



WARRINGTON ROWING CLUB

HEAD OF THE MERSEY - RACE SAFETY PLAN.

5th February 2012

The priority at all times is SAFETY.

NOTE: The Club is currently undergoing development works next to the Boathouse. The construction area must not be entered into at any time. Additionally the available area for parking is temporarily reduced so competitors need to allow sufficient time to get to the Boathouse.

This race safety plan identifies the risks involved in the Head of the Mersey and outlines the procedures to be adopted by the organisers and competitors to limit those risks.

Competitors and coaches are specifically reminded that persons using the river do so at their own risk and are solely responsible for their own safety.

This race will be run according to the British Rowing Row Safe guidance. All competitors must make themselves aware of, and abide by, the British Rowing Rules and the Local Rules issued by Warrington Rowing Club.

Contravention of these safety rules will result in disqualification.

CLUBS & COMPETITORS RESPONSIBILITIES.

- 1. Equipment.** All clubs must ensure that the equipment used by their club is safe and satisfies British Rowing Row Safe guidance & Rules of Racing. The Race Committee reserve the right to refuse the use unsafe equipment.
- 2. Course Plan.** All competitors must familiarise themselves with the course plan included with this safety document. The local hazards and river rules must be observed at all times. A full plan of the river is on display in the boathouse.
- 3. Lifejackets.** All coxswains must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid when afloat.
- 4. Clothing.** Crews must be properly dressed to protect them from the weather, particularly during marshalling periods, and between race stages.
- 5. Ability to swim.** Clubs must ensure that its rowing members are able to swim at least 50 metres clothed.
- 6. Capsize.** Clubs should ensure that their members are trained in capsized drill and that they should hold onto their boat in the event of a capsized while waiting for assistance. Only if able to do so and the riverbanks are not steep, should crews attempt to reach the riverbank using the hull of the boat for buoyancy. The north riverbank has pathways along most of its length.
- 7. Fitness for competition.** It is the responsibility of the Captain, Coach or person making the entry to ensure that the competitors are competent to complete the course without putting themselves at risk. The Race Committee reserve the right to refuse to allow any competitor to race if they feel that competitor is not competent.

Clubs and competitors are also reminded that they must:

- Ensure that all roadways and access routes to the WRC boathouse are kept clear at all times.
- Report all accidents and 'near misses' to the Race Control at Warrington RC.

A. WEATHER CONDITIONS.

1. The Head course is subject to the effects of wind, stream and occasionally, tide. Conditions on the day will be assessed by the Race Committee, in consultation with the Safety Adviser, who will determine any appropriate action:
 - i) To run the event in full.
 - ii) To cancel specific categories (Novice, Junior, etc.).
 - iii) To cancel a division.
 - iv) To alter the course by shortening or moving.
 - v) To cancel the whole event.
2. Should any cancellations be made, competitors will be notified as soon as practicable. Race numbers of crews affected will not be issued and Stage Marshals will prevent embarkation.

B. RULES APPLYING TO THE EVENT.

1. The event is run under the British Rowing Row Safe guidance.
2. Local Rules.

IMPORTANT: For the day of the event only, all traffic should keep to the LEFT HAND SIDE of the river, in relation to the direction of travel, when proceeding to, and returning from, the race start at Paddington Meadows. If the river or weather conditions dictate otherwise, the stage marshals will inform competitors.

