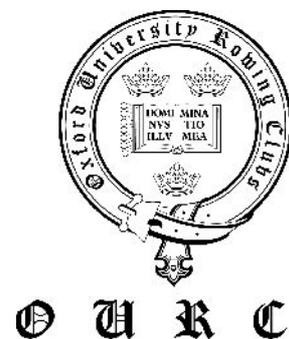


# Oxford University Rowing Clubs

## Event and Safety Plan

### Torpids 2016, Sponsored by Neptune Investment Management



*Last up-dated 06/01/2016 YW*

### Introduction

Torpids is a rowing event comprising four days racing from Wednesday to Saturday of 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> week in Hilary term (depending on the date of the Women's Head of the River Race), with a qualifying session (Rowing On) normally held the preceding Friday. This year Torpids will occur from the 24th February to 27th February, with Rowing On ideally held on the 19th February. We would also ask for a provisional day on Sunday 21st February to run Rowing On, should conditions be unsuitable on the Friday.

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

**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, normally 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 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.

This event plan exists in addition to the OURCs General Rules of Racing and rules of Bumping Races.

The event plan and risk assessments will be reviewed annually by the Rowing Sabbatical Officer, Race Secretary, and the Senior Umpires before submission to the University of Oxford authorities and the Environment Agency.

## Race Management

### Summary of 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 Jonathan Williams, who can be contacted on 07769614462 or [secretary@ourcs.co.uk](mailto:secretary@ourcs.co.uk).
- ii) **Race Committee** - help the Race Secretary with coordination of racing and event safety.
- iii) **Race Desk** – location Longbridges Boat House, 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 (07747 157037) or by two-way radio.
- iv) **Incident Coordinator (IC)**: Typically the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (07917643030). The coordinates post-incident care (See Emergency Action Plan, Appendix E). Responsibilities to include working in close cooperation with the following people:
  - Injured person (if applicable). Their welfare, liaising with the regatta medical staff, senior umpires, marshals and other relevant parties (e.g. EMS, family or friends of injured party, taxi) and to gather information that must be included in the incident record and possible legal reports
  - Other involved persons such as witnesses and medical staff - To gather additional information that must be included in the incident record and possible legal reports
  - Where applicable, to ensure incident is duly reported to appropriate bodies/persons such as Sports Safety Officer, College if student and British Rowing.
- v) **Senior Umpire (SU)** - situated near the start line for Rowing On, and in the bunglines area for Torpids. Ensures the safe and timely start of races, and oversees safety on the water during racing hours, and collaborates with the Race Secretary on the safe running of the event.
- vi) **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.
- vii) *[Rowing on]* **Timers** - act as impartial race observers for Rowing On at the Start and Finish lines and record the time each crew passes their position.
- viii) *[Torpids]* **Umpires** - act as impartial race observers for the bumping races.

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

*The consumption of alcohol by officials is strictly prohibited.*

### Race Secretary

The Race Secretary is the event organiser and has overall responsibility for the event, in accordance with this event plan, which they must carry out safely. This event plan does not restrict the Race Secretary, working with the Senior Umpire, from halting racing at any time or from making necessary alterations to ensure the safety of competitors, organisers and members of the public.

The Race Secretary, as event organiser, should appoint each and every Senior Umpire and member of Race Committee. The Race Secretary may exclude any individual from being a race official, and is expected to manage the officials, removing them from individual tasks if necessary. The Race Secretary shall inform other river groups of the event.

The Race Secretary is responsible for coordinating racing and so should direct members of race committee; tasking them as needed and as appropriate. The Race Secretary may delegate responsibilities as is appropriate. The Race Secretary consults with the SU about issues and risk mitigation affecting the safe running of the races.

### Senior Umpire

Senior Umpires are appointed by the Race Secretary, from those of the Senior Umpire team who have been ratified in a Captains' Meeting in the current academic year. The SU shall be governed by the OURCs rules. This ensures that those appointed have the necessary skill and experience to conduct their duties. Given the nature of

the event, there is no formal qualification appropriate to the task, but the existing team of Senior Umpires will make sure sufficient new members are recruited to cover the job, and will ensure that new recruits are fully briefed and trained in their role.

