

WARRINGTON ROWING CLUB

HEAD OF THE MERSEY

Sunday 10th February 2019

SAFETY PLAN

The priority at all times is SAFETY.

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 RowSafe guidance. All competitors must make themselves aware of, and abide by, the British Rowing Rules and the Local Rules issued by Warrington Rowing Club.

Please spend a moment to read the following British Rowing Guidance (“*Not Getting Cold at Heads*”):

<https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Safety-Alert-Not-getting-cold-at-heads.pdf?5da348&85af17>

A. 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 of 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. Auto inflate life jackets or buoyancy aids must not be worn in bow loader boats.
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 capsize drill and that they must climb onto their boat (get out of the water as much as possible) in the event of capsize while waiting for assistance from safety launches. Only if able to do so and where 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.
8. **Communication.** A representative of racing crews must make the officials aware of any communication problems that may occur during the event. This might be a foreign language issue or it may take the form of a physical/mental disability.

9. **Access.** Ensure that all roadways and access routes to the WRC boathouse are kept clear at all times.
10. **Report all accidents and 'near misses'** to the Water Safety Officer at Race Control.

B. RULES APPLYING TO THE EVENT

1. WRC head race consists of 2 legs between Paddington Meadows and Woolston.
2. All crews must carry their number plainly visible on the back of the bowman.
3. Crews should boat in good time for their race, at least **15 minutes** before their scheduled time. **Delays to start pose an unnecessary risk of cold to all participants.**
4. At all times the Circulation Pattern must be followed. Any changes to the circulation pattern due to unforeseen circumstances will be clearly briefed by race officials at the coxes / scullers briefing.
5. Competitors must be at the start, at least two **2 minutes** before the scheduled race time stated in the program. Crews failing to do so may be disqualified. No PA announcements will be made!
6. Coxes will be responsible for meeting the minimum weight for their class of race. Checks will be made when registering and during the day.
7. Crews must obey the directions of the start marshals and umpires. Crews not obeying rules as laid down by the race committee, the umpires or marshals may be given a time penalty or disqualified.
8. Only J14 experienced rowers and above are allowed to compete.
9. Competitors must be UK residents who are resident in this country for more than six months in a year (This is a condition of British Rowing Insurance).

C. CIRCULATION PATTERN

IMPORTANT: For the day of the event only, all boats 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.

1. 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.**
2. Use the **LEFT HAND** arch of Kingsway Bridge, in relation to the direction of travel. When going to the start at Paddington Meadows all crews must row upstream after boating, clear of the landing stage and bridge.
3. 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.
4. Where the course has been buoyed, all crews must stay **LEFT** of the buoys, in relation to the

direction of travel.

5. At each Finish area, crews must proceed past the finish line and not loiter.
6. 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.
7. 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. 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.
9. Approaching the landing stage, crews must row through the **LEFT HAND** arch relative to the direction of travel and beyond the yellow buoy before spinning. Do not obstruct or cross the buoy lines into the landing stage area.

D. ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Head course is subject to the effects of wind, stream and occasionally, tide. The Race Committee will assess the conditions on the day in consultation with the Safety Adviser. If conditions are not favourable they will consider the options outlined in the Bad Weather Action Plan and determine any appropriate action. This may include:
 - 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.
 - vi) To tolerate additional warm clothing in preference to normal club race attire.
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.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Mobile Radios

Radio communication will be between Race Control, Race Umpires, Starter, Start Marshals, Stage Marshals and the Finish Marshall who will be assigned a specific call sign. Where necessary, radios may be supplemented by the use of mobile phones. In the event of an emergency the nearest official will call 'Pan, Pan' and co-ordinate the necessary response. Unless directly involved in this response, all other stations will observe radio silence until the emergency is resolved (see RowSafe Section 2.3).

2. Megaphones

These will be in use by race officials and safety launches as required.

3. **Telephones.** A telephone, (incoming and 999 calls only), located at the clubhouse kitchen room is available for Race Control to summon Emergency Services if required. The telephone number for the clubhouse is **01925 242631**.
4. **Public Telephone.** The nearest 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.
5. **Emergency Telephone Numbers.** A list is included at the back of this document, on the club notice board, and near the club telephone. A copy is also held at Race Control.

F. MEDICAL & FIRST AID

1. The **Safety Adviser** for the event is **Alec Glover – 07706 854 184**
2. Any **Safety Incident** occurring during the competition must be reported immediately to the Safety Advisor. Full details of the incident will be recorded and reviewed by the organising committee following the event.
3. **First Aid** cover will be provided by First- Aiders who will be situated in the club house.
4. **Accidents and Emergencies** will be taken to Warrington General Hospital, Lovely Lane, Warrington, **WA5 1QG**

G. 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 will be achieved by safety launch (ref Rowsafe 7.7). There will be **four** launches positioned along the course. The only access point to the river is the landing stage, which will be cleared by the Stage Marshals.
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 launch stage 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 clubhouse area. This area will be monitored by the Stage Marshals. 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.

H. 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. 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. Launches should be prepared and alert with engines running during the competing of junior single scullers. This is to facilitate a timely rescue in the event of capsizes.
6. All safety launches will be equipped with first aid kit, emergency telephone numbers, thermal blankets, throw bags, & a bailer.
7. The launches will carry out the following duties:
 - a. Patrol river prior to racing to clear debris and look out for unforeseen hazards.
 - b. Patrol the landing stage area and 'Practice Area'.
 - c. Escort the crews travelling to the Paddington Meadows Start area.
 - d. Launches at Paddington Meadows and Woolston Start/Finish shall marshal competitors and present crews in race order to the start umpire.
 - e. Warn officials and crews of any dangers that arise before or during the race.
 - f. Carry out rescue in the case of competitors getting into difficulty.

I. 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 on a sample of the equipment of embarking crews, looking at:
 - a. heel restraints,
 - b. bow balls,
 - c. buoyancy compartments,
 - d. canvasses,
 - e. rudder lines,
 - f. general fixings and
 - g. adequacy of warm clothing.
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 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.

Warrington Rowing Club

Emergency Telephone Numbers

The telephone in the club house is for outgoing emergency 999 or 112 calls only. Incoming calls can be received, the number is (01925) 242631

WRC Safety Advisor (Alec Glover)	07706 854 184
WRC Chairman (Matt Holmes)	07950 252733
WRC Club Welfare Officer	07984 640931

Emergency- FIRE

- AMBULANCE

999 or 112

- POLICE

Warrington Police Station Non-emergency	0845 458 0000 101
Crime Stoppers	0800 555 111 (24hr)
NHS Direct (Dr.)	0845 46 47
Warrington General Hospital (WGH) Lovely Lane, Warrington	01925 635911
United Utilities (water supply)	0845 746 2200
Scottish Power – Manweb (electricity)	0845 272 24 24
Environmental Agency (river pollution)	0800 80 70 60 (24hr)
Mersey Docks & Harbour Co.	0151 949 6000
Peel Ports – Safety & Env. Mgr	0151 949 6054
Warrington Borough Council (WBC) Environmental Health	01925 443322
Floodline (flood risk information)	0845 602 6340

Boat House location is at the end of Howley Lane, Warrington, next to Kingsway Bridge, **WA1 2DN**. The grid reference is **SJ623880**.