

## **Rutherford Head - 3 December 2022**

### **Event and Safety Plan**

#### **As at 27-10-22**

This document should be read in conjunction with the competition's Risk Assessment and its 'Actions to address risks' and numbered references in this document refer to those actions.

#### **1. Introduction**

Rutherford Head is a rowing competition in the form of a time trial. It has two divisions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It is administered and organised by Tyne Amateur Rowing Club (TARC), based at Newburn.

The competitions will be run physically from:

Tyne Amateur Rowing Club, Water Row, Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8NL

Tyne United Rowing Club, Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon, NE15 8NR

Newcastle University Boat Club, Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon, NE15 8NR.

The course is 4.5km approx (with about 750m further at either end needed for marshalling) and is shown on the accompanying course map. The waters are within the jurisdiction of the Port of Tyne and authorisation is necessary and is being sought on the basis of this and other documents. The river will not be closed to other traffic, but this is very normally very limited.

The competition is for eights, quads and fours, coxed and uncoxed. The divisions will be run at 10.30am and 2.15pm. Races will be for both adults and juniors. Very novice crews are actively discouraged from entering as conditions can be very challenging. It is not proposed to invite athletes with disabilities.

Each division will be run as a separate time trial. The races will be run under British Rowing's Rules of Racing and safety guidance RowSafe. Local rules relevant to specific issues or hazards such as bridges will be published in the instructions issued to clubs and online.

#### **2. Planning and preparation.**

Authorisation is required from the Port of Tyne (PoT) and at the time of this version is being sought. PoT requires copies of key safety documents and details of insurance. River closure is not being requested, as commercial traffic is minimal and other potential users will all be notified in advance. The local authorities and the emergency services are informed/consulted as appropriate to the scale of the event. Insurance cover is supplied through British Rowing on its standard national policy.

Other river users on this stretch of the Tyne will be informed in advance, with particular emphasis on other rowing clubs, but also others such as Newburn Water Ski Club who operate occasionally close by. Rights of way pass through the various club sites at Newburn and warning notices will be put out on the day warning of activity. Bookings for externally provided launch safety cover and first aid will be made early and confirmed in place a week before.

Careful management of entries is important in minimising the risk of having too many crews on the water or causing undue overcrowding at the host clubs. This competition can attract a very large number of potential entries, but there is a default safety limit of 150 entries per division being accepted some weeks in advance, with the expectation of 140 actually starting.

In drawing up the start orders, care is taken to order crews as far as possible by speed, fastest first, to minimise the need for overtaking (although the river is broad enough for this not to be a major problem). In addition short breaks will be introduced in the start order within divisions to further reduce the need for overtaking.

The overall course map, instructions to clubs and crews, access and parking instructions and this safety plan will be issued/published no later than two weeks before race day. Detailed circulation patterns at start and finish will be issued in the week before the event, when numbers and likely weather conditions are known.

The organising committee will ensure that resources related to safety are available in-house, on loan or bought in, notably marshalling launches, loudhailers, radios and timing equipment; all to be checked as working prior to race day. The organising committees will prepare task rotas for volunteer helpers and volunteer names and roles will be fully filled out by a week before the race day, with later amendments only exceptionally. Priority will be given as necessary to tasks directly related to safety.

Assistance will be sought from neighbouring clubs in good time if there are insufficient resources at the home club. Volunteers named for key roles, notably launch drivers and water-based marshalls, will be assessed for experience and competence. Written instructions for all volunteer roles and bought in services will be prepared and circulated in advance.

The three clubs physically hosting on the day will ensure buildings, sites and boating steps are in a clean and safe condition, that toilet and changing facilities are available and arrangements have been made to receive any crews that are wet and/or cold.

### **Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.1-1.9, 2.1-2.9**

#### **3. Weather and water conditions**

Tides times are known in advance, but detailed weather forecasts will not be available until about a week before. During the week preceding the event, the competition safety adviser will monitor weather forecasts each day. They will perform an initial weather assessment on the Monday prior to race day and update this on the Wednesday and Friday. They will keep the rest of the organising committee and the chair of the Race Committee (lead umpire) informed of findings, noting not just the weather, but also the likely inter-action of wind and tidal flow.