The principal duty of the Senior Umpire is to ensure that each race is safe to start, and then to start that race in a safe fashion under the OURCs racing rules, and to ensure that racing only continues while conditions are sufficiently safe. To this end, the Senior Umpire on duty will conduct river checks as appropriate, using the marshals to report any traffic on the river or any obstruction in the river. The SU will conduct a full river check at least once before each race begins and repeat at their discretion sufficiently to ensure that they are satisfied the river is clear to start the race. The SU will consider the following (below) when starting each race, and will relate it to the nature of bumps racing and the quality and competence of the crews involved, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- The local stream conditions
- The local weather conditions
- Whether the race course is sufficiently clear of racing traffic, non-racing traffic, debris or any other obstruction
- Whether the safety launch/es is/are in a suitable position and ready to respond
- Whether sufficient marshals are in place and in communication with the SU and race desk, to provide full coverage of the stretch

The SU has the full operational responsibility of starting racing, and so will try to start each division in a timely fashion in accordance with the rules of racing, where circumstances and safety allow. Any other party (including but not limited to the Race Secretary, the Environment Agency and the University) which believes that there is a good reason not to start a race, should be encouraged to inform the SU immediately. The SU may halt racing on the grounds of safety and recommend any mitigating action to the Race Secretary which might allow racing to continue.

The first Senior Umpire of the day has responsibility for checking and approving the river as sufficiently safe to open to crews for their warm-up, at a point approximately half an hour before the first division. If at any point in the day the SU considers the river to be unsafe even for warming-up crews, s/he will close the river to student traffic and suspend racing. Before opening the river, the first SU of the day will be satisfied that:

1. Sufficient marshals are in place and providing full coverage of the stretch with working two-way radios.
2. The stream conditions are sufficiently safe.
3. The weather conditions are sufficiently safe.
4. First Aid cover is available at the river.
5. Any non-racing traffic already on the stretch has been spoken to and is aware of the event and circulation pattern.
6. The Race Secretary and their team are ready and happy that the river be opened.

In the same manner, the final SU of the day will close the river at the end of racing, will dismiss the marshals (in stages) once they are satisfied that all racing traffic is clear of the relevant areas, and will reopen the river to non-racing circulation.

As part of the preparations for the regatta, the coordinating SU for the team will liaise with the Environment Agency, the Rowing Sabbatical Officer (in his/her safety role) and the Race Secretary, to determine any special measures to be taken to allow racing under the risk assessment in more challenging conditions such as high stream or wind. These measures may include, but are not limited to:- restrictions on coxing status; use of higher bunglines; restrictions on racing divisions; use of half-divisions; changes in warm-up time between divisions; and provision of extra safety launches. The coordinating SU will consult with the whole SU team as available to bring their collective experience to bear in making such decisions. The coordinating SU will ensure that the decisions are agreed with the race committee (via the Race Sec. and/or Rowing Sabbatical) and will communicate them in a timely fashion to the racing clubs. The Rowing Sabbatical Officer will ensure that other interested parties (such as the Proctors and/or Sports Federation) are kept informed of the measures being used, as far as necessary, and that information on the measures is available to all college boat club members, including Senior Members. The coordinating SU will also ensure that the race secretary has a copy of the SU roster and mobile phone numbers.

## Marshals

This section will outline the marshalling for Torpids. The marshalling for Rowing On is slightly different and these differences are highlighted at the end of this section.

**Briefing:** Senior marshals from each college will attend a briefing meeting, held prior to the event, which 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, and should use the presentation provided by OURCs. The meeting will be open for additional persons to attend if they so wish.

**Over-seeing of marshals:** A member of the Race Committee will give a short briefing to all marshals on the day, so that they are aware of their specific duties. This does not substitute but instead refreshes the briefing that should have been given by their college's senior marshal.

**Equipment:** All marshals are issued with a high-visibility jacket, a radio, a klaxon and a starting order. Marshals in key positions are also given a megaphone. Other equipment, if deemed necessary by the Senior Umpire, Sabbatical Officer and/or Race Secretary, may also be issued.

**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 event plan. Additional marshals may be stationed on the day by the Race Committee and/or the SU as needs dictate. These stations ensure that the marshals' line of sight provides full coverage of the race course.

### General duties:

All marshals listed below, 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 completed 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, floating debris, and anything else which would impede the safe running of racing on their stretch of the river. Then, in the order in which they are listed below, they report back to the SU. During racing, marshals should radio, and if necessary stop the race with the use of their klaxon, if the course becomes unsafe to continue racing.

