



# IWL/ISL Marshal Briefing Script



## READ THIS FIRST:

### How to use this document

Marshal briefings are very important. Marshals need to know their jobs in order for racing to run smoothly. Read through and become familiar with this entire document BEFORE briefing a shift of marshals. Pay particular attention to the notices, which are specific to the day or highlight recent changes.

Briefing overview: 1) sign-in, 2) information for all marshals, 3) separate into three groups for role-specific briefings: 4) river marshals, 5) timers, and 6) bike marshal.

### General Notices

- With Accies and Falcon entries, **Start 2** and **Donny Bridge** must do **boat checks**.
- Instruct the Donnington Bridge marshal to patrol all the way from the top of Falcon raft to the bottom of the City of Oxford RC raft, talking to people along the way.
- The Bottom Gut marshal needs to stand across from Falcon, make this clear.
- The Top Gut marshal needs to have a clear view of river traffic coming down Greenbank. They should stand near the mooring point.
- Top Gut needs to keep track of which crews have gone by. **Give them a pen.**
- All marshals need to stand by the river, not under cover or across the towpath.
- Remember to brief Head and Finish marshals about **priority spinning**.
- Swan bait: we have bread, but try pebbles first – swans are stupid!
- **Remind Univ raft marshals that their crews must push off when the launch goes by!**
- **Shadowing: new marshals must shadow the old ones for the WHOLE NEXT DIVISION.**

### Shift-Specific Notices

#### Shift 1

- Remind timers to choose the same reference point for the start/finish “line” and then SHOW IT to the next shift.
- Head, Start 1, and Start 2 do NOT get klaxons.

#### Shift 2

- No handovers w/in 10 minutes of racing.
- Give spare set of instructions out during third briefing.
- Marshals MUST stay in their posts after racing ends until the SU dismisses them.

## 1) Sign-in

Pass around the clipboard with the marshal sign-in sheets. Once the clipboard comes back, call for any missing marshals by their college (indicated on the sheet). **Assign roles (there are 18 roles, omit ones in parentheses if not enough marshals):**

*Head, Finish, Boathouses A, Boathouses B, Univ., (Greenbank), Longbridges, **Top Gut**, (Middle Gut), Bottom Gut, Donnington Bridge, **Start 1, Start 2**, Bike Marshal, Start Timer 1, Start Timer 2, Finish Timer 1, Finish Timer 2*

- Ask if anyone's done marshalling before – if they have, they should be in **key positions in bold**.
- X/S coxes if possible to **Head** and **Start 1 & 2**.
- Experienced rower on **Top Gut**.
- Experienced people on Donnington Bridge/Finish if possible.
- **Do NOT put town club marshals near their own rafts (DB for CORC/Falcon or Start 2 for Accies).**
- Greenbanks and other "easier" positions for new marshals.
- Explain where Donnington Bridge position is (on city side, OPPOSITE the towpath).
- Explain where Boathouses A (upstream half of Boathouse Island) and Boathouses B are.
- Explain where Start 1 (upstream) and Start 2 (downstream) are.
- After the briefing, notify the Race Secretary of any missing marshals so their clubs can be fined.

**Before you start talking, send them to get their equipment (first shift: should be nicely laid out beforehand) or (later shifts) give them the spare set of marshalling sheets. Tell them to read the information on their clipboards, give them a minute or two to do this** (read one over their shoulder or this to yourself, to give you an idea of how long to give them to finish it fully)

## 2) Information for all marshals

### The marshal's role

- Marshals are essential for running a safe and competitive event.
- Be the SU's eyes and ears on the river.
- Care for the overall safety of the competitors and other river users.
- Actively manage crew movements (rafts) and in spinning areas so the event runs on time.
- Actively manage other river traffic, and communicate its movements to the SU.
- Act as the point of communication with crews at your locality.

### Should you contact Racedesk or the Senior Umpire?

- Marshals need to report events on the river to SU and Racedesk. Which of these you contact depends on the type of information you have to communicate.
- Contact the **SU** for: River traffic, swans, any delays to the race (e.g. equipment failures, late crews).
- Contact **racedesk** for: Substitutions, appeals, rules issues (abusive bankriders, coxes w/o lifejackets).
- Rule of thumb: land-based things go to Racedesk, water-based goes to the SU.

