



OURCs Event and Safety Plan

Isis Winter League 2009-10

Introduction

The Isis Winter League is a series of races held in Michaelmas and Hilary terms of each academic year, in order to provide regular competition for colleges. With the regular loss of events due to strong stream conditions on the Isis during the winter, it is hoped that these races will help provide a focus for crews, aiding retention of oarsmen and women. The ability to train coxes and OURCs Marshals is expected to aid the smooth running of Bumps Races.

This academic year, five races will be held, subject to conditions, on the following dates:

- Event A: Sunday 15th November 2009
- Event B: Sunday 29th November 2009
- Event C: Sunday 24th January 2010
- Event D: Sunday 7th February 2010
- Event E: Sunday 21st February 2010

With the agreement of the University insurers, non-college clubs will be eligible to row. Racing will occur from 1:30pm until 4:30 pm. The race course is upstream within the stretch from Iffley Lock to Folly Bridge. Racing is split into divisions of about 8-14 boats, racing at approximately 30 minute intervals. The race is a Head Race: boats are set off one at a time with roughly 30 seconds between each boat, and each boat rows the full length of the river. The aim of racing is to row the length of the river in the fastest possible time, measured by two OURCs committee timers at the start and finish respectively.

The race is run by the OURCs committee, using the following system of officials:

Senior Umpire (SU, wearing a yellow jacket) – ensures the safe and timely start of the races;

Race Secretary – manning the race desk;

Marshals – (wearing yellow bibs) work with race secretary and SU to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event.

The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.

This plan details the logistics of the event and the precautions taken to ensure smooth and safe running. Precautions are taken based on a “Head Racing Risk Assessment” document which identifies possible hazards and resulting risks, highlights the controls in place to reduce the risks, and identifies those responsible for ensuring the controls are in place.

Race Management

The OURCs Secretary (Ben Thurston) is responsible for the implementation of the Event and Safety Plan, assisted by members of the OURCs Race Committee. The Secretary, or other Race Committee member, will be on the Race Desk at all times, and can be contacted on the OURCs mobile phone (07527071415) or by two-way radio. The Race Secretary can be contacted on 07761188605.

Enquiries can also be dealt with by the Rowing Sabbatical (Laurence McGivern) who is available on 01865248597.

The location of Race Desk is to be confirmed, but will be made known by email to rowing captains before race day.

The mobile telephone number of EA person on duty on day of race and the number of the Iffley Lock lockkeeper (01865777277) should be obtained by the Race Secretary for the day of the event.

Marshals

Marshals are all issued with high visibility yellow jackets, radios and starting orders.

Personnel in key positions are also given megaphones as appropriate. All Marshals shall be briefed prior to the start of the event. The brief will cover individual marshalling duties and safety procedures, and are given summary notes of specific duties where appropriate. A member of the race committee is always present at the 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 radio to the SU to confirm the course is clear of obstructions. A secondary role is to report to the 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 although this role will primarily be taken by the Bike Marshal during the main event.

Each Marshal has particular duties dependent on their designated position on the river detailed below.

1. Head ▼: Approx. 50m beyond finish post. Instructs crews to clear the finish line + spin; Communicates with other river traffic; performs River Checks.
2. Finish: Located at the finish (approx. 50m past the end of the boathouses). Instructs crews to clear the finish line; performs River Checks. Assists with timing.
3. Boathouses A ▼: Located on top end of the boathouse island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to ARA/BR and EA regulations; performs River Checks.
4. Boathouses B ▼: Located on the bottom end of the boathouse island. Performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to ARA/BR and EA regulations; performs River Checks.
5. Univ: Located outside Univ boathouse. Performs boat checks; performs River Checks.
6. Longbridges: Located at Longbridges boathouses. Performs boat checks; performs River Checks.
7. Top Gut ▼: Located at the mouth of the gut. Performs River Checks; keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream so as to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start.
8. Bottom Gut ▼: Located at the downstream end of the gut. Performs River Checks.
9. Start #1: Located below Donnington Bridge in the marshalling area. Assists the SU

marshalling crews before the start;

10. Start #2 ▼: Located below Donnington Bridge in the marshalling area below Start #1. Assists the SU marshalling crews before the start; warns and instructs other river traffic to prevent obstructions on the course.
11. Spare Marshal: If all other posts are filled Bike Marshal: cycles ahead of each division with the sole aim of providing additional warning to spectators and members of the general public on the tow path if significant numbers of pedestrians and bystanders are present. Also able to cross to Falcon and City prior to each division.

