

Bumps Problems

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There are no guaranteed answers for some of these – they are intended to help bumps race committees, marshals, OURCs officials and captains think through their role in the regatta, and anticipate problems and how to deal with them. Equally, some of these conundrums do have an answer – there are emergencies that have specific required ways they should be dealt with, and new rules are occasionally brought in to help deal with particular bumps situations.

Many have actually happened during the last 15 years. Good luck guessing which.

PART X: GENERAL

I hope these illustrate that all marshals as well as race committee need to know all the racing rules..... Hint, think communication and prioritisation.

- 1) You're the Gut marshal with the five-minute gun about to be fired, and a crew comes scrambling towards you from the upper stretch of the river, saying that they've just snapped a seat and need to sort it out. What do you do? (several actions).
- 2) You're on the OURCs race desk as part of the race committee and a crew captain from two divisions earlier comes up to complain about what he feels is an incorrect bumps decision. Action?
- 3) As the finish marshal, you realise a crew just crossing the finish line has no bow-ball. What do you do – first, and then?
- 4) You're the boathouse or Univ raft marshal, and as the one-minute gun is about to be fired, you spot a schoolboy quad shoot out of the Cherwell Cut, and head down the Green Bank. What do you do – again what's the most urgent action, and then what next? Once the rest of the marshals know, what can the bungline marshals expect to be asked to do and what is the race desk likely to have to announce?
- 5) Immediately after a division, the coach of Hertford comes up to complain that they had bumped Lincoln in the Gut, but it didn't seem to be observed. Their cox had decided it was best to keep going, but Lincoln escaped up the Green Bank later. What do the people on the race desk need to do?
- 6) In the above problem it emerges that the umpires who should have been following Hertford and Lincoln got snarled up with some pedestrians, and the alleged contact took place while they were working their way round. There was definitely no contact after that, but the claimed touch can be neither disproved nor proved. What is the most just outcome?

- 7) The Gut marshal waiting for the imminent start gun suddenly realises that a cruiser moored beside Falcon has begun to move. What needs to be done by whom and in what order?
- 8) You notice a crew rowing in balaclavas. What do you do?
 - a) if you're doing marshal duty where they are boating\
 - b) if you realise as they pass OURCs
 - c) if you see them near the start
 What if there are no balaclavas but you are told later than a non-student ex-Blue substitute who is not on the entry form was rowing at seven?
- 9) You're the Gut marshal, and a messy lower division results in several bumps in the narrowest area. What situation or criteria, if any, would lead you to sound your klaxon, and under what circumstances would you decide you didn't need to sound it?
- 10) That division was stopped after all. What happens after the pile-up has been cleared? And what do the marshals need to tell crews? Does it make any difference if the division concerned was Men's Div 1?
- 11) A crew in rowing-on divisions is getting into all sorts of trouble while warming up, with an apparently inexperienced cox. They don't seem to have a coach with them. Are they in breach of the rules, and what action would you as a marshal take if they are, or anyway if not? What if they did have someone on the bank but who didn't seem able to help the cox? Which people should be worrying about this kind of thing?
- 12) You hear a klaxon further down the river from you, and a message over the radio confirming the division is being stopped. Since you are a marshal, you also have a klaxon. Do you use it?
- 13) Wadham men's first eight's cox is wearing a natty light blue blazer over a lifejacket. Is this allowed?
- 14) When any crew comes past a marshal, at any point on the course, what are the four things which the marshal should either look at, or consider stopping them to check, for that crew?
- 15) From the Univ raft, you see a Teddy Hall crew going straight into their raft while pointing bows towards the Head, having bumped out below their boathouse. What do you ask the boathouse marshal to tell the crew about the action you will be taking? And what if the crew concerned is an Oriel crew – is the situation the same?
- 16) It's been raining heavily, the usual gun man is away, and his substitute finds that the start gun doesn't fire when it's meant to. When, if at all, is the start aborted, and if it is, which is the next gun to fire – all the crews next to you are asking.... Whose decision is it?
- 17) Two coaches come to discuss a controversial bump with OURCs, but it's around changing-over time and only two OURCs officials can be found at Long Bridges. What needs to be done?