In the event of the river becoming unsafe to continue racing for whatever reason, attending marshals will sound the safety klaxons for at least 10 seconds and radio to all the others to do the same. Any marshal on hearing a klaxon should fire their klaxon for 10 seconds or until all racing crews around them have stopped (whichever takes longer). Races should be halted using the klaxons in any event that makes the continuation of racing unsafe, for example: the channel becoming blocked and racing crews imminently approaching, a person in the water with racing crews approaching and putting them in danger, or an injury which requires immediate First Aid. As crews hear the klaxons they will stop racing immediately as instructed in the coxing meetings (see later section). Crews halted by klaxon should remain stationary to allow safe access by first aid personnel and race committee until the Senior Umpire gives permission for them to move.

All marshals check that crews on the water are keeping to the circulation pattern, informing crews if they are in incorrect circulation. During racing marshals encourage crews who have bumped out to move out of the racing line so that there is a channel wide enough for racing crews to pass safely. Usually this will be asking crews to pull into one of the banks. Once the following launch has passed, marshals encourage bumped out crews to then paddle behind the following launch back to their boathouses, following the non racing circulation pattern.

A secondary role is to report to Race Desk any crews on the water where the boat is lacking a bow-ball or the cox is lacking a life-jacket over their outermost clothing layer, and to instruct them to remedy this.

A tertiary 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, facilitating a safe and fair contest. They will also warn members of the public of approaching cyclists, although this role will primarily be taken by the Bike marshal.

#### **Duties for Raft Marshals:**

Raft marshals perform checks on each boat to ensure they conform to relevant British Rowing and EA regulations. In particular they are asked to check that each boat has a securely attached bow-ball, heel restraints are fitted correctly, and that the cox has their life-jacket fastened over their outermost clothing layer.

The raft marshals should also check that suitable lights are attached when appropriate. The later divisions which require lights will be marked on the start order, but the SU may require lights for other divisions as well in the event of poor visibility.

The raft marshals facilitate the timely starting of divisions by encouraging crews to wait until the boats of the previous division have landed and cleared the rafts before they put their shells on the water, and asking crews to push off promptly after the last racing crew has passed, so that the landing stages are clear for the returning crews.

Where possible, they keep track of which crews have pushed off from the rafts they are monitoring. They will often field questions from competitors and aid communication between Race Desk and competitors.

#### **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 D* to this plan). Marshals who are normally given a megaphone to assist with their duties are marked ▼, and those who take part in river checks are marked †.

- 1) **Head (of the River) ▼†:** (by the grey footbridge)  
Communicates with 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, and politely advises cyclists to wait until the division has finished racing before proceeding down the towpath.
- 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 move upstream 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)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Boathouse Island; Communicates with river traffic entering the course from under the humpback bridge, and liaises with the SU about this.
- 4) **Boathouse B†:** (on Boathouse Island, covering boathouses from Exeter to Christ Church)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Boathouse Island; Communicates with river traffic entering the course from the Cherwell cut next to Christ Church Boathouse and liaises with the SU about this.
- 5) **Univ†:** (outside Univ Boathouse)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Univ. Should also be monitoring the raft, and instruct crews to move any equipment that may impede racing. Monitor traffic exiting the Cherwell cut next to ChCh boathouse. Alerts cyclists and pedestrians coming down the towpath of an imminent division start and after the one minute gun kindly advises cyclists to wait until the division has gone by before proceeding on their way.
- 6) *[Optional]* **Green Bank†:** (halfway between Univ and Longbridges Boathouses)  
Encourages crews warming up above the Gut to be through it with at least 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)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Longbridges. Liaises with river traffic including vessels mooring at point B and kayakers using the back weir streams.
- 8) **Top Gut ▼†:** (at the upstream Gut exit)  
Keeps a record of which boats have passed downstream to be able to inform the SU of the progress of crews to the start; 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; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut. Where not engaged in race duties, between the one minute gun and start gun, alerts cyclists and pedestrians coming down the towpath of an imminent division start and politely advises cyclists to wait until the division has gone by before proceeding on their way.