(▼ indicates that the Marshal has a megaphone)

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 in the marshalling area.

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, swans and floating debris. The race will only be started by the SU when the course is clear of obstructions.

Circulation Pattern

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of the event, a strict circulation pattern is enforced, which is the usual competition pattern. In the following explanatory notes, left and right refers to the course of the boat as seen by the coxswain, i.e. port (strokeside) and starboard (bowside) respectively.

Crews

The basic circulation pattern between divisions is a figure of eight. Above the Gut all crews observe reverse circulation thus keeping to the left of the river. Below the Gut the normal pattern is followed and crews keep to the right of centre. The change from reversed to normal circulation happens at the *top* entrance to the Gut as crews move down toward the start. Crews moving downstream into the Gut must cross to the right hand side of the river under direction of the Longbridges Marshal. Once through the Gut, crews shall proceed right of centre, taking care of boats that have spun onto the towpath bank. Crews may spin in either direction when it is safe to do so, and under the direction of the SU or Start Marshal. The top half of each division shall spin and pull into the towpath side, the bottom half shall spin and pull into the City side.

The SU, assisted by the Marshals at the start, shall start the race when it is safe to do so, and any crew late to the start may be held back until the back of the division. Crews will be started by the SU, and timed from Donnington Bridge. Crews marshalling on the towpath side shall start first, and may take any course they choose to the finish. Crews on the City side should cross to the towpath side and are then free to choose their course.

The finish is approximately 100 m above the top of the island, and crews should continue rowing past the finish. Crews should keep to the left hand side of the river, following the instructions of the Finish Marshal. Crews should not spin until told to do so by the Finish Marshal, and should then cross to the City side and proceed downstream to their boathouse.

Boathouse Island: All crews boating from the boathouse island must boat downstream and keep close to the left hand bank until the Gut entrance. Crews should proceed directly to the start area, with no further warm up.

Univ: Crews boating from the University College BC boathouse boat upstream, and should row up to the top of the island before spinning and joining the crews heading downstream.

Crews may boat as soon as the Univ Marshal has told them that the last crew has passed. Crews returning to Univ from the finish area shall row downstream to Longbridges, and spin above the Gut. They should then row upstream, on the left side of the river, back to Univ.

Longbridges: Crews at Longbridges boat upstream, keeping close to the left hand bank. Crews should boat as soon as the Long Bridges Marshal has told them that the last crew has passed. Crews may then proceed upstream, spinning at the top of the boathouse island: they should then join in the circulation pattern. *Crews that are late may boat downstream and proceed directly to the start area if the river is completely clear.* Crews returning to Longbridges from the finish area shall keep to the left hand side of the river down the Green Bank, and either spin above the Gut to land upstream, or cross late, when safe, to land downstream.

Falcon and City: Any crew stationed at Falcon or City of Oxford Rowing Club boats as normal, and may boat once the last crew has passed them. Crews may follow the last crew up through the Gut, crossing to the left side of the river once through the Gut. Crews above the Gut should then proceed as crews from Longbridges. *Crews that are late should spin below the Gut follow the normal circulation pattern there.* Boats returning to their clubs should cross back to the normal circulation pattern on entering the Gut, and spin according to their local club rules.

Upstream of the Gut encounters between crews are avoided by all crews keeping tight to the banks and leaving a clear, central passage for cruisers. Downstream of Longbridges crews obey the Regulations for the avoidance of collisions (Thames Navigation Licensing and General Byelaws 1993).

During the race no non-competing vessels other than the safety launch are on the course. Crews may take whichever route up the river they choose. The Safety Boat (SB1) follows racing as far as the Gut, where it remains on call until the division has finished. Crews race as far as the finish post, above the top of the boathouse island. Here crews wind down and move upstream well clear of the finish where they wait for the last crew to cross, following instructions from the Finish Marshal.

Crews that have finished should move upstream and spin to the Christ Church Meadow side only when directed to do so by the Marshal, then rejoin the circulation pattern. Crews for the next division may boat when instructed to do so by the Marshal at their boathouse location. This will be announced by megaphone at the island, CORC and Falcon boathouses.

Other River Traffic

During the period in which the Isis Winter League is held, there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. As they reach either Iffley lock (going upstream) or Osney lock (going downstream) they are given directions from the EA. Craft are permitted on this stretch of the river only between divisions (races are never started until the river is completely clear of river traffic and other obstructions). Craft take the centre of the river and pass one another in accordance with the Regulations for Avoidance of Collisions. Crews stick to the sides of the river but in the event of a crew meeting a cruiser in mutual water, both crew and cruiser obey these Regulations. Craft proceeding along the course may be asked to moor at Longbridges, the Isis Farmhouse, or the Finish, if a division is about to begin.

