



O U R C s

Captains' Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 8th week Trinity Term 2022

7pm, 15th June 2022

SNSC Auditorium, Worcester

Chair: James Forward (OUBC)

Attendance (voting members): 83

College boat clubs – 58

OURCs – 7

Blues squads – 17

Senior Umpires – 1

1. Welcome

- a. **Resolution for James Forward to Chair** – Ty Rallens to speak

It was resolved that the vice-President of OUBC would chair this meeting in the absence of the OUBC President as Chair.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Available at www.ourcs.co.uk

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising

4. Amendment to the Constitution – Ty Rallens to speak

Two thirds majority to pass

There are 36 college boat clubs, yielding a voting bloc of 72 club captains in Captains' Meetings. The OURCs committee is constitutionally limited to 20 members, but usually operates below this threshold. Additionally, there are currently 9 ratified Senior Umpires who may vote but rarely attend meetings.

The intention of this motion is to bring the voting power of the University squads in the Captains' Meetings more into alignment with their relationship to OURCs. Under the current rules, the University squads account for up to 36 votes in a CM. This change reduces that number to a total of 8, which is seen as more commensurate with the squads' relationship to the matters being voted on in Captain's meetings, e.g., rules in the Code of Conduct for all member clubs, matters pertaining to intercollegiate racing, and elections of OURCs officers.

Change:

1.7.h. Only the following may propose, second or vote on motions:

- i. Captains or designated representatives of College Boat Clubs, with each college limited to two votes.
- ii. Members of the OURCs Committee.
- iii. Members of the University Boat Clubs who have been awarded rowing Blues or Half-Blues in the preceding 12 months.
- iv. Senior Umpires who have been ratified by a Captains' Meeting in the preceding academic year.

To (changes in red):

1.7.h. Only the following may propose, second or vote on motions:

- i. Captains or designated representatives of College Boat Clubs, with each college limited to two votes.
- ii. Members of the OURCs Committee.
- iii. Presidents or designated members of the University Boat Clubs, with each club limited to two votes.
- iv. Senior Umpires who have been ratified by a Captains' Meeting in the preceding academic year.

Proposed: Ty Rallens (OURCs)

Seconded: Miranda Connolley (Magdalen)

The proposer outlined the history of OURCs and OUBC; historically OUBC ran all events such as Bumps, and the Captains' Meeting elected the OUBC President: hence Blues squad members voted as individuals for their President and the events they ran. The proposer stated that now the Blues squads' role in the business of OURCs was much smaller, so the proposed motion sought to adapt tradition to current circumstances. They stated that they highly valued the voice of the Blues in college rowing, but that they thought the current voting arrangement was disproportionate, and that the variable participation of Blues could swing future elections or votes. The proposer stated that the University clubs should be present at the Captains' Meeting as clubs rather than individuals; hence the proposal of two votes per University club.

A representative of OUBC reiterated that OUBC had a long history of running OURCs events and that Blues rowers are a part of the colleges and want to support the colleges and to be involved in college rowing; i.e. Blues squads support college rowing by running dev squads.

The OUBC representative stated that when Blues rowers vote they vote with the interests of their colleges. A captain asked whether this weighted the scales against colleges that don't have many Blues.

It was also pointed out by the OUBC representative that removing Blues votes would increase the vote share of OURCs, and they asked why OURCs votes were not proposed to be limited to only two. The OURCs Secretary explained the rationale behind OURC Committee Members' individual votes is that they are voting for the rules that they themselves will have to enforce and run across the year and in events, and so are encouraged to have more of a say to shape the rules they will have to implement.

Representatives from the Blues squads stated that Blue/Half-Blues rowers should have individual votes as they have more experience of rowing, and college rowers care about what the Blues rowers think. They also stated that the majority of times, Blues don't have a strong opinion, but should be able to weigh in when they do.

A representative from the captains commented that being in a Blues squad was aspirational in an environment where rowing is accessible and not elitist, and that squad members should be able to guide college rowing in a direction that would foster more college athletes becoming Blues rowers. Another captain voiced in opposition that they instead valued the broad and more casual aspect of college rowing that catered to athletes who didn't all want to be Blues.

A representative from the captains asked when Blues had historically weighed in to guide the captains.

A representative from OUBC responded that no block of Blues votes had been the deciding factor to sway votes over the last ten years as far as they could tell. In a past motion voted on by Blues squad members (the Osler House starting order motion), Blues had voted with the overwhelming majority. It was discussed whether a large number of attending Blues had swayed the Rowing Sabbatical Officer Election in 2014/15; however, it was unclear whether the 18 point difference between the final two candidates could have been composed of Blues votes.

Voting:

For: 27

Against: 50

Abstentions: 6

Motion fails.

5. **Amendment to the Rules of Racing** – Markus Baumgartner to speak
Simple majority to pass

Addition of 'exam substitution' rules to govern direct clashes with Exams/Vivas. The motion will provide much needed flexibility around exam time and will stop a situation where a rower is only able to row for a few days of Eights as they are not allowed to return to their original boat.