- 18) A St. Antony's boat which managed to bump out just before the Gut, barges blindly into a Catz crew which is just leaving Long Bridges for the next division. There is a serious hole in the Catz shell. Action a) regarding Catz and b) regarding St. Antony's? What should the two captains do about insurance claims?
- 19) A busy OURCs desk, and there are bumps to announce, coaches to talk to, a sponsor's advert to say and three marshals need battery replacements. What's the priority? How do you decide who does what?
- 20) On the afternoon of Thursday it clouds over heavily, the skies darken and with the penultimate division about to push off it looks like an early nightfall. What is the extra announcement which OURCs needs to make to the crews?
- 21) A Worcester crew lacks a pole-man, he seems to have disappeared. Should the OURCs marshals help the crew out? Will the senior umpire delay the division?
- 22) As Linacre and St. Benet Hall are coming towards the finish line at the end of the division, the Linacre coach (in front) is screaming at his crew that they just need to get their bowball over the line, while the Benet coach is telling his crew that they can still bump them until Linacre's stern is past the line. Which coach is correct?
- 23) The one-minute gun has fired and someone radios in asking to change over marshals. What should be the race desk's immediate response?
- 24) Nobody has checked any Osler-Green bow-balls/heel restraints/hatches recently. Who should deal with it?
- 25) A heel restraint breaks when being checked. What should the crew do?
- 26) There are seven minutes to go until the division start time of 2:35pm, which was set by the SU after a slight previous delay. A Pembroke crew is still getting their boat out for that division. Can they race? What do you need to check before deciding?

PART Y: BUMPS DECISIONS

The hint here is to remember that nothing seems fair in bumps where every decision leads to someone either being bumped or being denied a bump they wanted (as well as the lucky ones who get a bump or a row-over when they expected worse). Keep in mind that bumps is not fair, but it can be just, even when it depends on subjective (eg umpire/marshal) evidence. Make the most just decision for the largest number of crews, within the rules as they are currently written, and you will have done your best.

Not all the real questions amongst these have happened to the named crews – some names have been changed to protect the guilty. And some (but not many) aren't real.

Most can be treated as Torpids or Eights conundrums – there may well be different answers for both.

- A) (Torpids only) - Pembroke is bumped by Univ, and then Pembroke carries on and bumps Keble later. What order do they start in the next day?
- B) (Torpids only) - Starting-order Keble, Pembroke, Univ, Trinity. Taking turns in chronological order, first Pembroke, Univ and finally Trinity bump poor Keble. Who starts where the next day? What is the order if instead Univ bump Pembroke, then Pembroke bump Keble and finally Trinity bump Keble?
- C) (Torpids only) - Osler bumps out on Linacre, who get snagged in the bank. Then St. Hilda's who were behind both but didn't realise (and nor did their umpire), row past Linacre, bump Merton just ahead and stop. Starting order tomorrow?
- D) In the bottom divisions on the first day, an Oriel crew counts down loudly to the minute gun, and successfully manages to convince a Wolfson crew behind them to start, running into the Haystacks trees. Wolfson bend a rigger – what action does the senior umpire take and does OURCs take any action regarding bumps?
- E) Queen's get their rudder tangled in the bungline of the crew ahead, and are slowed right down, being bumped by St. Benet Hall behind them, who then stop and are passed by Jesus. What is a just decision for all crews?
- F) Two crews have a bad crash at the top end of the Gut when one of their rowers catches a crab and gets snarled in the other crew during the bump. The race is stopped, various other crews collide and most of the Mansfield men's first eight dive in from their raft to help rescue the many swimming rowers. The Mansfield guys can't race head of the next division as they should, since it's a bitter day and they're very cold and wet. Should the division be raced without them and what about the following division where they were expecting to be sandwich crew? Should the second-finishing crew in their original division go in their place?

[This really happened quite a while ago, and I am convinced that it was very badly handled by OURCs. Unfortunately by the time it came to the SU it was several divisions later and there was little that could be done. It underlines how sometimes it is important to make good decisions quickly – we can't always wait and let the system work it all out.]

- G) New College appear to get Oriel in the Gut, but the latter don't acknowledge and carry on clear. The two umpires in a position to see disagree about it, and one alleges that the other is going out with the New College cox and so is biased. No-one else got a clear view of the supposed bump. How do you decide if a bump is awarded?

