



Minutes for Council of Oxford University Rowing

13th June 2011, Old Practice Room, Magdalen

1. Attendance and Apologies

List of those present

Katarzyna Bera (President OUWLRC)
Fernanda Pirie (Senior Member OUWLRC)
James Thom (President OULRC)
Harriet Keane (President OUWBC)
Raegan Shayler (Sport Health and Safety Officer OUSD)
Ben Davis (Senior Member OULRC)
Paul Azzopardi (Senior Member OURCs)
Lucy Mase-Robinson (Rowing Sabbatical)
Ben Thurston (Secretary OURCs)
Mark Blandford Baker (BR Div Rep)
Barbara Wilson (Administrator OUBC)

Apologies

Jon Roycroft (Director of Sport OUSD)
Karl Hudspith (President OUBC)
Lisa Walker (Senior Member OUWBC)

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Previous meeting minutes approved.

3. Matters Arising

PA reported that Alison Drummond from Oxford City Council did visit race desk on Wednesday of Summer Eights. PA had a telephone conversation with Alison Drummond on Wednesday of Summer Eights and has not received any further communication.

4. Swim Tests

BD began discussion by suggesting that we work through the draft of the COUR advice to university and college rowing clubs (Appendix A). Advice aimed at college taster sessions with the Boat Club Safety Officer responsible for producing the risk assessment. This does not affect that anyone entering OURCs events needs to be swim tested.

BT asked how this may work if colleges are able to obtain their own swim tests, how this could be fed into our system. RS advised that for OURCs regattas we should be specifying that participants have passed our swim test to ensure consistency.

PA expressed that there needs to be greater clarity that the advice is just for taster sessions and not for general training.

Discussion of the current rule which specifies that everyone should be swim tested after the last swim test of Michaelmas term.

BT suggested that we do not need to legislate if we allow colleges to take responsibility. LM concerned that if we do not have some legislation, when colleges have the choice they do the easy thing. We currently have lots of other safety rules, why is this an exception?

NP: clear from feedback that colleges want to take on the responsibility.

BD suggested that the advice document should be sent to college governing body.

PA: Colleges were happy with the previous rule, don't want to go further backwards.

RS: Need to ensure that we don't just advise on this rather than have a rule simply because it is a difficult issue.

NP: It is difficult to have rules that cannot be enforced.

RS: Advice should still be that students are swim tested before rowing and swim tests will be available to allow colleges to test people before taster sessions.

Barbara Wilson arrived.

BD: Need to make a decision about having a rule before we move on to discuss anything further.

PA: Leo Blockley case set legal context. COUR reply to coroner included that swim tests would be compulsory.

BD: Advice from British Rowing and Legal Services is clear that old rule was fine, so we would need a reason to go further back than that. Suggests that we should go back to the old rule:

R3. All Colleges must ensure that their crews are safe to go on the water. This involves:

- a. ensuring that all rowers and coxes have passed a swim test demonstrating their ability to meet the standards laid out in RS, section 1.9, or have provided evidence to the Rowing Sabbatical Officer of an equivalent swimming ability.*

Prior to the taking of such a test, College Boat Clubs should seek to ascertain the swimming ability of their members by signed declarations, and act accordingly. Non-swimmers are not allowed on the water. A weaker swimmer (but not a non-swimmer) may row wearing a life-jacket until OURCs swim tests are held. After the last of these in the Michaelmas term, all those who have not taken a test, or who have taken and failed it, may not go on the water.

And that advice should be sent to captains and governing bodies.

RS: Referring to point 5 in the advice document. Risk assessments should be checked by colleges, Sports Health and Safety Officer cannot approve college documentation.

Access to Swim Tests:

LM: Large number of swim tests available at the beginning of Michaelmas term. Then in 1st Week plus one later week each term. Swim tests can also be completed at any time, with short notice at Oxford Brookes.

BD: Suggests that swim test times should be included on advice.

Raegan Shayler left.

Mark Blandford Baker arrived.

BD: Provided recap of where we have got to. If we go back to previous rule, door shuts on the last swim test of Michaelmas term.

NP: Need to be more flexible, people start rowing all through the year.

PA: Starting rowing at other times is different to the beginning of Michaelmas term.

Usually know you are going to row, not the same scenario as taster sessions.

BD: Need to be careful of making a rolling exemption that allows people to row all year without being swim tested.

PA: Evolution of rule has been good, bringing it to include the beginning of Michaelmas term may have been one step too far. Shouldn't go further back than old rule.

BT: Aware that some captains were shocked that the old rule closed the door at the last swim test of Michaelmas term. Aim should be to improve safety on the water, not just legislation. Captains care about their colleges, if they are given more responsibility, safety on the water may improve.

BD: Cannot just drop all responsibility onto colleges as they will not be able to pick it up. Need to build up better links with colleges and governing bodies.

MB: Nationwide concern that when people have to jump through too many hoops in order to try something, they won't. LB letter in Cherwell highlights need for swim tests but does take into account the need for this to be flexible.

BT: May be better to have a limit on sessions before being swim tested, rather than a date.

After further discussion decision that 5 sessions would be a reasonable limit, as swim tests are available all year round and at short notice. Exact wording to be drafted by LM and sent round for discussion.

MB: Suggests that this advice needs to be out before the end of term.

LM: Aim before the last captain's meeting on Wednesday of 8th week, so that this can be discussed.

MB: Final documents should be sent to Clive Killick at British Rowing and Legal Services to approve. Also send to Tony Reynolds, BR Regional Water Safety Officer, and Sports Strategy for their records.

BW: Suggests we should provide colleges with a model declaration form, based on British Rowing advice. Also include a reminder of other information that they should be giving to students before they go out on the water.

5. Any Other Business

- a) Constitution needs updating. Instances of ARA updated to BR. Stipulation that Trust Fund meeting should be held before taken out.
- b) COUR meeting time should be more flexible and we should look at moving it into office hours.
- c) Gaps in bumps charts around 06/08. BT to send link and upload bumps chart, or pass onto rowsab to upload.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th October at 6:30pm.