The main points are:

- i) Warming up may only take place in the 'Practice Area' downstream of the clubhouse between the landing stage and the black & white footbridge.
Do not row downstream of the black & white footbridge (Howley Suspension Footbridge) as there is a weir downstream.
- ii) Use the LEFT HAND arch of Kingsway Bridge, in relation to the direction of travel. All crews must row upstream after boating, clear of the landing stage and bridge. If proceeding to the 'Practice Area' crews must pass upstream of Kingsway Bridge before spinning to enter the 'Practice Area' via the LEFT HAND arch relative to the direction of travel.
- iii) Where the course has been buoyed, all crews must stay LEFT of the buoys, in relation to the direction of travel.
- iv) Overtaking: slower crews must give way to boats overtaking them. Overtaking boats should use the centre line of the river but not cross into any buoyed areas. The 'inside line' on bends must only be taken where there is clear water between the boats ahead.
- v) Approaching the landing stage, crews must row through the LEFT HAND arch of Kingsway Bridge and beyond the yellow buoy before spinning. Do not obstruct or cross the buoy lines into the landing stage area.
- vi) Crews must obey the directions of the start marshals and umpires.
- vii) Crews contravening this safety plan may be disqualified.
- viii) Crews not obeying rules as laid down by the race committee, the umpires or marshals may be given a time penalty or disqualified.

C. COMMUNICATIONS.

1. **Mobile Radios.** Radio communication will be between Race Control, Race Umpires, Starter, Start Marshals, Stage Marshals and the Finish Marshals who will be assigned a specific call sign. In the event of an emergency the nearest official will call 'Emergency, Emergency' and all other stations will observe radio silence.
2. **Telephones.** A telephone, (incoming and 999 calls only), situated in the corner of the clubroom is available for Race Control to summon Emergency Services if required. The number for the clubroom is **01925 242631**.
3. **Public Telephone.** The nearest public telephone kiosk to the boathouse is outside the 'Late Shop', approximately 200 yards over Kingsway Bridge on the right-hand side. The nearest public telephone kiosk downstream of the 'Practice Area' is at the end of Howley Lane, furthest from the boathouse. At the Woolston Start/Finish the nearest public telephone kiosk is situated on the cross roads of the A57 in front of the library.
4. **Emergency Telephone Numbers.** Lists are on the safety notice board, near the club telephone and a copy is also held at Race Control.

D. MEDICAL & FIRST AID.

1. The **Club Water Safety Adviser** for the event is Richard Round.
2. **First Aid** cover will be provided by the St. John Ambulance Brigade who will be situated in the boathouse.
3. **Accidents and Emergencies** will be taken to Warrington General Hospital, Lovely Lane, Warrington.

E. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS.

1. **Accidents on the water.** In the event of a competitor being injured, capsizing or becoming ill whilst rowing, the quickest means of rescue and access to the emergency services is by safety launch. There will be Three launches positioned along the course, and One in reserve at the landing stage. The only launch access point to the river is the landing stage, which will be cleared by the Stage Marshals in the event of an emergency.
2. **Emergencies.** In an emergency, the safety launches will have priority over all other traffic. Any race in progress will be immediately stopped and will be re-rowed at a time determined by the Race Committee.
3. **Evacuation Procedure.** In the event of the boathouse area being evacuated due to fire or other major incident, all competitors, spectators and members will make their way to the Assembly Point near the Ambulance Station under the direction of Club members. No one is to re-enter the boathouse until the Safety Advisor or Senior Committee Member gives clearance. Club members will ensure the access road is clear for emergency vehicles, and guide them to the site. Crews on the water will muster upstream of Kingsway Bridge and await clearance before proceeding to disembark at the landing stage.
4. **Accidents on land.** Most spectators, competitors and supporters congregate around the landing stage and boathouse area, which will be monitored by the St John Ambulance Brigade. Any further help can be summoned via Race Control.
5. **Accidents in the Start Marshalling Area.** In the event of an incident in either Paddington Meadows or Woolston Start Marshalling Area all recovery is to be made using safety launches, there are limited exit points along the river above Paddington Meadows.