Add (additions in red):

A3.5.f. Where a competitor for any day (excluding Rowing On) has a race time which clashes with a university examination or viva, an 'exam substitution' will automatically be permitted under the extraordinary substitution rules, under the following conditions:

- i. a clashing exam is defined as an exam or viva which finishes within an hour of the expected start time or starts within an hour and a half of the expected start time, of the affected competitor's division.
- ii. a copy of the affected competitor's timetable must be submitted to the race committee by 12:00 on the day before the exam clash, along with a cover note explaining the timings of the clash.

- iii. This may be performed at most twice for any individual competitor, and no more than four times in total for any crew during the event.
- iv. Unless there is a very good reason to refuse, the Event Committee will be expected to exercise their discretion under (A3.5.e.ix) to return the substituting rower to their original crew on later race days.

Proposed: Markus Baumgartner (Balliol)

Seconded: Rachel Laing (New College)

The proposer explained the rationale behind this proposed rule: it allows rowers to return back to their lower boats after subbing into a higher boat. A brief explanation of the current Ordinary and Extra-ordinary Substitution rules was given by the Secretary.

It was stated in opposition that part of the crew selection for Bumps was getting the best boat possible for the four days, and the spirit of keeping one crew together through the event was important. The Secretary stated that it was unfortunate that exams interfered with rowing but that it was the way things are. In counterpoint, a representative from the captains voiced that it would be fairer to ensure that people didn't lose a place in a boat they had worked hard for because of exams.

The Secretary raised concerns that this proposal would add a large administrative burden during Bumps on the people who are running the racing. A captain asked whether putting the notice period earlier would ease the administrative burden, and it was agreed that it would.

It was noted by a Senior Umpire that though discussion had been framed in terms of allowing first boat rowers to take exams and have a second boat rower sub for just one day, the wording of 'automatically permitting an extraordinary substitution' could be prone to abuse, as an 'extraordinary substitution' covers basically anything outside the rules. They noted that there was clear support for the spirit of this rule change but that the proposed wording might permit abuses like an associate 'ringer' in a first boat, or a first boat rower to sub into a beer boat. They suggested that the proposal might be reworded to be governed by more of the rules of ordinary substitutions.

The proposer agreed to the holding of indicative vote for support of this proposal, withdrawing the motion to discuss the exact wording further. It was suggested that a reworded motion could come to a Captains' Meeting in Michaelmas Term.

Indicative vote:

In favour: 75

Against: 1

Abstentions: 7

The assembly was in favour of this proposal.

6. Election for Interim OURCs Secretary – Ty Rallens to speak

- **Ty Rallens (Merton)**
Proposer: Evan Roberts (OURCs)
Secunder: Ruby Harrison (OURCs)

It was explained by the Secretary that, constitutionally, if a Secretary's term runs out with no Secretary elect, the Sabbatical Officer can appoint a new Secretary at the next Captains' Meeting. If this occurs this term, there will be no Secretary over the summer, which will make it difficult to get things done over this period with no Secretary and no Sabbatical Officer.

The term of the Interim Secretary was proposed to last until the end of Michaelmas Term. The candidate stated that they would use this term to find and train a successor. The Secretary stated to potential future Secretaries that the role would hopefully be less intensive than this year, as this year was spent rebuilding after flooding and pandemic.

A captain asked whether the Interim Secretary term was bound until the end of Michaelmas Term; it was clarified that the candidate planned to step down for the election of their successor whenever candidates put themselves forward.

Voting:

For: 66

Against: 6

Abstentions: 11

Ty Rallens Elected as Interim Secretary.

7. Ratification of Club Safety Reviews – James Lucas to speak

- Brasenose - £50
- St Edmund Hall - £0
- Osler House - £0
- Oriel - £200

No objections, ratified.

8. AOB

- a. **Discussion point: serious collisions and bank rider responsibilities** – Ruby Harrison to speak

The Captain of Coxes spoke about the outcomes of a Club Safety Review held after a college crew collided with a city crew. The serious safety incident prompting the CSR was that an N status cox (with an X status cox bank riding) had collided with a stationary crew during an impromptu race with another college. Captains were shown how the force of the collision had been sufficient to rip out the steering column of the boat that had been collided with. The outcomes of the CSR had been that the cox was not permitted to race in

Summer Eights, the bank rider was not permitted to bank ride in Summer Eights, the club was instructed to help the city club with boat repairs, and the coxing status of the bank rider was downgraded to N.

A captain asked why the cox had not been permitted to cox Summer Eights. The Captain of Coxes explained that they could not allow a cox who had been involved in a serious safety incident under conditions similar to those in Bumps racing, race in Bumps. They stated that if there had been a serious incident in Bumps involving a cox who the Captain of Coxes had allowed to race following a previous safety incident it could have called the safety of Bumps into question.

