



O U R C

Torpids Event Plan 2010

Last up-dated 07/12/09

Introduction

Torpids is a rowing event comprising four days racing from Wednesday to Saturday of 6th or 7th week in Hilary term (depending on the date of the Women's Head of the River Race), with a qualifying session (Rowing On) held the preceding Friday. This year Torpids will occur from the 3rd March 2010 to 6th March 2010, with Rowing On held on the 26th February 2010.

Rowing On: This is a timed race from Longbridges to Christ Church Meadow. The event is run as a processional race, with crews set off at regular intervals in divisions (subject to entry levels), with the first division starting at 1pm. The fastest crews covering the course then qualify for Torpids proper.

Torpids: Racing occurs between 12 noon and 5.30pm. The course is upstream within the stretch from Iffley Lock to Folly Bridge. Racing is split into 11 divisions, each of 13 boats, racing at approximately 30 minute intervals. The aim of racing is to catch up with the boat in front and gain a 'bump'. On gaining a bump, crews move out of the way and cease racing. Boats which are bumped or fail to gain a bump must continue racing until the finish line.

This plan details the logistics of both events - Rowing On and Torpids - and the precautions taken to ensure smooth and safe running. Precautions are made based on Risk Assessments which identify all possible hazards and resulting risks, highlight the controls in place to reduce the risks, and identify those responsible for ensuring the controls are in place. These Risk Assessments are attached as *Appendix A* (Rowing On) and *Appendix B* (Torpids) of this Event Plan.

Race Management

Race Officials

The races – both Rowing On and Torpids - are run by the OURCs Committee, using the following system:

- i) **Race Secretary** - coordinates racing and is responsible for event and race safety. For this event, the Race Secretary will be Ben Thurston, who can be contacted on **07761188605** or secretary@ourcs.org.uk.
- ii) **Race Committee** - help the Race Secretary with coordination of racing and event safety.
- iii) **Race Desk** – location TBC, will oversee the marshals and assists the SU. A Race Committee member, usually the Race Secretary, will be present at Race Desk at all times, and can be contacted by mobile phone (**07761188605**) or by two-way radio.
- iv) **Senior Umpire (SU)** - situated in the start area for Rowing On and the area of the bunglines during Torpids, ensures the safe and timely start of the races.
- v) **Marshals** - work with the Race Secretary and the SU to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event. Details of the role of the marshals are given below.
- vi) **Umpires** - act as impartial race observers (NOT for Rowing On).

These officials will be marked out by coloured bibs: yellow high-visibility bibs for the SU and the marshals, red for the umpires.

The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.

Marshals

(This section will outline the marshalling for Torpids. The marshalling for Rowing On is slightly different and these differences are high-lighted at the end of this section.)

Briefing: Senior marshals from each college will attend a briefing meeting, held in the week prior to the event, that covers individual marshalling duties and safety procedures, and will be given summary notes of specific duties where appropriate. These senior marshals are then responsible for briefing the marshals sent by their college.

Over-seeing of marshals: A member of the Race Committee will always ensure that marshals are in place and aware of their duties.

Equipment: All marshals are issued with a high-visibility yellow jacket, a radio, a klaxon and a starting order. Personnel in key positions are also given a megaphone.

Stations: Marshals will be stationed along the river at points marked on the Placement of Marshals maps, attached as *Appendix C* (Rowing On) and *Appendix D* (Torpids) of this plan. Additional marshals may be stationed on the day by the Race Committee and/or the SU as needs dictate.

General duties:

All marshals, except the Bike marshal, perform river checks, the process by which the SU can ascertain whether the river is clear of obstructions. In particular this process must be done, and show that the river is clear of obstructions, before a division can be started. When a river check is called the marshals will look for boats, swans and floating debris on their stretch of the river, then, in the order in which they are listed below, report back to the SU.

In the event of the river becoming blocked to oncoming crews during racing for whatever reason, attending marshals will sound the safety klaxons and radio to all the others to do the same. A division should also be klaxoned in the event of someone being in the water (either a member of the public, or a competitor ejected from a boat). As crews hear the klaxons they will stop racing immediately as instructed in the coxing meetings (see later section).

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, marshals act as 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.

Particular duties:

In addition to the general duties, each marshal has particular duties dependent on their designated position on the river bank, as detailed below (refer to the Placement of Marshals map, attached as *Appendix B* to this plan).