- H) Merton crashes into Jesus on the top stretch during the warm-up, cracking six feet off the Jesus boat. Who races, how soon is the race, and what penalties are applied?
- I) LMH bumps St. Hugh's at the same time as St. Hugh's bumps Exeter. No apparent difference in time can be seen, and both crews claim their bump was first, neither cox acknowledging immediately.
- J) (Torpids only) - Just coming out of the Gut, St. Peter's bumps St. John's, but SJC carry on without acknowledging and one stroke later they hit Lincoln, just ahead. They tangle Lincoln so badly that the rattled crew restarts very slowly and is bumped at the far end of the Green Bank by Magdalen, who have overtaken the entire mess cleanly. Meanwhile SJC have stopped. Is their bump valid, and what is the final order?
- K) The same problem as J, but in Eights. St. Peter's bumps John's, who don't acknowledge and bump Lincoln a stroke later. Lincoln stops, but their coach is yelling about it and gets them to understand that he thinks the SJC bump was invalid. Lincoln get going again but by then Magdalen have caught them and they are bumped properly. Again, which bumps are valid? How much does it depend on witness reports and whose should be taken most seriously?
- L) (Torpids only) - Teddy Hall runs into the bank from position 2 straight after the start, and the first two crews past them stop immediately afterwards, claiming a row-past style bump. However, the rest of the crews don't realise, no officials tell them so, and the rest of the race continues because they think it's just a bumped-out crew. Teddy Hall restart just as the sandwich crew, Somerville, is nearing them, and SEH get off ahead. They then bump crew 12, Linacre, and stop. Where do Teddy Hall start the next day?
- M) A St. Anne's rugby crew despite several warnings only gets through the Gut as the one-minute gun goes. Are they allowed to start? If not, what does the crew behind them (Templeton) do with an empty bungline to chase? Where do St. Anne's start tomorrow? And what happens if the crew simply doesn't turn up at all?
- N) There has been a nasty crash during warm-up and as a result three crews have had to withdraw from women's division two as they don't have time to get both rowers and equipment replaced without causing a huge delay. Bunglines 4, 5 and 11 are empty. What do the crews behind have to do to get a bump?
- O) Hertford is crossing the finish line being chased hard by Regent's Park, and the RP bowball hits Hertford stroke's rigger just three feet before the line. Cox doesn't acknowledge. Has there been a bump?
- P) A timid Brasenose cox acknowledges when the bows of Christ Church are at least a canvas away. Have House got their bump?
- Q) It's a strong stream, the Corpus cox drops the bungline by accident at the last minute, and the shell slips back a few feet just before the start gun is fired. Is it valid for them to continue to race as normal?

- R) The following day a similar incident occurs with a different crew, but it is strongly suspected that the Univ cox did it on purpose because they end up starting ahead of the usual position. Are they penalised?
- S) At the bottom of a division, Christ Church, the crew at 11, are bumped so hard on the Haystacks corner by Somerville at 12 that the bow rower is thrown out while catching a crab (ok it was a novice crew). The sandwich boat Catz rows right past them while the marshal is fumbling with the klaxon. Catz claims a bump – does this stand?
- T) Four boats in order – St. Anne’s, Balliol, Corpus and Worcester, coming up to the Gut. Corpus don’t see that Balliol bumps St. Anne’s, and since Balliol get snagged quite hard in the Gut trees when they easy, it looks as if they are still racing and trying to get going again. Corpus then row past Balliol and easy, thinking they’ve got a bump. Worcester goes past both, also assuming that Corpus have bumped. It only becomes clear what has happened after the racing. Which rule do you use and what is the decision?
- U) Up just before the Christ Church boathouse, Exeter bumps Templeton with a very clear contact, and Templeton’s cox immediately acknowledges plainly. But Exeter’s cox carries on, impacting Templeton so hard that they can’t easily continue (rigger bent) and the two crews swing round, impeding the crews behind. Is it right for a technical bump or a penalty bump to be awarded, and if so, how many?
- V) Osler-Green men get an overbump, but later that day (much later) it is alleged by someone normally reliable that they had an illegal substitute on board. What can the race committee do? During that evening video footage is sent to the race committee proving the allegation correct – does this change anything or not?
- W) Bumps is being run under flags, with only fixed divisions and just X/S coxes. Conditions are reasonable but some captains with very inexperienced crews are nervous. Wolfson withdraw their lowest fixed eight on Torpids Wednesday on safety grounds. Where do they start a) next day, if conditions improve? b) next year, if they drop right out for the whole week?
- X) During a dispute, the crew’s coach arrives claiming to have video evidence on a camcorder. Are you obliged to take it into account? Are you allowed to take it into account? What is this year’s race desk policy going to be?
- Y) Twelve minutes after the women’s division 1 bumps have been announced over the tannoy, the Wadham representative (cox) arrives at the desk to dispute his row-over. He claims that he asked a marshal to radio that he was coming and was disputing the announcement, within the 10-minute rule, but nobody heard from the marshal. Do you allow the cox to lodge an appeal, considering that a Pembroke representative is claiming loudly it can’t be allowed? What about the same situation if the marshal did radio through, but the race desk failed to note the time of the bumps announcement, and again Pembroke is claiming the appeal is too late?

end.