The organising committee will ensure that participating clubs are kept informed of the weather prospects and likely water conditions for the day via the event secretary and/or the club web site. The organising committee will review the need to cancel the event in advance throughout the week if prospects are poor.

Conditions along the whole course will be assessed early on race day and the organising committee or delegated officers shall decide if the competitions can proceed as planned or whether it is necessary or likely that either restrictions on who rows or complete cancellation is necessary at that point.

The safety adviser in conjunction with the Chair of the Race Committee can at any time on the day suspend or cancel racing, either as a whole or for particular classes of entry. Where it is thought possible to run reduced numbers in a competition, particular note will be taken of the possible young age or lack of experience of crews and exclude these first.

Should a risk of thunderstorms and lightning be identified in advance, the organising committee will consider this information and decide whether to cancel early. If lightning occurs on the day, then the 30/30 rule will apply: rowing shall stop when the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds (or less), and shall not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last lightning. If crews are on the water, they will all be instructed to return to the home club and land there or at one of the adjacent clubs as quickly as possible.

## **Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8-3.10**

### **4. Pre start on race day**

Race Control will be set up early in the day and remain staffed until completion of the two divisions. The overall race coordinator will maintain an overview throughout the day and take personal charge should a major incident happen. Tasks may be delegated to others with clear reporting lines.

The instructions issued to clubs in good time before the event will have contained the same information, except for late changes and up-to-date weather and water reports, so crews should all be well briefed in any case. There will not be collective briefings on the day.

The safety adviser will confirm to the race coordinator that all safety provisions are in place before advising that boating can take place - notably launch-based marshalls and safety launch cover. Crews will have been advised that the normal rules of river navigation will be followed on the way to the start, i.e. follow the south bank, but do not apply during the race.

Competitors will have been issued with the final start order with boating times before the day. Land marshalls will ensure that these are kept to. Crews presenting after the last boating time indicated will be refused permission to boat to ensure prompt start time, unless race control in consultation with other officials agrees otherwise.

Control Commission (boat safety) checks will be carried out before boating, ideally with the involvement of qualified umpires. The host clubs cannot guarantee to inspect every boat however (see later re competitor and club responsibilities).

## **Action points from Risk Assessment: 2.5-2.8, 3.1**

### **5. Communication including with Port of Tyne and emergency services**

The main means of communication will be by UHF radios, though externally provided safety launches will also have VHF. Mobile phones will be a back-up. Appendix 2 with its mobile phone number list and a clear communication protocol will be established by the Wednesday before race day and issued on the day to those who need it in full and key numbers will be available to all on the host club web site on the day.

Port of Tyne's Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) unit monitors and controls all commercial shipping, fishing and leisure movements on the River Tyne. Tyne VTS is operated on a 24 hour basis, using the call sign 'Tyne VTS', with Channel 12 as the primary maritime VHF radio frequency. Telephone number is 0191 257 2080 and email [TyneVTS@portoptyne.co.uk](mailto:TyneVTS@portoptyne.co.uk).

Race Control will ensure that Tyne VTS on VHF channel 12 or via the phone number above is contacted (a) immediately before the events starts, (b) on completion of the event and (c) in the case of a serious on water incident. Depending on the nature of the incident and whether rescue or just medical aid is required fire, ambulance or police may be called.

## **Action points: 1.7, 1.8, 3.14**

### **6. Standard procedures on the water**

For each competition the start marshalling launches will precede the first crews to boat down the river to the start marshalling areas. The safety cover launches and bank monitors will also be deployed at this time along the river in accordance with the course map accompanying this document. All will report to race control when in place and the marshalling launches shall give regular reports on how the start marshalling is progressing. All launches will check for debris en route and clear or ask race control to allocate another crew to clear.

Race Control will check with all marshalling and safety launches, umpires, race monitors and finish officials that they are in place before asking the start marshalls and start umpire to initiate the race. The race course should be clear of all but marshalling and safety launches at the time of the start. However, if a racing boat is held back for any reason and is on the course when the start is ready, the start umpire will take advice from race control and others and may start the race if advised the boat is in a safe position off the main racing line.

