

Oxford University Rowing Clubs Event and Safety Plan - Autumn Fours 2019



Introduction

Autumn Fours is an annual inter-collegiate small boats competition that will be held on Sunday 10th November 2019. The competition will be run as a side-by-side knockout tournament: two crews will race alongside each other from Longbridges Boathouse up to 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 Open 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 and a sufficient number of entries, and that the weather and river conditions are good enough for the safe running of the races. This plan details the logistics of the event and the precautions taken to ensure smooth and safe running. Precautions are made based on a risk assessment. This identifies possible hazards and resulting risks, highlights the controls in place to reduce these risks, and identifies those responsible for ensuring the controls are in place. This risk assessment is attached as an appendix of this safety plan. Autumn Fours 2019 runs with the consent of the EA and the University Proctors.

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. Entrants will also be required to have passed a swim test and entries will be checked against the OURCs swim test database. Honorary members of a boat club may enter but not associate members, without specific permission from the Race Secretary. Competitors are subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety as specified by the race committee. Entries per college may be limited due to time constraints.

Race Organisation

Management

The race will be organised by the Race Secretary (Joseph Lord, OURCs Secretary) with help from the Race Committee. The following officials will be used:

The Senior Umpire (SU) – ensures the safe and timely start of all races.

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

The Race Secretary – mans the race desk with help from the race committee.

Marshals – work with the SU and Race Secretary to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event. Race officials on the course will be identified by fluorescent yellow bibs and will be able to maintain contact through two-way radios.

Race Desk will be manned at all times. Mobile phones are held by the Oxford University Rowing Sabbatical Officer (07917-643030), Race Secretary and the SU. The location of Race Desk will be the singles bay of Longbridges boathouse.

Consumption of alcohol by race officials is strictly prohibited.

Marshals

Marshals are all issued with high visibility yellow jackets, radios, copies of the draw and klaxons if appropriate. Personnel in key positions are also given megaphones as appropriate. All marshals are given summary notes of specific duties where appropriate. A member of the Race Committee is always present at Race Desk to ensure that marshals are present and aware of their duties. Marshals are responsible for ensuring that the race proceeds safely and that all river traffic, including race traffic, is in the right place and aware of where they are going. Before the start of each division, marshals radio to the SU to confirm the course is clear of obstructions. In the event of potential collision, a competitor thrown from the boat, or other emergency on the course, marshals shall sound their klaxon to stop racing and alert the attention of the safety boat and first aid team as appropriate. A secondary role is to report to Race Desk if any significant numbers of pedestrians are present, and to request support if appropriate. During the race itself they are observers, ensuring a safe and fair contest, they will also warn spectators and members of the public of approaching cyclists if they can do so without interrupting their river-related role.

Marshals will be placed as shown in Appendix B. A short description of each position follows (marshals marked with a ▼ will be equipped with a megaphone).

1. Head (▼): Located approximately 50m beyond the finish post. Instructs crews to move off and spin in a timely and safe fashion. Performs river checks. Requests river traffic to wait if a race is in progress or klaxons a race if the craft insists on proceeding while one is running. An experienced marshal should be used on this position.
2. Finish: Judges the finish, sounds clacker board and informs race desk of the results of the races. Instructs crews to clear the finish line.
3. Boathouses A: Located on Boathouse Island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations. Performs river checks.
4. Boathouses B: Located outside Christ Church Boathouse on Boathouse Island. Controls the crossing point into the Greenbank transit lane in conjunction with Greenbank crossing marshal. Performs boat and river checks.
5. Univ Boathouse: Located outside the Univ Boathouse. Performs boat and river checks.
6. Greenbank Crossing Marshal (▼): Located slightly downstream of Univ Boathouse. Works with Boathouse B marshal to control the crossing point into the Greenbank transit lane. Performs river checks.
7. Longbridges: Located at the Longbridges Boathouse. Performs boat and river checks.
8. Top Gut (▼): Located at the mouth of the Gut. Pairs up racing crews and keeps note of boats that have passed downstream so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews ready to race. Instructs crews to move up onto start stations. Requests river traffic to wait if a race is about to be started.

9. Donnington Bridge (▼): Located towards Donnington Bridge. 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.
10. Bike Marshal (if deemed necessary by SU): Cycles ahead of each race warning anyone on the towpath about oncoming bikes.
11. Spare Marshal: Able to cross to Falcon or City if crews are boating from there.

The Race Desk oversees the Marshals and assists the SU. Operational decisions on the deployment of additional Marshals will lie with the race committee and SU. The SU will be situated on the start line at Longbridges.

A River Check is the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. The SU shall call for river checks by the Marshals after significant breaks in racing, or more often at their discretion. The Marshals are instructed to look out for boats and floating debris. The race will only be started by the SU when the course is clear of obstructions.

Safety Launch Cover

A safety launch will be based at the race desk during racing, equipped with a British Rowing advised rescue bag. All launch drivers will hold the RYA Powerboat Level 2 qualification or above. All launch occupants are to wear life-jackets and the driver is to use a kill cord.