- 1) **Head (of the River) Marshal:** (by the grey footbridge) communicates with other river traffic entering the course from under Folly Bridge, and liaises with the SU about this; instructs crews who have finished racing on where to wait to prevent a build up of crews above the finish line and when to spin; ensures crews returning to their boathouses keep tucked into the City side bank; warns non-event pedestrians and cyclists coming down the towpath that an event is occurring.
- 2) **Finish:** (by the Cox stone) operates the finish clacker over the STERN of the boats to inform crews when they have finished racing; instructs crews to clear the finish line, radios Race Desk when the last racing crew crosses the line; ensures crews returning to their boathouses keep tucked into the City side bank.
- 3) **Boathouse A:** (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses from St Anne's to Keble) fields questions from competitors, radioing Race Desk if unsure; performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations; makes sure that crews about to boat do not put their boats on the rafts before the crews of the previous division of the same sex have landed and cleared the rafts; encourages crews to boat on time to prevent late starting of divisions; keeps a record of which crews have boated for the division; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up.

- 4) **Boathouse B:** (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses from Exeter to Christ Church) fields questions from competitors, radioing Race Desk if unsure; performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations; makes sure that crews about to boat do not put their boats on the rafts before the crews of the previous division of the same sex have landed and cleared the rafts; encourages crews to boat on time to prevent late starting of divisions; keeps a record of which crews have boated for the division; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up.
- 5) **Univ:** (outside Univ Boathouse) fields questions from competitors, radioing Race Desk if unsure; performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations; makes sure that crews about to boat do not put their boats on the rafts before the crews of the previous division of the same sex have landed and cleared the rafts; encourages crews to boat on time to prevent late starting of divisions; keeps a record of which crews have boated for the division; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up.
- 6) **Green Bank:** (halfway between Univ and Longbridges Boathouses) monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up; encourages crews warming up above the Gut to be through it with 5 minutes to go; ensures that crews that are paddling back after bumping out or returning to their boathouse stick to the circulation pattern.
- 7) **Longbridges:** (outside Longbridges Boathouse) fields questions from competitors or directs them to Race Desk; performs checks on each boat to ensure that they conform to British Rowing and EA regulations; makes sure that crews about to boat do not put their boats on the rafts before the crews of the previous division of the same sex have landed and cleared the rafts; encourages crews to boat on time to prevent late starting of divisions; keeps a record of which crews have boated for the division; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up.
- 8) **Top Gut:** (at the Gut exit) it shouldn't be the case that crews are going through the Gut in opposite directions, but watches the Gut exit to ensure that crews change circulation pattern safely; keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream to be able to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; guides crews round any pile-ups; encourages crews to clear the racing line once bumped out.
- 9) **Bottom Gut:** (on the bend between the Sea Scouts and Falcon) pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; guides crews round any pile-ups; encourages crews to clear the racing line once bumped out.
- 10) **Donnington Bridge:** (by Donnington Bridge) might be required to cross Donnington Bridge to pass information to or perform boat checks on crews boating from Falcon or City; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; guides crews round any pile-ups; encourages crews to clear the racing line once bumped out.
- 11) **Top Bunglines:** (covering bunglines 1-7) monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up and checks that crews overtake sensibly; assists crews spinning onto their bunglines so as to keep the far bank clear for cruisers; keeps a record of which crews are attached to their bunglines; reports to the SU if the umpires have not shown up, or if there is no pole man for a crew in your section; generally assists the SU as required.
- 12) **Bottom Bunglines:** (covering bunglines 8-13) communicates with river traffic coming up through Iffley Lock, and liaises with the SU about this; monitors that crews are sticking to the circulation pattern during the warm-up and checks that crews overtake sensibly; assists crews spinning onto their bunglines so as to keep the far bank clear for cruisers; keeps a record of which crews are attached to their bunglines; reports to the SU if the umpires have not shown up, or if there is no pole man for a crew in your section; generally assists the SU as required.
- 13) **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 towpath if significant numbers of pedestrians and bystanders are present.

Marshalling for Rowing On:

A slightly different marshal line-up is used for Rowing On. Their specific duties are the same as the Torpids marshals, unless stated below

- 1) Head
- 2) Finish: drops the clacker on the BOW of the boat.
- 3) Boathouse A: there are no restrictions on when crews may put their boats on the rafts.
- 4) Boathouse B: there are no restrictions on when crews may put their boats on the rafts.
- 5) Univ: there are no restrictions on when crews may put their boats on the rafts.