A captain asked why there had been an effect on the bank rider. The Captain of Coxes stated that bank riders are supposed to be to help warn coxes, especially novice coxes, which this bank rider had not done. A captain asked why there had been an effect on the coxing status of the bank rider, even though they weren't coxing. The Captain of Coxes explained that a cox's status is a reflection of how safe they are judged to be on the river, and that skills X status coxes are assessed on include observation of hazards and of confidence; the Captain of Coxes felt that this incident had raised alarm about the observation of the bank rider to see the hazard of the stationary boat ahead, and their confidence to shout and warn the cox, and therefore raised questions about their potential safety as a cox.

It was asked by a captain what would have happened had it been another rower bank riding. The Captain of Coxes stated that any bank rider would also not have been permitted to bank ride in Summer Eights. They explained that any additional steps would have been taken in accordance with the individual's ability to contribute to another dangerous situation of the same type, i.e. if a coach had been bank riding and a dangerous situation had occurred under their watch the Senior Member of the club could have been written to.

It was asked by a captain whether the bank rider's downgrade to N status was permanent. The Captain of Coxes explained that they would be able to take another upgrade assessment from four weeks into next term.

A captain asked if there was any provision for OURCs to teach colleges what bank riders need to know, as many boat clubs do not know what they should be instructing their bank riders to do. The captain requested that a permanent resource be created. The Captain of Coxes agreed that this would be a valuable resource, and that work had been begun on this, but not finished.

It was stressed by the Secretary that the focus of Club Safety Reviews was not to punish clubs or individuals, but to help boat clubs develop better safety systems.

b. Discussion point: Appeals Process – Jennifer Holmes to speak

A representative from the captains, who had also helped on race desk in Summer Eights, stated that currently appeals go on far too late into the night. This makes it hard for the captains, who can receive phone calls past 10pm or even 11pm at night, when they are tired and without the support of their crew, asking them to make difficult decisions such as whether to escalate an appeal. Late nights also make it hard for race committees as well as they try to come to fair decisions whilst tired. They stated that something

clearly needed to change, and that a working group including captains, OURCs members and some Senior Umpires was planning to work on a motion to bring next year.

An OURCs member and 'Appeals Chief' for much of Summer Eights spoke in support of the working group. They suggested that a time limit for calls could be put in place (i.e. no calls between 10pm and 8am) allowing conversations to take place at productive times of day, when captains have the support of their crews.

A captain asked whether the issue causing appeals to go on so late was with manpower and not having enough people to sit on appeals until after the day's racing. A representative from OURCs explained that this was often the case: appeals are usually a lower priority than the immediate business of racing (i.e. briefing marshals, etc.) and sometimes race desk has only just enough people to run, with no spare people to sit on appeals. They also stated that more appeals come in right at the end of the day, as these are the higher divisions, which is simultaneously when most people from race desk are missing, creating a big pile-up of appeals late in the day.

Anyone with thoughts on how to improve the Appeals process were invited to contact Jennifer.

c. Academicals British Rowing Head Race – Scott Houghton to speak

A representative from Academicals explained that they want to run a British Rowing head race on this Isis. They explained that the reasons for this included: holding a BR event on the Isis to help college crews get BR experience points for the big Tideway Heads, create another race in this region as surrounding regattas are oversubscribed and filling within days of entries opening, and finally to act as a fundraiser for Academicals. The planned race would be run as a 3km total out-and-back (a unique gimmick in the South East).

The Academicals representative explained that they hoped to run the race at some time in February, during term time (pre Torpids) as they wanted to attract students to compete. They asked which of the following options would be preferable to colleges.

1. Running this race on the usual date of IWL D, effectively replacing this IWL. They highlighted that this would result in the loss of a race that everyone in a college could enter (as the Academicals race would require BR membership whereas IWL does not).
2. Running this race the day before an IWL. They highlighted that this would remove a day of training, but add a day of racing.
3. Running this race on a weekend in the middle, on which there was no race planned.

The Academicals representative asked which of these options colleges would prefer, and if they would be interested in taking part in the proposed race.

A captain stated that most people in their college do not have British Rowing membership, and the college values IWL D so would strongly not want to have it replaced. Another captain stated that they were keen for this regatta, but would not want it to be on the same day as IWL D, as they like to send novices to that regatta who would not go to a BR event. From a coaching perspective, it was stated that running the event on a Sunday was hugely preferable to running it on a Saturday, as Saturday is the only day without training

restrictions. They stated that running the event on a Sunday would split the lost training time between town and college clubs.

A captain asked whether the race would be run early enough for the British Rowing points associated with it to help crews entering Women's Eights Head of the River. It was thought so by the Academicals representative.

From indicative votes taken, the assembly was interested and in favour of this proposed event, with no one in favour of replacing IWL D and a strong majority preferring that the race be held on the Sunday of another weekend.

d. Captains' Training Day

Captains were reminded to sign up for the training day on Sunday 19th June.