F. SAFETY LAUNCHES.

1. All safety launch crew members and passengers will wear Lifejackets or Buoyancy Aids.
2. The launch drivers will hold a minimum of RYA Level II certificates and a complete rescue kit, in accordance with British Rowing Row Safe guidance, will be carried.
3. There will be Four launches, One in reserve at the landing stage near the Practice Area and Three patrolling the course. All launches will be in contact with each other and race control.
4. Launch drivers shall ensure that competitors are not put at risk by their actions. In the event of an emergency on the river, launches have right of way over all other traffic, including races in progress. If a race is in progress the competitors shall be warned by the use of an audible sound, to give them chance to provide clear passage to the safety launch.
5. The launches will carry out the following duties:
 - i) Patrol river prior to racing to clear debris and look out for unforeseen hazards.
 - ii) Patrol the landing stage area and 'Practice Area'.
 - iii) Escort the crews travelling to the Paddington Meadows Start area.
 - iv) Launches at Paddington Meadows and Woolston Start/Finish shall marshal competitors and present crews in race order to the start umpire.
 - v) Warn officials and crews of any dangers that arise before or during the race.
 - vi) Carry out rescue in the case of competitors getting into difficulty.

G. MARSHALS.

1. Stage Marshals will be on duty to control the embarkation and landing of competitors boats. They will also carry out a safety inspection of the equipment of embarking crews, looking at:
 - heel restraints,
 - bow balls,
 - buoyancy compartments,
 - canvasses,
 - rudder lines and
 - general fixings.
2. Boats that are unsafe or improperly equipped will not be allowed to race. Stage marshals will also ensure that all coxes are wearing lifejackets or buoyancy aids and carrying cox's weights if applicable.
3. Race Marshals (3 - minimum with radios) will be positioned to provide line-of-sight coverage along the course (see plan). Prior to racing the race marshals will assess the condition of the course and advise race control of any unsuitable racing conditions. Any deterioration in the weather or stream conditions during the race will also be reported.

H. RACE RULES.

1. WRC head race consists of 2 legs between Paddington Meadows and Woolston.
2. The Race Committee reserve the right to amend the order of the race programme if found necessary.
3. **Under NO circumstances should crews venture further downstream than the black and white footbridge (Howley Suspension Footbridge) as this is the limit of our permitted water and there is a weir.**

4. All crews must carry their number plainly visible on the back of the bowman.
5. Crews should boat in good time for their race division to allow adequate time to travel to the start.
6. Follow the Circulation Pattern. All crews must boat upstream.
IMPORTANT: For the day of the event only, all traffic should keep to the LEFT HAND SIDE of the river, in relation to the direction of travel, when proceeding to, and returning from, the race start at Paddington Meadows. If the river or weather conditions dictate otherwise, the stage marshals will inform competitors.

When going to the Start at Paddington Meadows: All crews must row upstream after boating, clear of the landing stage and Kingsway Bridge. Crews that have embarked must not loiter around the landing stage or immediately upstream of Kingsway Bridge.

When going to Warm-up in the Practice area: If proceeding to the 'Practice Area' crews must pass upstream of Kingsway Bridge before spinning to enter the 'Practice Area'.

7. At each Finish area, crews must proceed past the finish line and not loiter.

At Woolston halfway Finish: crews must proceed upstream as directed by the Race Marshals, using the LEFT HAND SIDE of the river, and spin to reform in race order.

At Paddington Meadows Finish: crews must continue downstream using the LEFT HAND SIDE of the river. Crews must be aware that other competitors may be travelling upstream to the Paddington Start area.

8. Competitors must ensure that are at the start in good time before the scheduled race time, stated in the program. Crews failing to do so may be disqualified. No PA announcements will be made!
9. Crews wishing to practice may do so downstream of Kingsway Bridge between the landing stage and the black and white footbridge. Under no circumstances will crews be allowed to practice on the course or in the Start Marshalling area.
10. Cox's will be responsible for meeting the minimum weight for their class of race. Checks will be made when registering and during the day.
11. The race results will be posted at Race Control after each division.
12. Cox's must wear an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid, properly fitted and adjusted.
13. Any crew found to contravening these safety rules may be awarded an Official Warning, or disqualified by a Race Umpire.