### Change overs

- Nobody may switch over with another marshal **less than 10 minutes before a division** is due to start. Explain your job to replacements and any adjustments you have had to make.
- **For IWL A 2023, we expect Shift 2 to shadow Shift 1 for the beginning of Division 3. Hand over after the following launch goes by.**
- At the **end of the day**, river marshals **MUST** wait in their positions until they are dismissed by the Senior Umpire over the radio. If racing is delayed, this might be later than the planned shift end.
  - When you are dismissed, bring your equipment (radios, bibs, etc) **back to racedesk**.
  - The bike marshal and timers can head back to racedesk after the last division finishes racing.

### 3) Separate marshals into three groups for role-specific briefings

Ideally, send **timers** off to a separate briefing. The **bike marshal** should listen to the river marshal briefing and then be given their specific instructions afterward.

### 4) River Marshals

In order of a river check: *Head, Finish, Boathouses A, Boathouses B, Univ., (Greenbank), Longbridges, Top Gut, (Middle Gut), Bottom Gut, Donnington Bridge, Start 1, Start 2*

#### Event format and circulation pattern

- Make sure marshals know which way is upstream and downstream. Get them to point.
- Explain the circulation pattern to them, refer to the copy on their clipboards.
- Crews should boat pointing downstream and head straight to Top Gut.
- Above the Gut, they should stick to their SIDE of the river, keeping the middle clear for river traffic.
- At Top Gut they should cross to the towpath side, Top Gut marshal to monitor the crossover.
- Crews should follow normal training circulation below the Gut, spin and get into starting order.
- After the race, crews should go up to the Head, spin, and wait on the Meadows side above the Finish. Once all crews have finished, start heading back to Boathouses. Non-Boathouse Island crews should cross back to the Towpath Side below the Finish.
- **Other river traffic** should keep to the middle of the river in between divisions and be **politely** asked to wait if a race is about to go off/in progress.

#### Radios

- Demonstrate how to use the radios – turning them on, changing the volume and channel, and which button to press to speak.
- Wait a second after pushing the button before speaking, or the start of the message will be cut off.
- Don't talk over the SUs, Racedesk, or other marshals.
- Do not put the radios down or give them to anyone.

#### River traffic

- River marshals must manage the other river traffic particularly where it enters and exits the course.
  - Head, Finish, Boathouses B, Univ, Top Gut, Bottom Gut, Donnington Bridge, and Start 2 need to be vigilant to spot other river traffic approaching the course. They should politely ask traffic to stop, tell them there's a race on and ask what they are trying to do. If they won't stop, need to tell SU immediately if a race is close to starting or already in progress. But ALSO carry on trying to stop them.
- Be polite to other river users, but you must also be firm. We have a Harbourmaster's Notice (on your clipboards) which gives us permission to halt them temporarily from 10 minutes before a division starts until the following launch goes by. After that they are free to proceed up or down the course to wherever they are going.

#### River checks

- The Senior Umpire will ask for a river check, usually from the Head. They want to know about river traffic, fishermen, swans or debris on the course. **They do NOT want to know about** the EA, OURCs launches, or racing crews who are in the right place. The one exception to this last point is slow crews returning after a race to boathouses below the Gut, notify the SU of their progress as the race must not be started with them in the Gut.
  - Explain what the EA boat looks like – a bit like a little blue tugboat.
- During the river check, the SU needs to know **who** you are, **what** the river traffic is, **where** it is, and where it is **going**. If there is no river traffic, say **"Clear!"**.
- Do a practice check (without radios). See order above.

## Swans

- Explain the difference between swans and geese (see appendix with photos).
- Donnington Bridge, (Greenbank), and Boathouses A have bread to lure swans out of the racing line.