Should a commercial craft, powered pleasure boat or other river user appears and seems likely to interfere with the racing (most likely from downstream), the nearest water-based marshall shall approach the craft and request it to turn around or wait. If the boat master refuses to do so and proceeds, then advice should be given that doing so may contravene Port byelaws by endangering others. Race control and the start umpire should be informed immediately and if necessary racing should not be started or be suspended.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.8, 2.8, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.11**

## 7. Emergency procedures on the water

In the event of an incident occurring, it should be within sight of a safety launch and the launch will respond immediately. If a crew not involved but spotting an incident believes it has not been spotted, they should report it to the next safety launch. The launch crew should deal with the incident as necessary and advise race control of what is happening. Race Control will call the emergency services should this be advised by the safety launch.

The safety launch can decide whether to evacuate the rowers affected immediately or hold until all crews are past. If the incident is serious and immediate evacuation is necessary, then the Chair of the Race Committee or the safety adviser may decide racing should be stopped immediately or other appropriate action taken to safeguard all on the river.

A safety launch responding to an incident may take any appropriate action without consultation with race control if needed urgently to safeguard crews or others. If stopped, racing can be restarted if deemed safe by those directly involved in attending the incident and reporting this to race control. Evacuation should be to Gateshead CRC at Derwenthaugh if clearly the safest option for incidents in the lower part of the course or to the clubs at Newburn (a maximum of 4.5km away) otherwise. Adverse wind or tidal flow conditions should be taken into account.

All actions will be monitored and logged by race control.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 3.7-3.9, 3.11, 3.12**

## 8. Competitor and entering club responsibilities

The responsibilities of and precautions taken by the host clubs are outlined above and in the Risk Assessment. Competitors must take some responsibility for their actions, and they should be advised as such by their own clubs through coaches or otherwise. Coaches of juniors in particular must ensure that all competitors are fully briefed before the competitions on the instructions to crews and on the day of any further information from the briefings.

The instructions to crews will emphasise two things for competitors and coaches to consider. Firstly, that all crews should have sufficient strength and experience to row a 4.5km race on a large tidal river. And secondly, that as the event is taking place in late November, the weather could be cold and/or wet and suitable clothing to wear at the start should be carried. Competitors through their clubs will be made aware that they may not be allowed to boat or race if these expectations are not met.

Club volunteers under the direction of an umpire if possible will undertake Control Commission checks of safety aspects of boats before getting on the river, but this will not necessarily be on a 100% basis (as per British Rowing policy). As far as possible competitors will be given time to

rectify faults. Participating clubs are asked via the *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* to check all standard safety items on every boat before loading and again on race day before proceeding to the steps.

Competitors through clubs and coaches or directly should make themselves familiar with the national Rules of Racing as they apply to head races and to any local rules published, most notably the need to use only the middle arch/es of bridges during racing.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.2, 2.7, 3.2, 3.6, 3.12**

**9. Vehicle parking**

Other than host club and race officials, only trailers and towing vehicles can park at TARC and TURC. Car parking for crews boating at TARC is available at a public car park further along Grange Road opposite (but not at) Newburn Activity Centre. For those boating from TURC on the south bank competitors can use Newburn Bridge Approach Road alongside the club but not blocking the entrance. Parking for cars will also be available at NUBC on a first come first served basis.

The highway authorities for Newburn ask that no vehicles should be parked in an obstructive manner on road, footpath or verge and must observe all signed restrictions. Consideration must be made with regards to access for others on roads and footpaths when parking. Those attending will be asked to give especial consideration close to the residential areas off Grange Road near TARC north of the river.

The *Instructions to clubs and crews* mentioned above will include these parking requirements and requests. A map showing all the relevant locations will also be issued. There may be special direction signs subject to agreement of the highway authorities (though this is being considered for larger events in the autumn and winter).

**10. Principal contacts ahead of the competition**

The following form the core of the organising committee. They can be contacted by email as shown. A full list of people with responsibilities with fuller contact details will be produced by the Wednesday before the competition and published on the web site

Izzy Friedlander	Vice Captain (Events)	07940 318370	vicecaptain.events@tynearc.com
Colin Percy	Joint Competition Secretary	07985 003304	entries@tynearc.com
Lyn Goldsmith	Joint Competition Secretary	07565 350347	entries@tynearc.com
John Mulholland	Safety Adviser	07740 078023	john.rsa@jdmulholland.plus.com
Jo Gregory	Club Manager		clubmanager@tynearc.com
Charly Curtis	Chair of Race Committee	07907 543637	

CWP

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