First Aid

First aid cover for the event will be provided by a minimum of two first aiders. First aiders will be qualified with the HSE approved First Aid at Work or equivalent qualification. First aid cover will have first aid response as their sole responsibility and will have full access to the facilities of race desk, including safety launches, for the purposes of best providing cover or best responding to an emergency. First aiders will be informed through their agents of the nature of the event and have the risk assessment made available to them. All first aiders engaged are done so on the basis of their qualification and professed skill. They are required to hold liability insurance of their own, or through their employer. They are responsible from when the SU declares the river open for racing until the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

Defibrillators are available at Balliol Boathouse (///ally.pilots.cloth) and University Boathouse (///nation.bunks.levels)

Emergency Access

Emergency access will be available to both the towpath and Boathouse Island. **The designated point to transfer a casualty to an ambulance is at Riverside Centre (01865248673, ///copy.bath.ridge), where access is simply by a public road.** When this is not possible, access to Christ Church Meadow and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the west slip road from Donnington Bridge (///causes.gets.scars) to Longbridges is held at Race Desk, and access to Christ Church Meadow (///scrap.wiring.mixed) will be arranged for emergency services by contacting Christ Church lodge (01865276150). Access to the river can also be gained at Donnington Bridge, via City of Oxford Boathouse (01865242576, ///sock.trial.reef), and the rear of Univ boathouse (///image.even.often). If a casualty who is a member of the University is taken to hospital, an official of their college (chosen under advice from the SU) will be contacted.

Communications

A set of two-way radios are used for communication between race control and the Marshals, the stewards and the medical personnel. These are distributed as follows: 20 radios for the use of the race committee, including one each for the EA, the Iffley Lock lock-keeper, the safety boat, race control and the SU, with the remainder for the use of other Marshals. Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at marshalling briefings on the day. In addition to radio communication, we will have the use of various mobile phones.

Circulation Pattern

Boathouse Island

Crews based on the Boathouse Island should boat from rafts at the downstream end of the island to allow crews room to land. They will then be held at Christ Church raft by the Boathouses B marshal before being allowed to cross when the river is clear over to Univ and down the Green Bank transit lane as directed by the Greenbank crossing marshal. On returning, crews should land on the upstream end of Boathouse Island.

Univ Raft

Crews based at Univ will boat and go straight into the Green Bank transit lane moving down straight into the Gut. On returning from racing, crews will progress down the transit lane on the city side of the river to Christ Church boathouse, where they will be held by the Boathouses B marshal. They may then cross the river and land pointing downstream (by “backing down”).

Longbridges

Crews boating from Longbridges will proceed straight into the warm up area below the Gut. After racing, crews will move down the Boathouse Island transit lane and will wait at the Christ Church raft to receive permission from the Boathouses B marshal to cross to the County side. They will then go down the Green Bank transit lane and land downstream at Longbridges.

Warming Up

Crews will warm up below the Gut, only spinning to go 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. Each racing crew will race up a buoyed lane from Longbridges to the finish stone. The two stations will be preassigned to each crew, “County” being the station closest to the towpath and “City” being on the boathouse side.

Potential Problems

Cyclists

Each crew will be limited to one accompanying bike that may follow alongside the crew to ensure safety rather than to coach. Cyclists are responsible for using the towpath in a safe fashion and must not unreasonably interfere with the public use of the public right of way. Occasional permission may be granted for an additional cyclist to accompany a crew by a Race Committee member or the SU - for example to assist in training a novice cox. A bike marshal will precede each race to assist with their safe passage along the towpath. Crews will be reminded by e-mail before the event of the need for accompanying cyclists to give way to pedestrians and make safety a priority.

Other River Traffic

When Autumn Fours is held there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. Races will only be run when the river is clear of other craft. If a race is in progress, craft intending to proceed onto the course will be asked to moor at Longbridges or the Head by marshals until the race has finished. If, however, the craft insists on proceeding, the race will be stopped. Craft take the centre of the river and crews stick to the sides of the river. In the event of a crew meeting a cruiser head on, the crew should move to starboard (i.e. bowside/the cox's right).

Stream Conditions

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with the Iffley Lock lock-keeper and the EA (where necessary/possible) to decide how to proceed. Contingency plans exist to allow some racing to continue. Options include requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, shortening the course to start from the downstream end of Boathouse Island and preventing crews from going through the Gut to warm up. In extreme circumstances, the entire day's racing may be cancelled.

Adverse 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. Fog will prevent racing if visibility is less than 100m. Strong wind will trigger contingency plans. Options include requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, shortening the course to start from the downstream end of Boathouse Island and preventing crews from going through the Gut to warm up. The entire day's racing may be cancelled if the SU deems conditions bad enough. In poor visibility in which racing will continue (decreasing light, mist, etc.) boats must be fitted with bright white lights at bow and stern which are visible through 360 degrees.

Lightning

In the event of an official sighting of lightning, the 30/30 guidance provided by British Rowing will be followed. The weather will be monitored by the Race Desk and a decision on the suspension of racing will be made by the SU in conjunction with the Race Secretary.

Accidents on the water

In the instance of an accident on the water, marshals shall fire their klaxons, signalling that all crews must stop immediately. If the accident results in a potential injury or someone in the water, the marshal shall call for First Aid and the safety launch will respond, taking at least one member of the First Aid Unit. The First Aider present at the scene shall assess and take control of the situation and shall retain control until they judge the casualty to be safe, most likely by their being in the safety launch and on their way to land. At this point, an SU or committee member shall be delegated to assume control of the situation and restore order on the water while the First Aid Unit takes care of the casualty on land. Racing shall be suspended until the First Aiders and Senior Umpires are satisfied that the situation is resolved.

The Incident Coordinator shall keep clear notes of the situation and aftermath, liaising with all relevant parties, such as Boat Clubs, witnesses, casualties, colleges, or hospitals, aided and advised by the Senior Umpires and Sport safety Officer as necessary. They shall be responsible for any

necessary communication with the University, Colleges, Senior Members or other necessary parties in the days following any incident.