



OURCs Event Plan - Autumn Fours

2014 Introduction

Autumn Fours is an annual inter-collegiate small boats competition which will be held on Sunday 26th October 2014. The competition will be run as a side-by-side knockout tournament: two crews will race alongside each other from Longbridges Boathouse up to Cox Stone (the Bumps finish line). The winner (judged by the bows) will progress to the next round. Racing will occur from midday and conclude by dusk.

In the event of a low number of entries the event may be run as a "round robin" competition where the winner will be the one with the most wins. In the event of a tie, the winner will be the victor of the race between the tied boats.

There will be separate men's and women's tournaments.

This plan details the logistics of the event and the precautions taken to ensure smooth and safe running. Precautions are made based on a risk assessment. This identifies possible hazards and resulting risks, highlights the controls in place to reduce these risks, and identifies those responsible for ensuring the controls are in place. This risk assessment is attached as an appendix of this safety plan.

Autumn Fours 2013 runs with the consent of the EA and the University Proctors.

Entry Restrictions

Entry will be restricted to "non-novice"¹ college crews and all entrants must be valid members of an OURCs member club as defined in 1.7 of the OURCs Constitution. Novice coxswains will be allowed to enter but only if they have more than one term's experience. Entrants will also be required to have passed a swim test and entries will be checked against the OURCs swim test database. Honorary members of a boat club may enter but not associate members, without specific permission from the Race Secretary.

Competitors are subject to additional entry requirements in the interest of safety as specified by the race committee.

Entries per college may be limited due to time constraints.

¹ "Non-novice" crews is a definition essentially designed to eliminate beginner crews but not those with previous experience of racing.

Race Organisation

Management

The race will be organised by the Race Secretary (Tom Stewardson OURCs Secretary) with help from the Race Committee. The following officials will be used:

The Senior Umpire (SU) — ensures the safe and timely start of all races.

The Race Secretary — mans the race desk with help from the race committee.

Marshals — work with the SU and Race Secretary to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event.

Race officials on the course will be identified by fluorescent yellow bibs and will be able to maintain contact through two-way radios. Race Desk will be manned at all times. Mobile phones are held by the Oxford University Rowing Sabbatical Officer (07747 157037), Race Secretary and the SU. The location of Race Desk is to be confirmed.

Consumption of alcohol by race officials is strictly prohibited.

Marshals

Marshals are all issued with high visibility yellow jackets, radios, klaxons and starting orders. Personnel in key positions are also given megaphones as appropriate. All marshals are given summary notes of specific duties where appropriate. A member of the Race Committee is always present at Race Desk to ensure that marshals are present and aware of their duties. Marshals are responsible for ensuring that the race proceeds safely and that all river traffic, including race traffic, is in the right place and aware of where they are going. Before the start of each division, marshals will radio to the SU to confirm the course is clear of obstructions. In the event of likely potential collision, a competitor thrown from the boat, or other emergency on the course, marshals shall sound their klaxon to stop racing and alert the attention of the safety boat and first aid team as appropriate. A secondary role is to report to Race Desk if any significant numbers of pedestrians are present, and to request support if appropriate. During the race itself they are observers, ensuring a safe and fair contest, they will also warn spectators and members of the public of approaching cyclists.

Marshals will be placed as shown in Appendix B. A short description of each position follows below (marshals marked with • will have a megaphone).

1. Head (•): Located approximately 50m beyond the finish post. Instructs crews to move off and spin in a timely and safe fashion. Performs river checks. Requests river traffic to wait if a race is in progress or klaxons a race if the craft insists on proceeding while one is running. An experienced marshal should be used on this position.
2. Finish: Judges the finish, sounds clacker board and informs race desk of the results of the races. Instructs crews to clear the finish line.
3. Boathouses: Located on Boathouse Island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations. Performs river checks. Controls crews crossing over to return to Univ raft.
7. Crossing Point (•): Located outside Christ Church Boathouse on Boathouse Island. Controls the crossing point into the Green Bank transit lane.
5. Univ Boathouse: Located outside the Univ Boathouse. Performs boat and river checks.
6. Longbridges: Located at the Longbridges Boathouse. Performs boat and river checks.
7. Top Gut (•): Located at the mouth of the Gut. Pairs up racing crews and keeps note of boats that have passed downstream so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews ready to race. Instructs crews to move up onto start stations. Requests river traffic to wait if a race is about to be started.
8. Donnington Bridge (•): Located towards Donnington Bridge. Informs crews warming up of any changes to the schedule and ensures crews are in the start area and paired up in ample time. Controls crews spinning downstream of the Gut during their warm-up.
9. Bike Marshal: Cycles ahead of each race warning anyone on the towpath about oncoming bikes.
10. Spare Marshal: Able to cross to Falcon or City if crews are boating from there.

The Race Desk oversees the Marshals and assists the SU. Operational decisions on the deployment of additional Marshals will lie with the race committee and SU. The SU will be situated on the start line at Longbridges.

A River Check is the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. The SU shall call for river checks by the Marshals before each division. The Marshals are instructed to look out for boats and floating debris. The race will only be started by the SU when the course is sufficiently clear of obstructions.

Rescue Boat Cover

A rescue launch will be based at the race desk during racing, equipped with a British Rowing advised rescue bag. All launch drivers will hold the RYA Powerboat Level 2 qualification or above. All launch occupants are to wear life jackets and the driver is to use a kill chord.

