

# OURCs Rules – Chapter 2

## ***Rules and Regulations Relating To Conduct of College and University Boat Clubs***

### **R1. Scope of these rules**

These rules are in addition to Environment Agency regulations and the ARA Water Safety Code, and apply to College crews in all locations.

Crews should not rely solely on these rules but should make their own risk assessments each outing, taking into account the conditions and abilities of their rowers.

University crews have their own codes of conduct and risk assessments approved by the Area Safety Officer (Sport) but should when using the Isis (between Folly Bridge and Iffley Lock) or Godstow (between Osney Lock and St. Edward's School Boathouse) stretch should follow all rules defined as specific to these two stretches.

These rules apply at all times unless specifically defined otherwise.

Some of these rules may be over-riden by special rules of competitions.

### **R2. EA Regulations**

EA regulations are enforceable under OURCs rules, in particular:

- All boats shall carry a valid EA Registration/Exemption plate.
- In limited visibility, all boats shall carry a white light at the stern and a white light at the bows. (WSC/1.11.6)
- Boats shall, in general, keep to the right side of the river and may move to the centre to overtake only when the river is clear.
- Crews are responsible for an awareness of the size of their boat and the river to avoid colliding with or obstructing other river traffic (applicable to every stretch of water, regardless of the governing authority).

Crews must also abide by the rules and restrictions of the relevant water authorities wherever they choose to train.

### **R3. ARA Equipment Regulations**

All boats must meet the requirements of the ARA Water Safety Code (WSC), of which the following are also enforceable under OURCs rules:

- All boats (except tubs) must carry a bow-ball (WSC/1.11.1). In the event of losing a bow-ball, boats should replace it immediately or return, at light pressure, as directly as possible to their boathouse while keeping within the rules of the river.
- All boats with flexible shoes must have heel restraints fitted (WSC/1.11.2).
- Coxes must wear a lifejacket at all times when on the water (WSC/1.8), to be visible outside of all clothing.

### **R4. ARA Personnel Regulations**

Those involved with rowing, coxing or coaching shall meet the following requirements:

1. It is the responsibility of the College Boat Club to ensure that all members are in good health and can swim a minimum of 50m in light clothing .
2. All rowers, coxes and coaches should have satisfied the College Boat Club's Captain that they understand the local navigation, circulation and safety rules (WSC/1.6).

3. All individuals using a 1x, 2x or 2- must have passed a capsizing drill conducted under ARA guidelines.

## **R5. Registration and Status of Coxswains**

Any member of OURCs as defined in Chapter 1, coxing a crew should be in possession of an OUCS coxing permit.

1. The Captain of Coxes shall keep a register of all college coxswains with a permit to cox college crews, which shall detail:
  - a. The name of the cox.
  - b. The date of registration.
  - c. The number of terms of active coxing experience.
  - d. The status of the cox: "novice", "experienced" or "senior".
  - e. Any penalties imposed on the cox by OURCs
2. Newly registered coxes with no previous experience shall be designated "novice".
3. Coxswains will achieve experienced status after 3 full terms coxing, upon confirmation from their college captain. Exceptions for early promotion to experienced status may be considered upon written application.
4. Coxes wishing to be accorded "senior" status must apply in writing to the Captain of Coxes, detailing their experience. Applications will normally only be considered from coxes with at least 6 full terms coxing.
5. The Captain of Coxes shall assign newly registered coxes with previous coxing experience an appropriate status.
6. Coxes with "novice" status may not take part in an outing without the presence of a coach on the bank or in an accompanying launch, who shall be held responsible for the safety of the crew.
7. Coxes with "experienced" or "senior" status shall be held responsible for the safety of their crew. An experienced/senior status cox who puts their or any other crew in a situation where damage or danger results is liable to have their permit endorsed or suspended.
8. The cox of each crew on the Isis and at Godstow shall be in possession of an OUCS coxing permit.

## **R6. Scheduled Closures**

No member of OURCs may row without permission from the OURCs Secretary between the following times:

1. Earlier than 1 hour before sunrise, or later than 1 hour after sunset.
2. Between 8.30am and 1.00pm on weekdays during 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> week of each term (graduate colleges exempt, Proctors' Ruling).

## **R7. Extreme Conditions**

In fast stream conditions, crews rowing on stretches other than the Isis and Godstow, should make their own risk assessment based on advice from the local club and the Environment Agency. In the case of red boards crews should consult their Insurance Policy to clarify their position with regards insurance.

Crews using the Isis and Godstow stretch must abide by the flag rules defined in R8.3 and R9.2, shown by the on-line flag when operational in term time or by calling the Iffley Lock.

The following restrictions also apply:

1. No crew may navigate a lock showing red boards.
2. No crew may row if visibility is less than 100m.
3. No crew may row if ice has formed on the water.

