

Rutherford Head at Tyne Amateur Rowing Club

1 December 2018

Safety Plan draft v3 as at 28-10-18

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

1 Introduction

The Rutherford Head is organised Tyne Amateur Rowing Club (ARC) with the help of Tyne United Rowing Club and Newcastle University Boat Club. The competition will have an organising committee based on the Tyne ARC's ongoing Events Group. Contact names in full will be given in Appendix 1 to be produced in the week before race day when all are known.

The competition will be run from Tyne ARC club house, Water Row, Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NL with boats also embarking at Tyne United Rowing Club and Newcastle University Boat Club, both at Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon, NE15 8NR.

Division 1 will be run at 10.30am and Division 2 at 1.45pm. Boats will be on the water from about 8.30am and be off by 4.00pm at the latest.

The course for the competition is 4.5km approx (with about 500m further needed at either end 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 use by others at this time of year is very limited.

The competition is for eights, quads and fours, the latter two coxed and uncoxed. Races will be for both adults and juniors. The number of juniors is usually a small proportion of the total and the juniors racing are often more experienced and able than some of the adults.

Inexperienced crews can enter but advice is given to clubs thinking of entering crews to consider if they all have sufficient ability and confidence to race on a large tidal river. The organising committees will ensure that in the case of seriously adverse conditions, such rowers (as far as they can be identified) will not be allowed to row, even if already at the race location. If already on the water, they will be given extra supervision on the water until back at the host club.

Morning and afternoon will be run as a separate time trials. The races will be run under British Rowing's Rules of Racing and their RowSafe guidance with local rules relevant to specific hazards such as bridges being added.

2 Planning and preparation.

Authorisation is required from the Port of Tyne (PoT). PoT requires copies of key safety documents and details of insurance. Emergency services are informed as appropriate to the scale

of the competition. Insurance cover is supplied through British Rowing on its standard competition policy.

River closure is not being requested, as commercial traffic is minimal, but other potential users on this stretch of the Tyne will be informed in advance, with particular emphasis on other rowing clubs, but also others. Public Rights of Way pass through the various club sites at Newburn and warning notices will be put out on the day warning of activity.

Careful management of entries is important in minimising the risk of having too many crews on the water. This competition can attract a very large number of potential entries, but there is a safety limit of 130 crews actually racing 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 likelihood of overtaking.

The *Course Map* and *Instructions to Crews and Coxes* will be issued/published when the competition is first advertised via the poster (which includes guidance on who can and should enter). Access and parking instructions will be issued later and detailed circulation patterns at the start and finish will be issued in the week before race day, when numbers and likely weather conditions are known.

The organising committee will ensure bookings for externally provided safety launch cover, first aid and communications will be booked well in advance and confirmed a week before. Other resources relating to safety are available in-house, all to be checked as working prior to race day. The organising committee will prepare task rotas for volunteer helpers and fully fill them a week in advance, subject to later minor changes. 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 the competitors 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, 1.4 to 1.7, 2.1 to 2.4

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 race, the competition safety adviser will monitor weather forecasts each day and inform the rest of the organising committees of concerns as necessary, noting not just the weather, but also the likely inter-action of wind and tidal/top-water flow, plus the related issue of debris in the water

The organising committee will ensure that entering clubs are kept informed of the prospects for the day via emails from the competition secretary (who does the administration of entries via British Rowing's Online Entry system - BROE) direct to entering clubs, the club web site and social

media. The organising committee will review the need to cancel the competitions 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 race officials shall decide if the competition 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 (chief umpire) 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 some crews and exclude these first.

Should a risk of thunderstorms and lightning be identified in advance, the organising committees 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 club where they boated and land there. If circumstances demand they can also land at the emergency landing spots in the start area.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.2, 1.3, 3.3, 3.5, 3.8

4 Pre start on race day

The Race Control location will be set up early in the day at Tyne ARC and remain staffed until completion of the competition and all boats off the water and loaded on trailers. A delegated official (to be named no later than a week before) will take on overall coordination of competition, though he/she may further delegate to others, with clear reporting lines.

A safety briefing for all participating club coaches and individual rowers may be held before each competition gets underway. The instructions issued to clubs in good time before race day 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.

The safety adviser must confirm to the coordinator at Race Control that all safety provisions are in place before the coordinator advises step marshalls that boating can take place.

Competitors will have been issued with the final start order with embarking 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, with an emphasis on younger juniors and novices generally. The clubs cannot guarantee to inspect every boat however (see later re competitor and club responsibilities).

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5 to 1.7, 2.5 to 2.8

5 Communication

The main means of communication will be by UHF radios so that there is good communication to/from all parts of the course. Mobile phones will be a back-up. Safety launches will be in contact with each other by VHF radio as well and race control will also have a VHF radio. Appendix 1 with its telephone number list 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 on the host club web site.

Action points: 1.6, 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 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 appear and be likely to interfere with the racing (most likely from downstream), the nearest water-based marshall or safety launch 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 of Tyne byelaws by endangering others. Race Control and the starter should be informed immediately and if necessary racing should be suspended.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5, 3.1 to 3.17

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 believes an incident has not been spotted, they should report 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 in conjunction with others as necessary may decide racing should be stopped immediately, crews on course allowed to finish but with no new crews started or some other appropriate action taken to safeguard all on the river. If stopped, racing can be restarted with the consent of the Chair of the Race Committee.

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. All actions will be monitored and logged by Race Control.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 3.5 to 3.17

8 Entering club and individual crew responsibilities

The responsibilities of and precautions taken by the organising and 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 Coxes* and on the day of any further information from briefings.

The instructions emphasise two things for competitors and coaches to consider. Firstly, that all crews should have sufficient ability and experience to row a 4.5km race on a large tidal river. And secondly, that as the competition is in December, the weather could be wet, windy and cold and that suitable clothing to wear at the start (or even during the race) should be carried. Competitors and clubs should be aware that they may not be allowed to boat or race if these expectations are obviously not being met.

Club volunteers under the direction of an umpire will undertake Control Commission checks of key safety aspects of boats about to go on the river, but this will not necessarily be on a 100% basis; British Rowing does not require this and lays primary responsibility on participating clubs and crews to check. Participating clubs are asked via the *Instructions to Crews and Coxes* to check all standard safety items on every boat before race day and again *before* proceeding to the steps to boat. As far as possible competitors will be given time to rectify faults.

Competitors and coaches should have made 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, as advised in the Instructions.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.7, 2.7, 3.2

9 Pre-race contact for the competition:

Colin Percy, Tyne Amateur Rowing Club

Mobile: 07985 003304

Email for entries administration: entries@tynearc.com

Email for other matters: colinwpercy@gmail.com

Appendix 1

Contact names and phone numbers for the day

To be completed in week before race day