- 6) Green Bank
- 7) Longbridges: there are no restrictions on when crews may put their boats on the rafts.
- 8) Top Gut: rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews paddling from the marshalling area to the start line.
- 9) Bottom Gut: keeps a record of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area; rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews paddling from the marshalling area to the start line.
- 10) Donnington Bridge: keeps a record of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area; rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews in the marshalling area.
- 11) Spinning: (located at the lowest point the SU will allow crews to spin) communicates with river traffic coming up through Iffley Lock, and liaises with the SU about this; stops crews spinning too low; marshals crews in the marshalling area; keeps a record of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area.
- 12) Bike

Circulation Pattern

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of Rowing On and Torpids, strict circulation patterns are enforced. These are illustrated on the Circulation Pattern maps, attached as *Appendix C* (Rowing On) and *Appendix D* (Torpids) to this plan.

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

Circulation pattern: For both Rowing On and Torpids, 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. Encounters between crews are avoided by all crews keeping tight to the banks and leaving a clear, central passage for cruisers and other river traffic.

Boating: All crews boating from Boathouse Island must boat downstream and keep close to the left bank. Crews on the County Side must boat upstream towards the Head. Any crew stationed at Falcon or City of Oxford Rowing Club should boat as normal, unless the river is completely clear, in which case crews may boat downstream. Similarly, if crews are late boating at Longbridges, they may boat downstream, as long as the river is clear and permission has been gained from a marshal.

Warming up: In Rowing On, no water warm-up is permitted. In Torpids, of the 13 crews in each division, the top 6 will warm up above the Gut and the bottom 6 below the Gut. Boat number 7 may choose its warm-up stretch. The change from left to right hand circulation happens at the top entrance to the Gut as crews move down toward the start, under direction of the Longbridges and Top Gut marshals. The Bungline marshals assist crews with spinning onto their bunglines; either reverse or normal spin is allowed with the aim of leaving the far bank clear if cruisers are passing.

Overtaking: Crews may overtake other crews warming up, but coxes must be certain to check for oncoming cruisers both above and below the Gut.

Spinning: In Torpids crews may spin wherever they like provided they do not cause obstruction to oncoming river traffic. Below the Gut, again because of the narrowness of the river, coxes are advised to spin at Haystacks and in the bay outside Falcon. Crews then spin when next to their bung lines.

During the race: No vessels other than the racing boats and the following safety launch will be on the course when a race is in progress. Crews may take whichever route up the river they choose. In Torpids, in the event of a 'bump', the crew gaining the bump moves out of the racing line as quickly as possible and stops. Crews who have been 'bumped' or have not gained a 'bump' race as far as the finish post, opposite Christ Church Meadow.

After racing: Once past the finish line, crews wind down and move upstream, clear of the finish, where they wait for instructions on spinning from the Head marshal. In Torpids, crews who 'bump out' follow the following safety launch up the river, observing the circulation pattern. Crews that 'bump out' beyond their boathouse join the warm-up circulation pattern and land at their raft when they pass it on the correct side of the river. Crews 'bumping out' before their boathouse may go straight in provided it is clear to do so and under instructions from the marshals, with the exception of the top half of Boathouse Island, St. Anne's to Keble, who must re-join the circulation pattern.

Crews for the next division may boat when the last racing crew passes their raft, as announced by the marshals and/or the public address system.

Other River Traffic

Races are never started until the river is completely clear of river traffic and other obstructions. During Torpids, 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 verbal notice from the EA. Marshals are briefed to speak to other river users who appear on the Isis and keep the SU notified of their appearance on the course.

Craft proceeding along the course take the centre of the river and pass one another port side to port side. Marshals are briefed to monitor crews during the warm-up and make sure they stay clear of cruisers, and also to be ready to provide the SU with information as to the position of cruisers on the course. The Circulation Pattern (see *Appendix D*) shows the positions of three points, labelled A, B and C. These may be used as places for craft to moor temporarily if it is the case that waiting for them to clear the course will delay the next race excessively.

Communications

24 two-way radios are used for communication between Race Desk, the SU, the EA launch, the Iffley Lock keeper, the 2 safety boats, the marshals and the First Aid personnel.

Call signs are assigned according to position and are explained at the relevant marshalling meeting, and on the day at Race Desk.

In addition to radio communication, OURCs has the use of mobile phones held by: Race Desk (Secretary's Mobile **07761188605**), the SU and First Aid. The Iffley Lock keeper also has a land line (01865 777277). An emergency (999 calls only) telephone is located in the back of Longbridges Boathouse. Mobile phones can also be used for emergency calls. The phone number of Christ Church Lodge (01865 276150) will be kept at Race Desk to secure emergency access to Christ Church Meadow. The number of the EA person on duty on each day of racing will be obtained by the Race Secretary.

A public address system based at Race Desk can address all competitors and spectators from Christ Church Meadow to Donnington Bridge.

Safety

Competitor Safety

Event Management

Marshals are thoroughly briefed on their duties (as described above) prior to the event at a meeting for senior marshals from each participating boat club (organised by the OURCs Secretary), and also on the day, by members of the Race Committee. 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 klaxons, bringing all racing to an immediate halt.

