



Council for Oxford University Rowing

Confirmed report of the meeting held on Tuesday 27th October 2015 at 6.30 pm in the Oscar Wilde Room, Magdalen College.

Present:

Prof. Ben Davis (OULRC Senior Member and Chair)
Dr. Paul Azzopardi (OURCs Senior Member)
Jon Roycroft (OU Director of Sport)
David White (OU Sports Safety Officer)
Mark Blandford-Baker (BR Regional Representative)
Barbara Wilson (OUBC Administrator)
Gary Stephens (Sports Services Manager)
Yosiane White (Rowing Sabbatical)
Madeleine Badcott (OUWBC President)
Alec Trigger (OULRC President)
Jonathan Williams (OURCs Secretary)
Joe Hitchen (OURCs Captain of Coxes)
Jessica Dunham (OURCs Captains' Representative)

Apologies:

Dr. Lisa Walker (OUWBC Senior Member)

No response:

Morgan Gerlak (OUBC President)
Dr. Fernanda Piri (Senior Member OUWLRC)
Lucy Roberts (OUWLRC President)
Prof. Sir Jon Bell (Senior Member OUBC)

1. Minutes of meeting held on 12 May 2015 [Paper 1]

The minutes were unfortunately not complete or satisfactory. The committee was asked to contribute anything they may remember or be able to improve regarding the minutes via email to the Rowing Sabbatical Officer, or to the Chair (BD). BD and YW will ensure that mechanisms are in place so that this runs more smoothly in the future.

The minutes of both the TT15 meeting and the present MT15 meeting will be circulated within a week, although amendments to those of TT15 will be accepted until the next meeting of this committee.

2. Matters arising, not covered elsewhere in the agenda

Action points from the last meeting - none clear enough to be considered.

a) Squad reports

BW asked whether the squad reports could please also list the names of the presidents who wrote the reports, along with the squad title. [**Action : YW**]

b) Dates on minutes

BW asked whether the minutes could be dated clearer in order to be able to find specific points more easily. [**Action: YW**]

c) Addition to TT15 minutes

PA mentioned that although the minutes are tidier than they were, the main thing that is missing is the discussion on what COUR is. It would suffice to add in a line saying that this was discussed at the meeting and is an ongoing discussion. No conclusion was reached at the TT15 meeting. [**Action: YW**]

3. University Squad Reports [Paper 2]

Please ensure the squad reports are in at least a week in advance of the next COUR meeting so that we can avoid the late circulation of additional reports.

MBB asked whether the use of the term “returning Half-Blues” refers to Isis rowers. This is confirmed by BW.

No further comments.

4. OURCs Reports - Rowing Sabbatical Officer, Secretary and Captain of Coxes [Paper 3]

In the minutes of the TT15 meeting, FP requests an annual report from OURCs regarding safety issues that occur on the Isis. PA argued that this is frankly too much work to compile, and that the termly reports from the Rowsab, Secretary and CoC should suffice. The majority of relevant issues are brought up in these reports anyway. The use of these reports instead of one annual report also allows for a more timely reaction to pressing issues. PA therefore asked the committee to please let OURCs know if there is anything that is missing from the reports that should be in them.

JH was unsure whether a termly Senior Umpire report is also necessary, but PA said that it is, so long as the TT report is more elaborate. The TT reports from not only the SUs, but also the rest of OURCs should be more elaborate and cover more, giving a good overview of how the term but also year went in general. [**Action: YW, JW, JH, RQ**]

Finally, YW explained that the swimming lessons mentioned in the Rowsab report have begun and are going well. 4 out of 15 who took a lesson on Monday 26th of October passed a retest (out of the 9 who were actually retested there and then).

It was agreed that the reports look good and should hopefully remain of such standard.

5. Senior Umpire's Report [Paper 4]

JH noted that only one cox was removed from the Isis during Summer Eights, not two as mentioned in the report. [**Action: YW**]

MBB asked whether Rachel Quarrell can be added to the first line of the report since it now suggests that she was not one of the Senior Umpires of the event. [**Action: YW**]

MBB also strongly suggested that OURCs should look at how appeals are done at Cambridge, since from the report it seems like more trouble than it is worth, and that appeals are more about wording than actual evidence. JH said that the committee has been going to Cambridge for a number of years to see how they do bumps racing, and that the general conclusion has been that the difference in river layout between Oxford and Cambridge means that on the spot appeals are easier in Cambridge than they are here. JW has talked to RQ about tightening the rules on appeals, and there is a general consensus that the appeals system needs improving, however the best way to do this has yet to be discovered.

BW asked whether it would be useful if in future a recommendation for the following year could be put at the bottom of the report.

6. British Rowing Regional Representative's Report

MBB is no longer on the board of British Rowing, but is still our representative at the regional British Rowing Council.