In situations not covered by these rules, e.g. high winds, it is the duty of the cox (or, if the cox is novice status it is the duty of the coach) to decide whether or not it is safe to boat.

## **R8. Specific Rules to the Isis**

### **1. Scheduled Closures**

No member of OURCs may row without permission from the OURCs Secretary between the following times (out of courtesy to other river users):

- a. Between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Sundays.
- b. After 7.00pm on Wednesdays.

### **2. Scheduled Restrictions**

OURCs members using the Isis Stretch must observe the following restrictions:

- a. Weekdays before 8.00am, from Sunday of 1<sup>st</sup> week to Saturday of 8<sup>th</sup> week, no more than 1 crew out on a weekday morning without the written permission of the OURCs committee (to prevent congestion).
- b. Sundays, only one crew from each College is allowed on the Isis at any one time (to prevent congestion) from Sunday of 1<sup>st</sup> week to Saturday of 8<sup>th</sup> week.
- c. Weekdays 5.00pm-7.00pm from Monday of 0<sup>th</sup> Week to Tuesday of 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Trinity Term, only University crews or those entered for the Senior Divisions in Eights (as defined in B2.7) plus the top crew of the next division and all College 1<sup>st</sup> Vlls, may row in IIs, IVs or Vlls. There is no restriction on smaller boats (as requested by Captains).
- d. During OURCs competitions, or other competitions sanctioned by the OURCs, no crew is allowed on the river except those permitted by the competition rules.
- e. Any University or College Boat Club organising a regatta on the Isis must request a river closure from the OURCs Secretary, such a request to be made at least two weeks in advance.
- f. Exceptions may apply during competitions.

### **3. Boating/Landing**

From Sunday of 1<sup>st</sup> week to Saturday of 8<sup>th</sup> Week

- a. For normal training outings crews must boat from and land at stages on the City side of the river pointing upstream, and must boat from the OUBC raft pointing downstream. Crews may boat and land from Long Bridges, and land at OUBC, either upstream or downstream so long as it does not interfere with other crews. Crews who do cause an obstruction or hindrance by landing or boating against the stream at Long Bridges or OUBC will be judged to have committed a major transgression and penalised accordingly.
- b. All boats shall carry their full complement at all times unless the written permission of the OURCs Secretary has been obtained. The only exception to this rule is boats being transported FROM City of Oxford or Falcon TO the boathouses, hence not required to turn. The reverse of this journey is NOT excepted from this rule.

### **4. Special Rules Applying to the Gut**

The Gut is defined as the narrow stretch of the Isis between Longbridges boathouse and the Canoe Centre.

- a. No novice coxswain may go through the Gut until the date designated by the OURCs Captain of Coxes at their registration meeting.
- b. Crews should not obstruct the Gut unnecessarily either by easying or proceeding slower than normal full crew paddling allows.
- c. Crews may not overtake in the Gut without permission from the boat being overtaken.
- d. Tub boats are not permitted in the Gut.

5. Spinning
  - a. Under normal conditions (i.e. no flags) boats may only spin at the following places between Sunday of 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday of 8<sup>th</sup> Week:
    - i. Upstream of the red and white post below Folly Bridge.
    - ii. At Longbridges boathouse, spinning stern towards the towpath, and close enough to the towpath to leave a clear passage for crews entering and leaving the Gut.
    - iii. Below the red and white post on Haystacks Corner but crews may not paddle further than the post other than to manoeuvre for spinning. The stretch between the Isis boathouse and the lock is to be kept clear whenever possible and not used for coaching.
  - b. Boats must turn singly in order of arrival at the turning point unless prior crews have granted permission to spin.
  - c. Having spun, boats must immediately leave the turning area so as not to obstruct other crews.
  
6. Fast Stream Conditions

During fast stream conditions, special rules are in force on this stretch, as indicated on the OURCs website ('The Isis Flag'):

  - a. Red Flag (4 bucks): Isis closed to all University and College rowers. Navigation of Osney and Iffley Locks prohibited.
  - b. Amber Flag (3 bucks): Isis closed to all College crews except Senior Crews as defined in R10. Crews must spin between the red and white posts 100m downstream of Donnington Bridge and upstream of Haystacks Corner. River closed between Folly Bridge and Oxford Canal. Navigation of Osney and Iffley Locks prohibited.
  - c. Blue Flag (2 bucks): Isis closed to Novice status coxes. Crews must spin between the red and white posts 100m downstream of Donnington Bridge and upstream of Haystacks Corner. River closed between Folly Bridge and Oxford Canal. Navigation of Osney and Iffley Locks prohibited.
  
7. Coaching Launches
  - a. Coaching launches must not be used on the Isis except with the prior permission of the OURCs Secretary. Permission will only be granted for the purpose of transporting.
  
8. Coxswains

All coxswains must be registered members of the OUCS.