First Aid

First aid cover for the event will be provided by a minimum of two first aiders. First aiders will be qualified with the HSE approved First Aid at Work or equivalent qualification. First aid cover will have first aid response as their sole responsibility and will have full access to the facilities of race desk, including safety launches, for the purposes of best providing cover or best responding to an emergency. First aiders will be informed through their agents of the nature of the event and have the risk assessment made available to them. All first aiders engaged are done so on the basis of their qualification and professed skill. They are required to hold liability insurance of their own, or through their employer.

They are responsible from when the SU declares the river open for racing until the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

Emergency Access

Emergency services will be made aware of the event and access will be communicated to them in advance. Emergency access will be available to both the towpath and Boathouse Island. The race desk will hold a key to the access road to the towpath and, in the event of access being required to Boathouse Island, Christ Church lodge (01865276150) will be contacted to open the necessary gates. Access to the river can also be gained at Donnington Bridge, via City of Oxford Boathouse (01865272576), Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club and the Riverside Centre (01865278673). The designated point to transfer a casualty to an ambulance is at City of Oxford Club, where access will be secured by the Race Secretary before the start of the event. If a casualty who is a member of the University is taken to hospital, an official of their college (chosen under advice from the SU) will be contacted.

Communications

A set of two-way radios are used for communication between race control and the Marshals, the stewards and the medical personnel. These are distributed as follows: 20 radios for the use of the race committee, including one each for the EA, the Iffley Lock lock-keeper, the safety boat, race control and the SU, with the remainder for the use of other Marshals. Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at the relevant marshalling and stewarding meetings. In addition to radio communication, we will have the use of various mobile phones.

Circulation Pattern

Boathouse Island

Crews based on the Boathouse Island will boat from rafts at the downstream end of the island

to allow crews room to land. They will then be held at Christ Church raft by the crossing point marshal before being allowed to cross when the river is clear over to Univ and down the Green Bank transit lane. On returning, crews will land on the upstream end of Boathouse Island.

Univ Raft

Crews based at Univ will boat and go straight into the Green Bank transit lane moving down straight into the Gut. On returning from racing, crews will progress down the transit lane on the city side of the river to halfway down Boathouse Island. Here they will receive instruction on when it is safe to cross from the Boathouses marshal.

Longbridges

Crews boating from Longbridges will proceed straight into the warm up area below the Gut. After racing, crews will move down the Boathouse Island transit lane and will wait at the Christ Church raft to receive permission from the Crossing Point marshal to cross to the County side. They will then go down the Green Bank transit lane and land at Longbridges.

Warming Up

Crews will warm up below the Gut, only spinning to go downstream after checking with the Donnington Bridge marshal. The Top Gut marshal will pair up crews just inside the Gut and then call up the pairs when necessary towards the start stations.

Racing

Each crew will race up a buoyed lane from Longbridges to the finish stone. The two stations will be pre-assigned to each crew, "County" being the station closest to the towpath and "City" being on the boathouse side.

Potential Problems

Cyclists

Each crew will be limited to one accompanying bike which may follow alongside the crew to ensure safety rather than to coach. Cyclists are responsible for using the towpath in a safe fashion and must not unreasonably interfere with the public use of the public right of way. Occasional permission may be granted for an additional cyclist to accompany a crew by a Race Committee member or the SU - for example to assist in training a novice cox. A bike marshal will precede each race to assist with their safe passage along the towpath.

Other River Traffic

When Autumn Fours is held there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. Races will only be run when the river is clear of other craft. If a race is in progress, craft intending to proceed onto the course will be asked to moor at Longbridges or the Head by marshals until the race has finished. If, however, the craft insists on proceeding, the race will be stopped. Craft take the centre of the river and crews stick to the sides of the river. In the event of a crew meeting a cruiser head on, the crew should move to starboard (i.e. bowside/the cox's right).

Stream Conditions

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with the Iffley Lock lock-keeper and the EA to decide how to proceed. Contingency plans exist to allow some racing to continue. Options include requiring crews to race with experienced/senior

coxes, shortening the course to start from the downstream end of Boathouse Island and preventing crews from going through the Gut to warm up. The entire day's racing may be cancelled.

In the event of the EA displaying Amber or Red Boards at the local locks (indicating a strong or rising stream), it is understood that the EA must be consulted.

Adverse Weather Condition

The SU will monitor weather conditions, both by reference to weather forecasts before the event and to the weather as the event proceeds. If they consider it necessary to take the weather conditions into account, they will act accordingly. Fog will prevent racing if visibility is less than 100m. Strong wind will trigger contingency plans. Options include requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, shortening the course to start from the downstream end of Boathouse Island and preventing crews from going through the Gut to warm up. The entire day's racing may be cancelled. In poor visibility in which racing will continue (decreasing light, mist, etc.) boats must be fitted with bright white lights at bow and stern which are visible through 360 degrees.

Lightning

In the event of an official sighting lightning, the guidance provided by British Rowing will be followed. The weather will be monitored by the Race Desk and a decision on the suspension of racing will be made by the SU in conjunction with the Race Secretary. The location of the storm will be approximated by counting the time between the thunder and the lightning and if this is 30 seconds or less, then competitors and officials will be advised to take proper shelter as soon as possible (I.e. within buildings and away from boats/trees).

Accidents on the water

In the instance of an accident on the water the safety launch will respond, taking members of the First Aid Unit, when called by the marshals on the radio. The First Aid Unit will make all judgment calls on their attendance and the movement of any injured parties in liaison with the Sabbatical Officer. Marshals will sound their klaxons and instruct any rowers in the water to stay with the boat and account for all members of the crews involved. Upon return to the bank, the First Aid Unit will supervise the treatment. All boathouses should contain items such as safety blankets. The race organisers will ensure a supply at Race Desk.