MBB stated that two things are important. Firstly, the distribution of the Tideway Safety Document. A hard-copy was sent to all of the squads, as they frequently use the Tideway, and a digital copy was emailed to all of the college clubs by YW. More importantly, a Tideway coach endorsement form was distributed. This is important for all university squads, but also for colleges who use the Tideway. To clarify, if a coach takes a college crew down to the Tideway just for one race, e.g. Fours Head, then no

endorsement form is necessary. However, if a college boatclub wants to run a multiple-day training-camp on the Tideway then it is essential that such a form is completed. If the college is hiring a launch from a Tideway club then they will probably be asked for such a form, but even if they are using their own launch, a form is necessary.

MBB and BW reported that they went to a BR conference recently and picked up a rowing booklet for freshers that includes all kinds of basic but useful information for new rowers. YW was already planning on creating such a booklet over Christmas, so will contact the makers of this Yorkshire version to talk about using the same format. [**Action: YW**]

MBB would like to come to the next captains' meeting to talk about British Rowing affiliation to the captains. YW to invite him. [**Action: YW**]

PA asked whether the title of this report should be changed to "Regional Representative's Report" instead of "Divisional Representative's Report". MBB agrees this would be more suitable.

7. OU Sports Safety Subcommittee

PA, JR, DW and YW went to the recent meeting. With regard to rowing the swim tests were discussed. In particular, the communication of who passed and who failed a swim test. A fail-list is published immediately after the swim tests are done, and a complete pass-list is circulated as soon as it has been completed. This takes a considerable amount of time since the hand processing of 1500 names is time consuming for the Rowsab. The Sports Safety Subcommittee is therefore looking into collaborating with IT to get a bod-card scanner system set up to reduce the time delay in producing a pass-list, and also to reduce errors that naturally occur through a hand-written system. Furthermore, an application is being built for the OURCs website where senior members can look up whether specific students have passed a swim-test and are in the database, or not.

PA also mentioned that the additional precautions that were discussed after the Torpids incident last year were implemented successfully during Summer Eights, and this is now known by the university.

8. Rowing Safety

JW reported on an incident that occurred recently on the Towpath, in which a member of public on a bike had to swerve around a rowing coach with no hi-vis gear or bike-lights, and thereby ended up in a hedge (instead of the river). He was slightly battered and bruised, and had approximately £100 of damage to his bike, but he is ok and is not making any formal complaint. The identity of the coach is unknown, since it was so dark. The victim did ask if we could remind coaches of the essence of lights, which YW did within 24 hours through an email to the rowing captains.

PA asked whether we fine people who do not have lights. There is indeed a rule in the OURCs Code of Conduct that people must use lights if they are bankriding, so if someone is spotted without then they will indeed be fined.

BD suggested reminding captains at the next captains' meeting that they must use bells as well as lights and hi-vis gear.

DW wondered what would have happened insurance wise in such a situation and therefore spoke to an insurance clerk about what the implications of such an incident may be. It is possible that this falls under the college's insurance, although since colleges row under rules and regulations set by OURCs this might be more complex, and could possibly need to be done through legal services. PA mentioned that this should not come onto the OURCs tab, and the committee agreed with this.

9. OURCs Business

PA elaborated on a complaint received by the Vice-Chancellor's Office of the University from a resident of Abingdon regarding noise made by Balliol and St John's college boat clubs early in the mornings. After inquiring into the matter, it turned out that the resident in question had bought the house next to the Abingdon Rowing Club over a year ago and has been complaining to many organisations (EA, council, etc.) about noise, but also other matters. He has even bought a barge and moored it so that it deliberately impedes rowing boats landing at the boat club. Abingdon boat club have been made aware of the situation, and have updated their restrictions on the use of megaphones, etc., early in the morning for Balliol and St John's. This is not OURCs' or the university's business really, and Abingdon rowing club will do all they can to prevent noise complaints. If the issue with Balliol and St John's persists then Abingdon boat club can simply deny them use of the boathouse which is an easy fix if this remains an issue.

It would be good to remind all colleges not to disturb people early in the morning.

10. Any Other Business

Nothing to be considered.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meetings will take place on the 2nd of February and 10th of May 2016. The current time of 6.30pm was good, but we will reassess this closer to the next meeting.

POINTS FOR ACTION

- Correct and amend the TT15 minutes : BD, YW and any other contributors
- Update squad and SU reports : YW
- Continue the OURCs and SU reports, with a more elaborate TT report : YW, JH, JW, RQ
- Rowing booklet for freshers : YW
- Invite MBB to Captains' meeting : YW

[Paper 2]

Squad reports

OUBC – Morgan Gerlak

OUBC had a particularly large turnout of trialists this year. The majority of the squad is again made up of postgrads, but there is also a strong showing of undergrads. In total we have 2 Blues and 6 Half Blues returning to the squad this year.