All participating crews shall observe the OURCs rules, which encompass the safety advice of British Rowing and EA regulations. Clubs that have not submitted a safety audit may not race. Crews infringing these rules or acting in an unsafe manner may be subject to fines, penalty bumps, or disqualification from the event.

Coxes of all crews must attend a briefing meeting (organised by the OURCs Captain of Coxes) covering the event and safety management issues covered in this document. If any cox does not attend, they will not be permitted to compete unless given express permission by the OURCs Captain of Coxes. The meeting will be split into two parts: the first (approximately 15 minutes) for all coxes, covering essential safety information; and a second section, for coxes new to Bumps racing, or for those wanting a refresher, to cover all aspects of coxing in the event. In addition, at least one Senior Committee member from each College Boat Club must attend the first section of the meeting, ideally the Captain, to ensure that information is circulated throughout the club.

In addition, a Torpids briefing will be part of the Captains' Meeting preceding Rowing On. This briefing will go over all the important safety aspects, rules of racing, marshalling, umpiring, as well as information on appeals

made to, and penalties imposed by the Race Committee. A question and answer section will be included, where the OURCs Secretary, Sabbatical Officer and Race Committee can advise on any issues raised.

Stream Conditions

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with the Iffley Lock keeper and the EA (who attend all 4 days of the event) to decide how to proceed. OURCs has developed a contingency plan to allow some racing to continue (included in the attached Risk Assessments). Options include moving the bunglines further away from the lock, cancelling racing for less experienced crews, requiring crews to race with experienced/senior coxes, running part divisions and cancelling the entire day's racing.

Poor visibility

In the instance of poor visibility the SU will make the decision as to whether racing may start or continue. The SU will, as a matter of course, state which divisions should boat with two bright white lights on their boat at bow and stern. Marshals will check this as part of the boat checks.

Lightning

All marshals and race officials will be responsible for watching out for lightning and if it is seen it will be reported to Race Desk. Race Desk will then approximate the distance of the storm by using the "30 – 30" rule (comparing the time difference between lightning and thunder). If the storm is felt to be within approximately 10km (30 seconds between lightning and thunder) then crews will be taken off the water as soon as possible and advised to seek proper shelter in the boathouses.

Once all crews have returned to their boathouses, a river check will be co-ordinated by Race Desk. Once all crews are off the water the marshals will be advised to seek shelter. Launches will return to the nearest raft and the drivers should seek shelter in the nearest boathouse. The public address system will be used to warn spectators and other competitors.

Following the suspension of racing, racing will only resume 30 minutes after the last lightning. This will be announced over the public address system.

Medical Emergency

First Aid

First Aid cover is supplied by Equestrian Medical, who are based at a location TBC. One safety boat is supplied for their use. In the case of a serious incident, access to Christ Church Meadow and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the slip road from Donnington Bridge is held at Race Desk, and access to Christ Church Meadow will be arranged for emergency services. The Race Committee are to be briefed before the event by the Race Secretary on procedure during an emergency and plans will be kept at Race Desk for guidance during an incident.

Safety Boats

Each boat is driven at all times by qualified personnel (RYA level 2, or equivalent). During Rowing On and Torpids, a minimum of two launches are used by OURCs. The boats have distinct roles:

Race Following Launch: stationed at Longbridges, which follows the races to the Christ Church Cut and is ready to aid participants. Between divisions this launch helps to marshal crews in the start area.

First Aid Launch: stationed at a location TBC, for the use of the First Aid team.

Spare Launch: It is possible that OURCs will obtain a third launch, particularly if the racing is conducted under a flag, to act as back-up.

Spectator and Bystander Safety

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 Race Desk. Pedestrians will be warned of oncoming races by stationary marshals (in addition to the Bike marshal), the use of clear signs at entry points onto the towpath, and by the use of a public address system which covers the course between Donnington Bridge and Christ Church Meadow. Announcements will be made 5 minutes and 1 minute before each division, and during racing as appropriate, warning pedestrians to watch out for bikes. Race Desk can station extra

marshals to warn bystanders. In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, marshals will report to Race Desk, who may postpone the start of a division and/or contact the Police as appropriate.

Numbers of cyclists accompanying divisions will be strictly controlled. Each boat shall be accompanied by an umpire (numbered red bibs) and a coach (blue or green bib) only, with sanctions being applied to clubs that disobey this rule. Marshals shall be responsible for reporting unsafe behaviour of accompanying cyclists, who may be identified from their bib numbers. 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.

First Aid provision is available to spectators as well as competitors.