## **R9. Specific Rules to Godstow**

1. Scheduled Closures

No member of OURCs may row without permission from the OURCs Secretary between the following times (out of courtesy to the Medley sailing club):

  - a. On Sundays between 2.00pm and 6.00pm, between March and November inclusive.
  - b. After 7.00pm on Wednesdays during Trinity Term.
  
2. Spinning
  - a. Crews spinning from downstream to upstream above Rainbow Bridge must do so before or opposite the Medley Sailing Club. The stretch opposite Bossoms Boat Yard is not to be used for spinning or coaching.
  - b. Boats must turn singly in order of arrival at the turning point unless prior crews have granted permission to spin.

- c. Having spun, boats must immediately leave the turning area so as not to obstruct other crews.
3. Fast Stream Conditions  
 During fast stream conditions, special rules are in force on the Godstow stretch, as indicated on the OURCs website ('The Godstow Flag'):
- a. Red Flag (4 bucks at Osney Lock, 2 bucks at Godstow Lock or at the discretion of the St Edward's School Boatman): Godstow stretch closed to all crews. Navigation of Osney Lock prohibited.
  - b. Amber Flag (3 bucks at Osney Lock, 1 ½ bucks at Godstow Lock or at the discretion of the St Edward's School boatman): Godstow closed to all College crews except Senior Crews as defined in R10. River closed below Rainbow Bridge. Navigation of Osney Lock prohibited.
4. Coxswains  
 All coxswains must be registered members of OUCS.

## **R10. Definition of a Senior Crew**

1. Within these rules, a senior crew is defined as an VIII or a coxed IV with a cox classified as "Senior" under Rule R6.4 and at least four rowers with three full terms rowing experience, and not containing any rower with less than one full term of rowing experience.
2. At the discretion of the OURCs committee, other crews may be also be designated "Senior". Application should be made in writing to the OURCs Secretary.

## **R11. Use of the City of Oxford RC Facilities**

1. Crews using the City of Oxford Rowing Club grounds are expected to comply with all reasonable requests from Club members relating to the following guidelines
2. Avoid using the area at peak times for City members, i.e. weekday evenings and weekend mornings
3. Only use the grass areas for rigging/derigging, also for leaving boats unattended. Do not use Car Parking space, or the Hard.
4. The landing stage should be occupied as briefly as possible when boating/landing, with priority given to CORC members.
5. Boat and land pointing upstream whenever possible.
6. Do not leave trailers in the Car Park for more than 24 hrs without permission from the CORC Committee.

## **R12. Personal Conduct**

The use of foul or abusive language and gestures is an offence. When directed towards members of the public or OURCs Officials performing their duties, it is regarded as a serious offence.

## **R13. Transgressions**

Fines and sanctions may be imposed upon a college boat club in the event of a breach of OURCs rules. Transgressions witnessed by non-members of the OURCs committee should be reported to the OURCs secretary or sabbatical.

1. Any member of the OURCs committee is empowered to impose fines.
2. At their discretion, committee members may choose to caution a cox or crew rather than impose a fine.
3. Types of transgression:
  - a. Minor transgressions are defined as those breaches of these rules without serious safety implications, which only minimally inconvenience other river users,

- or which gain a crew only a minor training advantage. The fine for a minor transgression shall be £10.
- b. Major transgressions are defined as those with potentially serious safety implications, which significantly inconvenience other river users or which gain the crew major training advantage. The fine for a major transgression shall be £25.
  - c. Extreme transgressions are defined as those resulting in serious incidents, or rowing whilst banned, for example by an OURCs flag or a previous penalty. The fine for an extreme transgression is £100. Only a formally convened OURCs committee meeting may impose the fine, and may also impose further sanctions on the boat club or crew involved such as banning them from the river and/or from OURCs races.
  - d. The OURCs committee shall not be permitted to impose sanctions upon an entire Boat Club unless it is proven that both the men and women's captains, and/or both the men and women's team members were involved in the extreme transgression.
4. Violations of any of the scheduled restrictions shall incur a 10-pound fine for the first offence in each academic year, but double for each additional offence of any scheduled restrictions within the same year.
  5. Committee members must notify the OURCs Treasurer of fines they have imposed. The OURCs Treasurer will then send the college boat club concerned details of the fine.
  6. Dangerous or careless coxing may (in addition to a fine) result in endorsement, or in particularly serious cases withdrawal, of the permit of the coxswain concerned.
    - a. Coxswains whose permits are endorsed more than 3 times in any 3 consecutive terms shall have their permits withdrawn for the rest of the term in which the fourth endorsable offence occurred and for the entirety of the subsequent term.
    - b. Following a period of disqualification, coxswains whose permits were withdrawn shall have to satisfy the OURCs captain of coxes that they are competent to cox before they may reapply for their permit.
  7. Appeals against fines or other penalties imposed by the OURCs should be directed, in the first case to the OURCs Secretary and on further dispute, to the OURCs senior member who shall have the final say in all such matters.