Training has been going well and our first competitive race will be the Fours Head on 7th of November. Following the Fours Head the squad will be cut down to a more suitable size and preparations for Trial Eights will begin.

Looking ahead I am confident that we have all the tools required to win a fourth consecutive Boat Race. In an Olympic there will always be a bit more uncertainty, however, we have been incredibly diligent with our training and that's being reflected in our improved physiologies. The focus this year must be on the process, not the result. If we execute the process to the best of our ability the result will take care of itself.

OUWBC – Madeleine Badcott

The squad has had a promising start to the season so far; we have had a good turnout, including four returners from last year's Blue Boat and two athletes from Osiris. As usual during this part of the year, we have been training in a variety of different combinations, including some sculling boats. Eight athletes raced in single sculls at the Wallingford Long Distance Sculls; we had some very encouraging times posted, with the top results being 2nd place in both the Elite and IM1 1x. This coming weekend we will be sending a 4x and 8+ to the British Championships in Nottingham. This will be a great racing opportunity for our crews, particularly the four athletes and one cox intending to trial for the GB team this season.

OULRC – Alec Trigger

This year we started with a squad of 30 rowers and 3 coxes. We have just finished a week of physiological testing and have cut down to a squad of 21. We are doing lots of side-by-side work to increase the internal competition and are looking towards some local head races to get some race experience.

We started the season with the unfortunate news that our head coach would be leaving mid season. We have advertised the position and have a shortlist of 3 coaches. We are looking to make a decision and start the transition period within the next 3 weeks.

OEWLRC – Lucy Roberts

The start of the 2015-2016 kicked off with a 4-day sculling camp, offering new triallists the opportunity to gain experience in smaller boats. We had a strong attendance and started the season with over 30 athletes and 3 coxes. Of these 30 athletes, two are returners from last year's blue boat and six are from Tethys. We have completed our first round of physiological testing and are promoting inter-squad competition by introducing more side-by-side pieces into our training sessions. We are currently training in a number of different combinations and have competed at both Pairs Head and the British Championships in Nottingham. At Pairs Head we entered twelve athletes in double sculls and were successful in winning the Elite Lwt 2x and IM3 Lwt 2x categories. In the coming week two of our athletes will be taking part in the first GB trials assessment.

[Paper 3]

OURCs reports

Rowing Sabbatical Officer

This term has started well with my two main projects being swim tests and lessons, and safety audits.

Swim tests

The big batch of swim tests this year took place on Sunday and Wednesday of 1st week and Sunday of 2nd week. I created an online googledoc in which captains could see which time slots were busy, and how many spots were free for them to send people. As soon as a college emailed me with a request for spots the googledoc was updated. This system worked remarkably well. I had 1800 spots that college captains could sign their rowers up for, and eventually broadened this to 2100. In the end, 1453 rowers took a swim test. Of these, 155 failed their swim test, but 19 of those passed a test later in the week. This means a failure rate of around 10%, which is in line with previous years. There was in total one rescue required, the student was struggling to keep his head above water and was pulled to the edge of the pool by a life-guard with no resulting injuries or issues.

For the first time this year, in conjunction with the instructors who assess our swim tests, we are offering people who failed their swim test a 30-minute lesson focusing on the surface dive part of the swim test. This is what over 90% of people fail on. The lessons are cheap and will be followed by a retest. We hope through these short lessons to help those who almost passed their test a way of still passing and joining rowing. The lessons will take place next week.

Safety audits

British Rowing has moved the annual safety audit deadline from after Christmas to the 30th of November. I have therefore set Oxford Colleges a deadline of November 1st, in order to leave me ample chase-up and review time. So far I have received audits from Exeter, Linacre, Merton, Oriel, Regent's Park, St Hilda's, St Hugh's, St John's, St Peter's and Worcester colleges. I have sent out 3 reminders since September, and will continue to remind captains until the deadline of the 1st. I hope to receive the rest of the audits this week.

Secretary

Activity on my front has been fairly subdued so far. I've mostly been trying to support Yosi, but she doesn't seem to need very much help. The dates for this year's competitions have been set, entries for IWL A are open. A specification for the new website is coming along, hampered by the lack of a webmaster; this is to be addressed. Three new members have been recruited to the committee, some other possible candidates have been identified. Alissa Bray has been elected as sponsorship officer.

Captain of Coxes

In Torpids, we had a number of bad concessions (including from Div1 coxes) which lead to a number of small problems so the Eights briefing was tweaked to address this and the quality of concessions improved as a result. There were a couple of more serious collisions (involving contact between racing and stationary crews) which lead to penalty bumps being awarded for dangerous coxing. I spoke to all of the coxes involved before their next races but, in agreement with her coach, one was later removed from the competition because of continued poor coxing. The Torpids briefing this year will be updated to prevent any repeats. This term has started well with over 200 new coxes registering at the registration meetings this term and last and no issues to report.