- 9) [optional]: **Middle Gut†**:(mid-way between Top Gut and Bottom Gut)  
Keeps track of which boats have passed downstream. Pays particular attention during racing, as a lot of bumps occur in the Gut; Encourages crews who have bumped out to move to ensure that there is room for racing crews to pass safely, which may mean the crew needs to paddle out of the Gut and pull in near Longbridges.
- 10) **Bottom Gut ▼ †**: (at the downstream Gut exit, just upstream of the Sea Scouts)  
Pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur just before and in the Gut.
- 11) **Donnington Bridge city†**: (by Donnington Bridge on the City Side)  
Acts as a raft marshal for crews boating from Falcon or CORC; pays particular attention during racing as a lot of bumps occur just before the Gut.
- 12) **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 possible way for a crew in the section to get attached to their bungline; generally assists the SU as required. May also be required to communicate to crews any additional information such as delays.
- 13) **Bottom Bunglines ▼ †**: (covering bunglines 8 and below) 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 possible way for a crew in the section to be attached to their bungline; generally assists the SU as required. May also be required to communicate to crews any additional information such as delays. Where not engaged in race duties, between the one minute gun and start gun, alerts cyclists and pedestrians coming down the towpath of an imminent division start and politely advises cyclists to wait until the division has gone by before proceeding on their way.
- 14) **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. They should report to Race Desk between each division, and may be used to ferry equipment, such as a replacement radio, to other race officials between races.

#### **Marshalling for Rowing On:**

A slightly different marshal line-up is used for Rowing On (as shown in *Appendix C*). Most of their specific duties are the same as the Torpids marshals, the differences are stated below:

**Raft Marshals:** Only boats in the next division may put their boats on rafts.

- 1) Head
- 2) Finish: drops the clacker on the BOW of the boat.
- 3) Boathouse A
- 4) Boathouse B
- 5) Univ
- 6) [optional] Green Bank
- 7) Longbridges
- 8) Top Gut: rather than monitoring racing, marshals crews paddling towards the start line, and keeps track of crews moving downstream through the Gut during warm-up.
- 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 track 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 track of which crews are correctly marshalled in the marshalling area.

12) [optional] Bike marshal

### **Changing Marshals**

Marshals should not leave their posts unless their fully-briefed replacement is there waiting to take over. No changeover should occur within 10 minutes of the next racing division. Outgoing marshals are expected to pass on any experience or relevant information from their shift to their replacement. At the end of the day, marshals must stay in place until the SU dismisses them.

## **Circulation Pattern**

To ensure the safety of river traffic and the smooth running of Rowing On and Torpids, strict non-racing 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.

For both Torpids and Rowing On, warming up crews and crews returning to their boathouses are expected to keep tight to the banks, leaving a clear central passage for cruisers and other river traffic. For the avoidance of confusion, all other river traffic pass each other in accordance with normal regulations.

Warming up crews may overtake other crews, but coxes must be certain to check for oncoming river traffic, especially cruisers both above and below the Gut.

Racing crews may take whatever line along the course that they wish, avoiding obstructions.

### **Other River Traffic:**

Races are not started until the river is sufficiently clear of river traffic and other obstructions. During Torpids, there is little other river traffic, but occasionally other craft may appear on the river. When the locks are manned, craft that reach either Iffley Lock (going upstream) or Osney Lock (going downstream) 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.

Signs are displayed at the Head and Foot of the river, and at the top and bottom exits of the Cherwell Cut to alert other river users to the regatta in progress in accordance to the EA guidance.

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 Patterns (see *Appendix C & D*) show the positions of temporary mooring points. If it is the case that waiting for a craft to clear the course will delay the next race excessively, they will be asked to moor at one of these points, and wait until the division has passed before continuing. Craft proceeding upstream may be encouraged to follow a division, staying behind the following launch.

## **Rowing On Circulation**

For Rowing On crews may not do laps on the water to warm up. They should proceed through the Gut, and then spin and move into their assigned starting position when it is safe to do so.

### **Warm up circulation - crews boating upstream of the Gut:**

Crews boat with bow-balls pointing downstream, keeping close to the bank from which they boated down to the entrance of the Gut. (Longbridges crews should proceed directly through the Gut.)

When they get to the Top Gut marshal they should cross if necessary to the towpath side (bowside bank) when it is safe to do so.

They should proceed through the Gut staying on the towpath side and then join the circulation pattern for crews boating from below the Gut.