Swans

During summer events, arrangements are made to have the swans on the Isis removed from the river for the duration of the races. This should not be an issue at this time of year as there are no swans on the Isis. Following the practise of head racing, crews may proceed up the

course picking their own line, avoiding all obstacles, including wildlife.

Communications

Two-way radios are used for communication between race control and the Marshals and the medical personnel (who also use their own communication equipment). These are distributed as follows: 13 radios for the use of the race committee and marshals, plus one each for the EA, the Iffley Lock Keeper, the safety boat, race control and the Senior Umpire. Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at the relevant marshalling briefings. In addition to radio communication, we will have the use of the OURCs mobile phone held by race control (07527071415, number published to clubs). The Iffley lock keeper also has a land line (01865777277) and the Christ Church lodge is available if access to the Meadow is required (01865276150).

Safety

Competitor Safety

Event Management

Marshals are thoroughly briefed prior to the event on their duties (as described above) by members of the race committee and on the advice of a Senior Umpire. The SU is responsible for ensuring that racing starts only when conditions are safe, subject to satisfactory reports from the Marshals and Race Desk. If any incident occurs that could potentially jeopardise the safety of crews, Marshals sound marine air horns/klaxons, bringing all racing to an immediate halt. On hearing a klaxon over the radios or anywhere on the course, all marshals sound their klaxons.

All participating crews shall observe the OURCs rules.

Clubs that have not submitted a safety audit to the ARA/BR may not race. Crews infringing OURCs rules or acting in an unsafe manner may be subject to fines, or disqualification from the event. Information for competitors will be published before the event, detailing the safety issues. Coxes of all crews will be OURCs registered unless exempted by the Captain of Coxes (non-OURCs clubs only).

Particular attention is paid to rules covering the use of life jackets, bow balls and heel restraints.

Bank Riders

Novice coxes must have a bank rider. Other coxes may choose to or not. Coxless boats should use discretion based on the experience of the steersman and stream conditions whether to use a bank rider or not, although it is recommended that a bank rider is present. There must not be more than one bank rider per crew. If there is more than one bank rider following a crew, then that crew is liable to be fined under OURCs rules. This is to ensure safety to other tow-path users.

Stream Conditions

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with the Iffley lock keeper, the boatmen and the EA to decide how to proceed. OURCs has developed a contingency plan to allow some racing to continue (detailed in the Risk Assessment). Options include moving the start positions further away from the lock, cancelling racing for less

experienced crews, requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, running smaller divisions and cancelling the entire day's racing.

Although in 1995 a revised event took place without incident when there were 8 bucks drawn, 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 and their recommendations adhered to.

Lightning

In the event of an official sighting lightning, the guidance provided by the ARA/BR 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 Senior Umpire 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).

Medical Emergency

First Aid

First Aid kits are present in all boathouses and safety launches. In case of a serious accident, access to Christ Church meadow and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the slip road from Donnington Bridge is kept at the Race Desk, and barriers normally preventing access to Christ Church Meadow are lowered by arrangement.

Safety Boats

Up to two powerboats are used by OURCs during the event. Each boat is driven at all times by qualified personnel (RYA level 2, or equivalent). The boats have distinct roles: SB1 will be available to follow racing at least as far as Longbridges and is ready to aid participants. [SB2: to be used in the event of strong stream conditions, based at Falcon.]

All launch drivers to be qualified to RYA level 2 or equivalent (e.g. BSAC).

Spectator and Bystander Safety

Due to the very low number of spectators expected, compared to Torpids and Eights, the handling of spectator safety will rest with the Marshals. As well as reporting to the SU on the state of the river prior to racing, Marshals will also report on numbers of pedestrians to the Race Desk. Pedestrians will be warned of oncoming races by Marshals and the use of clear signs at entry points onto the towpath. The use of extra Marshals in warning bystanders, including the use of a cyclist preceding a division, will rest with Race Control. In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, Marshals will report to the Race Desk, who may postpone the start of a division or contact the Police as appropriate.

Numbers of cyclists accompanying divisions will be strictly controlled. One coach only shall accompany each boat, with sanctions being applied to clubs that disobey this rule.

Marshals shall be responsible for reporting unsafe behaviour of accompanying cyclists. Captains will be made aware that they are responsible for the conduct of their coaches, and sanctions will be employed in the case of dangerous or inappropriate behaviour.

In the event of an accident, Marshals will report to the Race desk, which will take appropriate action.