## Klaxons

- Cover everything on their marshalling clipboard guide:  
“If the racing line is completely blocked and the next crew has no safe path, or there is someone in a boat requiring first aid or in the water, or a severe collision is imminent, immediately klaxon.”
- Fire your klaxon in all directions for at least 10 seconds. During this time, press your radio button too, so all marshals can hear it.
- Do not stop klaxoning until everything you can see has stopped moving, or it runs out of air.
- **Never say “klaxon” on the radio except to confirm your own firing.** Ask “is the race live?” if you’re unsure. If yours has run out, and you need a new one, call them an ‘air powered race stopping device’
- If you hear another klaxon, fire yours until all crews have completely stopped.
- If you have klaxoned, state to racedesk and the SU why you have klaxoned, and if First Aid is required. All crews should keep it held up until racedesk says otherwise.
- Tell them that we would rather they were over-zealous with the klaxons than overly-cautious.
- A klaxoned race is over; no times to be taken for crews after the klaxons have sounded.
- **MAKE SURE THEY KNOW HOW TO USE THEIR KLAXONS! ASK IF ANYONE’S AT ALL UNSURE!**
- If you have them practice, don’t do it for long so as not to waste air, but check they understand they should hold a real klaxon button down for 10+ seconds. Have them aim their klaxon away from anyone’s ears (ideally toward the sky) to practice.

## Extra information for selected marshals

**Boat checks (raft marshals)** (get everyone to listen to this, useful info):

- Cox wearing a life jacket, bow ball, heel restraints, shoe-release, hatch covers, backstays on all riggers, any repairs up to standard (tell them ask racedesk if unsure).
  - A bow ball should be firmly attached; give them a bit of a waggle and push on the end to see how much it deflects. If the bow ball is attached with duct tape, and you can’t feel screws through it, tell the crew to get it fixed properly ASAP, as **duct tape alone is insufficient.**
  - Make sure raft marshals know how to check heel restraints properly (pull the heels of the shoes upward, they should not come farther than level with the deck of the boat), that shoes should be able to be opened by pulling on a single strap, and what we mean by backstays (not all rowers are sure).
- Encourage crews to **push off ASAP once the following launch has gone past** for the previous race (or, if the following launch is responding to an emergency, when the Senior Umpire instructs.)
- Marshal at crowded rafts (Univ, LB) should check boats on trestles, so crews can boat quickly.

## Spinning, Finish, and Head marshals

- Spinning (start area) marshals need to work together (and with the SU) to get crews in order and then to feed them up to the start line in a steady stream as the race goes off.
- Spinning marshals, go and talk to the SU (usually on the downstream side of Donnington Bridge) on the way down to your position.
- Finish marshal needs to encourage crews to move up (working with the Head marshal) to get them clear of the finish line and into a safe position to wait to spin.
- Finish and Head marshals can use different strategies to keep finished crews well above the finish line, depending on conditions in the area upstream of the finish line. In calm conditions crews can be moved towards the Head as far as possible then spun to wait pointing downstream. If the stream is strong/wind is blowing downstream, crews should be kept facing upstream until the end of the division, then asked to spin in order and immediately row home.

- Finish and Head must assist crews that have been given **priority spinning** (indicated by “(S)” on the draw). After the race, use your megaphones to instruct these crews to spin first while the others wait, and send them downstream as soon as possible.

## 5) Timers

- Timers **should not** talk to each other about times.
- Try to stand one behind the other so you see the same finish/start ‘line’. It often helps to have one person sit on the bank and the other standing behind them.
- Pick a reference point across the river and imagine the finish/start ‘line’ extending from you to it.
- Timing starts/stops when the bow ball crosses the line.
- Tell the NEXT timing marshal where the reference point is when you change over.
- How do the timing sheets get back? (Bike marshal?) Ask Race Secretary on the day.

## 6) Bike Marshal

**Bike Marshal;** rides 5 yards/a sensible amount in front of first boat in division and warns public that the bank riders are coming. Keep an ear on your radio, you might be asked by racedesk to do something! We can do without a bike marshal in some IWLs – depends on the weather and how busy the towpath is.

## NEW: Adaptive Rowers

Adaptive rowers sometimes participate in this event. These include rowers who are hard of hearing or with visual impairments. They already have measures in place to enable them to safely participate in the event, however please keep in mind that someone may not respond to you simply because they cannot hear you.

## APPENDIX: Swan or Goose?

Use these pictures to demonstrate the differences.

- Swans have necks that are as long or longer than their bodies.
- Geese have short necks shorter than their bodies.
- Swans have black on their bills as well as orange.
- Geese have only orange, and their bills are shorter.
- Swan shaped birds in grey are young swans (Cygnet).