Crews must not overtake while traversing the Gut.

#### **Warm up circulation - crews boating downstream of the Gut:**

Boat with bows pointing upstream. Crews from the Isis Boathouse should cross to the non-towpath side (their bowside bank). Crews from CORC and Falcon rafts should proceed upstream and spin in the area upstream of the Falcon raft.

After they have spun, when it is safe to do so, they should cross to the towpath bank and proceed keeping right of centre (to their bowside bank).

Crews should spin in normal circulation, and should pay particular attention to the direction of the SU and marshals who will facilitate marshalling in the correct order.

Marshalling crews will be asked to keep tucked into a particular bank, as instructed by the SU and marshals. Crews will be started by the Senior Umpire, and marshalling crews should move up towards the Senior umpire as each crew is set off.

#### **Racing crews:**

Slower crews should move to give way to a faster overtaking crew.

As they cross the finish line they should wind down and move to the towpath side and proceed upstream well clear of the finish line under the instruction of the Finish and Head marshal to make room for other crews. Crews should not spin until told to do so by the Head marshal.

#### **Return Circulation - crews landing on Boat House Island:**

Crews returning to Boat House Island should stay on the non-towpath side and land downstream without doing any further laps.

#### **Return Circulation - crews landing at Univ and Longbridges:**

Crews returning to Univ and Longbridges should cross to the towpath side immediately downstream of the finish line, and then proceed along the towpath bank to land downstream without doing any further laps. If there is a strong stream at Longbridges, then crews landing at Longbridges may spin upstream of their raft, and drift back to land.

#### **Return circulation - crews landing below the Gut:**

Crews returning to boathouses downstream of the Gut should cross to the towpath side immediately downstream of the finish line. They should proceed through the Gut and then land in normal training circulation.

### **Torpids Circulation**

For 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.

#### **Boating:**

Crews boating above the Gut should boat with their bow-ball pointing downstream (opposite to normal training). Crews boating from Longbridges may, if permission has been granted by the raft marshal or they are warming up below the Gut, boat pointing downstream if they are headed straight through the Gut. They must take extra care to check that the river is clear before pushing off.

Any crew stationed at Falcon or City of Oxford Rowing Club should boat as normal.

#### **Warming up:**

Of the 13 crews in each division, the top 6 will warm up above the Gut and the bottom 6 below the Gut. The middle crew may do either. 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.

The top 7 crews should spin directly onto their bungline after proceeding through the Gut.

#### **Spinning:**

Unlike normal training, 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 beside their bung lines.

#### **During the race:**

Crews may take whichever route up the river they choose. In Torpids, in the event of a 'bump', the crew gaining the bump moves to clear a channel for racing crews to safely pass, and stops. Crews who 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 warm-up circulation pattern. Crews who '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.

## **Communications**

At least 24 two-way radios are used for communication between Race Desk, the SU, the EA launch if present, Salter's Cruisers, the Iffley Lock keeper, the 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 (07747 157037), Rowing Sabbatical Officer (07917643030), the SU and First Aid. The Iffley Lock keeper also has a land line (01865 777277). 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.

A public address system based at Race Desk can address all competitors and bystanders from Christ Church Meadow to Longbridges Boathouse.

## **Safety**

**In the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix E) is to be followed.**

#### **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 given a refresher briefing 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, a Torpids briefing will be held, usually immediately following a 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 Race Secretary, Sabbatical Officer and other members of the OURCs Committee can advise on any issues raised.

#### **Race Start – Cannon Use:**

The races will be started by means of a cannon which is fired twice to give warning of the start (at five and one minutes to go) and once to signal the start of the race. The cannon is fired by the Senior Umpire giving a visual signal to a competent person who is in charge of the cannons. The senior umpire retains complete control of the starting sequence and may delay or abort it at any time in accordance with the race rules. The cannons are held under the control of a competent person and their operation is supervised by a firearms licence holder. The transport, storage, maintenance and usage of the cannons is done under the direction of the firearms licence holder and they retain responsibility for ensuring that all regulations are adhered to.

## **Weather**

#### **Stream Conditions:**

In the event that the river is running faster or higher than usual, the SU liaises with people including the Iffley Lock keeper, the Race Secretary, the boatmen and the EA to decide how to proceed. The SU must consider the proximity between racing crews and the weirs at Iffley Lock, (or Hinksey if appropriate), as well as the competence of the crews to deal with the conditions. 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.

