crews from upstream of the Gut should boat pointing downstream and stay on that side of the river until they reach Top Gut. The centre of the river must be kept clear for other river traffic. When crews reach Top Gut, they must cross to the bowside bank (towpath side) if not already there and keep to normal circulation in the Gut and below. Crews should spin and wait on the non-towpath side of the river, pointing upstream, in racing order.

After finishing their race, crews should remain upstream of the finish line until the final boat in the division has finished. Crews may then return to their rafts as directed by the marshals. Crews returning to boathouses not on BHI should cross back over to the towpath side immediately below the finish line. Crews returning to boathouses downstream of the Gut may be asked to wait at Longbridges if this is necessary to allow the next division to run on time.

A diagram of the circulation pattern is available in the IWL section of the OURCs website (<http://www.ourcs.co.uk>).

Racing

Crews should row up to the start when instructed by the marshals or Senior Umpire, winding up to race pace only when told to do so, and race up the course to the finish. The timer will start when the bow of the boat crosses the start line. Crews may choose their own line up the river, but are expected to follow the Ideal Racing Line, which is by the towpath bank below the Gut, by the Greenbank (non-towpath side) above the Gut, before crossing over below the Cherwell Cut back to the towpath side.

Except in the Gut, crews who are being overtaken must make all reasonable effort not to impede other crews. Slower crews are expected to hold their current direction and not to veer back into the path of someone who is trying to overtake them. Overtaking crews are expected to go round crews being overtaken. No overtaking should be attempted in the Gut.

The finish is on the bows and is marked by a white semaphore post ("clacker"). The clacker shall be dropped when each crew has finished the race. Once they have finished, crews should wind down, row up the course to the Head and spin when instructed by the marshals.

Crews from the first half of a division may be asked to spin and wait pointing downstream for the rest of the division to finish. Crews must not go below the finish while a race is in progress. Once the division has finished, crews should return to warm up circulation to return to their boathouses.

If a klaxon is fired during racing, all crews must hold it hard immediately and should not start rowing again until instructed to do so by a marshal, Senior Umpire, or medical launch. If possible, crews from a klaxoned division will be invited to re-row in a later division.

Cyclists

Only one cyclist may accompany each crew during the race, unless specific permission has been granted by the event organisers to have additional bank riders. It is not expected that

there will be many pedestrians on the towpath, but bank riders should keep a good look-out and avoid collisions. Filming, or any activity that prevents due care and attention being paid to cycling, is not permitted by cyclists during racing.

During racing, any bank rider involved in an incident on the towpath must stop 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 accident), 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, as must their crew. The bank rider must alert the nearest marshal and proceed as above, with Race Desk expediting a substitute bank rider if the crew is yet to race.

Marshals shall be responsible for reporting unsafe behaviour of accompanying cyclists. Captains should be aware that they are responsible for the conduct of their coaches, and sanctions will be employed in the case of dangerous or inappropriate behaviour.

Marshalling

Competing clubs may be required to provide marshals. A marshalling rota will be sent out prior to the event and hosted on the OURCs website (<https://ourcs.co.uk>) in the IWL section.

Emergencies

There will be First Aid available at Longbridges Boat House which can be brought to any point on the Isis using a launch. If First Aid is required, ask the nearest marshal to radio Race Desk. The Rowing Sabbatical Officer will be available by telephone (07917 643030) to give emergency access advice.

If required, defibrillators are available at

- Pembroke Boat House (///glitz.actual.horn), downstream side;
- Balliol Boat House (///speech.gums.stocks), upstream side;
- University College Boat House (///nation.bunks.levels), front;
- Longbridges Boat House (///normal.when.sings), downstream side;
- Falcon Boat House (///margin.rating.votes), downstream side; and
- The Riverside Centre (///rider.burst.vouch), downstream side.

These locations are also shown on the Circulation Pattern and Placement of Marshals map, held by all river marshals (wearing yellow high-visibility jackets and carrying clipboards) and also available on the OURCs website (<https://ourcs.co.uk/>) under 'Racing', 'Isis Winter/Spring League'.

Lightning

If any lightning is seen, it should be reported to the nearest marshal, who will contact Race Desk. 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 should seek proper shelter in their boathouses.

Organisation

Entries must be done via the OURCs Entries system. Any questions should be directed to racedesk@ourcs.co.uk and secretary@ourcs.co.uk.

On the day, Race Desk will be based at Longbridges Boat House. Any substitutions required after the online substitution deadline must be done in person at Race Desk before the crew in question boats for their race. It may also be possible to make substitutions by phone or WhatsApp, but only once Race Desk has been set up on the day.

Crews Containing Adaptive Rowing Athletes

Crews containing adaptive rowing athletes are asked to put a note under Notes during Entries, so that the Race Secretary and Rowing Sabbatical Officer can get in touch with the crew Contact to discuss any particular requirements and Individual Rescue Plans.