

Rutherford Head – 2 December 2023

Event and Safety Plan

Issued 10-11-23

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 club will appoint an Organising Committee to oversee preparations for then competition and direct it on the day.

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 10:30 and 13:45. Races will be for adults and older 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 to Clubs and Crews* issued to clubs and online.

2 Planning and preparation

Authorisation is required from the Port of Tyne (PoT) and this has been obtained. 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 competition. 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 and other water skiers 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 usually attracts a large number of potential entries, but there is a default safety limit of 140 entries per division.

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 competition, 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 Committee 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 competition, the competition Safety Adviser will monitor weather forecasts and actual conditions (including height and speed of top water) 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 Race Committee Chair (in effect the lead umpire) informed of findings, reporting not just the weather, but also the likely inter-action of wind and river 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 competition secretary and/or the club web site. The organising committee will review the need to cancel the competition 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 competition can proceed as planned or whether it is necessary either to restrict who rows or to cancel the races as a whole.

The Safety Adviser in conjunction with the Race Committee Chair 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 as quickly as possible.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9, 3.10

4 Pre start on race day

Before race day the Organising Committee will appoint a person to lead Race Control for the day; by default this will be the Organising Committee Chair. This person will maintain an overview throughout the day and take personal charge should a major incident happen. Race Control will be set up early in the day in the meeting room at Tyne ARC and remain staffed until completion of the two divisions.

The *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* will be issued to clubs and published online well before the competition and will contain all information needed, covering both safety and other issues. Any late changes and up-to-dates will be very well publicised as and when issued. There will not be collective briefings on the day.

The Safety Adviser will confirm to Race Control 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. keep the starboard/green/bow side of the boat nearest the bank, but that they do not apply during the race.

Competitors will have been issued with the final start order with boating times before the day. No participating crews will be allowed on the water prior to official boating. 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, under the supervision 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@portoftyne.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 competition starts, (b) on completion of the competition 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: 1.9, 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 Race Committee Chair 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 or the Sea Cadet's landing 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 to be 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 races on the *Instructions to Clubs Crews* and on any subsequent updates issued just before or on the day.

The *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* will emphasise two things for competitors and coaches to consider before race day, ideally before entering crews. 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 competition is taking place in early December, 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.

Control Commission (club volunteers under the direction of a qualified umpire) may undertake spot check inspections of boats presented by competitors before getting on the river. Boats failing to meet the recognised standards will be turned back, though 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 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

The *Instructions to clubs and crews* document mentioned above will include parking requirements and requests as follows. A map showing all the relevant locations will also be issued. There may be special direction signs subject to agreement of the highway authorities.

“Trailers must be parked at the club indicated for boating in the published start order (Tyne ARC, Tyne United RC or Newcastle University BC). You can park trailer towing vehicles there too.

There is no drop-off access within the three clubs’ grounds. In particular buses/coaches **MUST NOT** attempt to drop off competitors at any of the host clubs; please do so sensibly and quickly on neighbouring roads and then proceed to the Grange Road car park (see below).

For those boating at Tyne ARC, out of consideration for local residents, **DO NOT** park cars or minibuses on Grange Road or in the surrounding residential streets in Newburn and **DO NOT** park in front of the Branzino Restaurant on the road down to the club. Cars (and buses/coaches) may park at the free car park opposite the Newburn Activity Centre along Grange Road. This car park is only a short walk away from the rowing clubs: see map on website. Do not park in the at the Activity Centre car park itself.

Those boating from Tyne United RC must not park on the approaches to Newburn Bridge on Newburn Bridge Road. Newcastle University BC provides for some general car parking but space is limited.

The Highway Authorities for the area 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.”

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	Chair	07940 318370	vicecaptain.events@tynearc.com
Colin Percy	Competition & Entries Sec	07565 350347	entries@tynearc.com
John Mulholland	Safety Adviser	07740 078023	john.rrsa@jdmulholland.plus.com
Jo Gregory	Club Manager	07957 733387	clubmanager@tynearc.com
Charly Curtis	Race Committee Chair	07907 543637	

Colin Percy, Competition Secretary.

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