#### **Precipitation & Cold:**

Rain will not typically halt racing, but the SU must consider if it threatens to swamp racing crews or pose a significant risk of hypothermia. Snow and cold conditions pose a further threat that might jeopardise the safety of competitors and so halting racing. Hail is particularly dangerous given the injury that can be done to equipment and persons. The SU must decide whether it is possible for competitors to complete the race, including warm-up and warm-down, in a safe fashion, considering the facilities available to them. The heightened risk involved with any participant entering the water must also be considered. In the event of rapidly changing conditions, it must be remembered that a race proceeding, potentially early, might be the best way to get crews back to boathouses.

#### **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 static bright white lights on their boat at bow and stern. These lights must each be visible though at least 180°. Marshals will check this as part of the boat checks.

#### **High Winds:**

High winds make navigation difficult for crews and may also threaten swamping, although the Isis stretch of the Thames is rarely affected by any significant disturbance of the surface of the water. The SU must consider if enforcing only experienced/senior coxes is appropriate, or other mitigating action.

#### **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 distance (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 a minimum of two First Aid at Work (or equivalent) qualified personnel with equipment appropriate to the event, who are headquartered at Longbridges Boat House. The First Aid personnel will advise the SU and Race Secretary if they feel there is any medical reason why it is unsafe to continue. At least one safety boat is supplied for their use.

First Aid personnel will remain at the event until 30 minutes after the SU has declared the river open for non-racing circulation at the end of the day.

The designated point for a casualty to be transferred to an ambulance is at City of Oxford Rowing Club. When this is not possible, access to Christ Church Meadow and Longbridges for emergency vehicles is arranged in advance: a key to the west slip road from Donnington Bridge to Longbridges is held at Race Desk, and access to Christ Church Meadow will be arranged for emergency services. Access is also possible from the rear of the Four Pillars hotel on Abingdon Road to the University Boat House. The emergency services will be made aware of the event and access will be communicated beforehand. 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.

If a casualty who is a member of the University is taken to hospital, an official of the college (chosen under advice from the SU) will be contacted.

**In the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (*Appendix E*) is to be followed.**

### **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 fulfil distinctive roles:

**Race Following Launch:** follows the races to the Christ Church Cut, or elsewhere as directed by the SU, and is ready to help participants. Between divisions this launch may help to marshal crews in the start area.

**Safety Launch:** usually stationed at Longbridges Boat House, for the use of the First Aid team.

In practice, the two launches will often swap duties between divisions.

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

## **Public Safety**

OURCs' does not invite spectators to watch the event, nor take any responsibility for the safety of the public beyond ensuring that our event does not negatively impact their health or safety. All members of the public have a right to use the towpath as a public right-of-way and OURCs will not impede this in any way. Marshals will be briefed to report to the SU and Race Desk if they believe that the safety of members of the public may be compromised, particularly in the build-up of spectators along the towpath. Should there be any imminent danger to members of the public if immersed (and/or river users), the nearest marshal is to be made aware immediately and the klaxon is to be sounded to bring racing to an immediate halt.

### **In the event of a serious incident, the Emergency Action Plan (*Appendix E*) is to be followed.**

Race Secretary and Senior Umpire should consider options available to minimize the risks of potential harm to members of the public and act accordingly, in line with the Risk Assessment. Possible solutions include encouraging marshals to warn members of the public (as long as the safety of river users is in itself not compromised) of imminent racing, sending a senior 'person' from the race committee (e.g. 'Incident Coordinator') to assess potential difficulties and liaising with the Senior Umpire and Race Secretary to deal with these accordingly.

In the event of unsafe or disruptive behaviour by spectators, marshals will report to the Race Desk, who will take action as per the Risk Assessment.

First Aid personnel will not be prevented from attending to members of the public.

Finally, the EA normally chooses to exercise their rights under a Harbourmaster's notice to prohibit mooring and swimming along the course.

## **Incident Debrief**

Following any significant safety incident the SU, Race Secretary and Incident Coordinator should briefly discuss the causes for the incident and whether any action is appropriate. The SU, Race Secretary and Incident Coordinator are expected to communicate regularly about concerns or any relevant information.