



Agenda for Council of Oxford University Rowing

14th May 2012, Old Practice Room, Magdalen College

1. Apologies for Absence

Ben Davis

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

3. Squad Reports

a. OUBC

The Blue boat lost the boat race. Isis won the reserve race.

We had started the boat race season with a fixture against the German U23 national team. The Blue boat prevailed in both pieces. At the the official crew announcement and weigh-in we learned that we were more than a stone a man lighter than Cambridge, and were up against the second greatest weight deficit in the history of the boat race. Our second fixture was against Molesey who again we beat in both pieces over the course. Our final fixture against Leander was a single piece from the start to the Chiswick steps which we won comfortably by over twenty seconds.

We were therefore confident in our ability to produce a good performance on race day and everything in preparation seemed to be going well. We lost the coin toss and Cambridge chose Surrey. There was a North-North-Easterly wind creating a head wind on the course from the Fulham wall to Hammersmith, and a tail wind from the Chiswick steps to Barnes bridge.

We got off to a good start and took a small lead. Cambridge used their weight advantage to reclaim this margin in the head wind up to Harrods. Around the sharpest part of their bend we only lost two seats which we reclaimed as we rowed past Chiswick Ayot, retaking the lead at that point, with the tail wind and the final bend still to come in our favour. At that point the race was stopped by the umpire due to a swimmer being in the path of our blades.

Both crews were told to row back downstream while the police picked up the swimmer, which gave Cambridge back some of their bend. We re-marshalled for a restart but Cambridge decided the conditions were too rough and turned without being told to by the umpire. We then rowed back downstream again, once more giving Cambridge back part of their bend.

The first race had finished with us in the lead and I checked that the umpire was going to restart us in relative positions. He informed me at the time that the BBC had told him it was a dead heat when the race was stopped and so we would restart level. A few days later he said that the BBC had actually told him Cambridge were in the lead. We are trying to find out who these unaccountable individuals at the BBC were.

We were again the faster crew off the restart and took about a half length lead before we clashed just over forty seconds in. By sheer bad luck one of our blades snapped, and as we were being warned at the time it was deemed to be our own fault so the race was not stopped again as we had to abide by our accidents. Cambridge quickly moved clear

rowing against just seven oarsmen, and went on to win by four lengths.

At the finish line we appealed the decision but it was not upheld, handing Cambridge victory. It was only after this that we realised our bowman, Alex Woods was still lying flat, having collapsed from his exertions at the end of the race. Our supporters launch with two medics on board quickly came over and lifted him into their boat. When we got ashore we carried him on a stretcher to an ambulance. He was taken to Charing Cross hospital where he was pronounced to be in a stable condition. He was discharged the next day and is now fully recovered. It seems that he had simply pushed his body to a point where there was so much lactic acid that it had begun to shut down.

A few months previously the CUBC President David Nelson, had challenged me to an eight-oared rowing race from Putney to Mortlake. Neither of those things happened on the day, so immediately after getting ashore I asked him for a re-row, but he declined. However, one very good piece of good news in all this is that Isis won their race by four lengths. Not only that, but helped by a particularly high tide this year, they set a new record for the reserve race, as well as the third fastest time in the history of the boat race of 16:41. We are all very proud of them, and it was a consolation for me and the rest of the blue boat to know that this year has not been entirely wasted by any means. We also won the spare pairs race.

Given the circumstances of what happened on race day there is a strong desire amongst most of the squad to compete at Henley and other races this summer. At this point it seems there is a good chance we will have the entire blue boat competing, in which case we will race the Grand Challenge Cup, and as it is an Olympic year we will try and be competitive with whoever enters. Otherwise we will look at other events, or perhaps at forming a composite. There is also a good group of Isis guys who are looking to win places in the varsity boats next year, who will be looking to put together crews for either the Prince Albert or Temple.

b. OUWBC

c. OULRC

Having confirmed the two VIIIs shortly after the January training camp, the Blue Boat and Nephthys trained in parallel through Hilary for our Henley Boat Race and the Tideway Head respectively. The strong progress that had been made by both line-ups on camp, however, slowed a little on the return to Oxford, with a few injuries and absences causing disruption to both crew's schedules. Nephthys had early success winning at Bristol Head, and then put in a strong performance at Hammersmith, but were perhaps a little disappointed with their final row of the season at the Head of the River race, in which they placed 136th. On that same Saturday, the Blue Boat moved to Henley for the last week before our race. We had a fantastic last week at Upper Thames RC, graced by great weather and in the company of OUW, OUWL, and PCBC. The extra speed we found that was unfortunately not quite enough, however, and we were beaten to the line by our Cambridge counterparts by 3/4 of a length.

This term, we are continuing to train in a slight variation on the Blue Boat line-up, with the aim of racing in the Temple at Henley Royal. We are also organising a development squad in order to recruit more people from the College clubs for next year's season. This will start up after Summer Eights in 6th Week, and run alongside our Temple VIII to either Richmond/Reading or Kingston regattas at the ends of 9th and 11th week respectively.

d. OUWLRC

After successful training weeks in the UK and in Portugal, the squad now has 15 rowers and 2 coxes, although injury and illness are now taking their toll. The crew is expected to be set shortly in the push up to HBR.

4. Rowing Sabbatical Report

Trinity swim tests saw 175 people take swim tests run by OURCs with a 11% failure rate. Further tests are taking place at the arrangement of the individuals with Bubbles Swim School, at the pool in Botley.

OUWLRC have continued to run capsized drills this year on OURCs behalf. There were over 100 people asking for a capsized drill in Trinity, marking a significant increase from last year.

HBR representation by an Oxford college was decided by a single head race with Pembroke winning the men's position by default and the women's by a significant margin. Pembroke raced well in both events, losing marginally in the men's event, but winning Oxford's first collegiate race at HBR in the women's.

The Isis and Godstow stretches of the river have been 'red flag' for the period of 28th April until the 13th May following the heavy and persistent rainfall. There was notable flooding on Port Meadow and high river levels seen throughout Oxford. The river has been carrying a large quantity of debris, including an entire tree that is now stuck by Boathouse Island, and much of this is impossible to see in the clouded water.

Away from Oxford, some colleges have been able to train on other stretches such as Radley, Abingdon and Wallingford, using the provision in the rules that they must make their own risk assessment based on the advice of the EA and local clubs.

5. BR Division Representative Report

6. Representation of Colleges on COUR

Amend Section 3 of the constitution of COUR to include two College Boat Club Captains as selected by the Captains at a Captains' Meeting by insertion of new section 3.7 and renumber 3.7 to 3.8:

3.7 Two elected Captains of College Boat Clubs as elected by a quorate Captains' Meeting of OURCs.
Proposed: Karl Hudspith (OUBC)

7. Representation of Presidents on COUR

Amend 3 to include the Presidents of all squads. This matches the reality of our meetings.

Insert new 3.2: Presidents of OUBC, OUWBC, OULRC and OUWLRC and the Secretary of OURCs.

Remove footnote 2.

Proposed: Sahil Sinha

8. Any Other Business