

Tyne Head at Tyne Amateur Rowing Club

15 February 2020

Safety Plan as issued 12-01-20

This document should be read in conjunction with the competition's Risk Assessment, issued at the same time and both posted on the competition web site page on the date above. The numbered references in this document refer to the 'Actions to address risks' column in the Risk Assessment.

1 Introduction

The Tyne Head is organised by Tyne Amateur Rowing Club (ARC) with the help of Tyne United Rowing Club (TURC), Newcastle University Boat Club (NUBC) and Gateshead Community Rowing Club (GCRC) as necessary. The competition will have an organising committee based on the Tyne ARC's ongoing Events Group. Contact names for race day will be given in Appendix 1 to be produced in the week before race day when all are known. The pre-race contact point is given in Section 9.

The competition will be run from the TARC club house, Water Row, Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NL with boats also embarking at TURC and possibly NUBC, both at Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon, NE15 8NR.

Division 1 will be run at 10.30am and Division 2 at 2.30pm. The first boats (in Div 1) will be on the water from about 9.00am and the last boats (in Div 2) off by 4.30pm 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 (coxed and uncoxed), doubles and pairs. 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 the rowers and/or coxes have sufficient ability and confidence to race on a large tidal river in winter. The organising committee 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 competition will be run under British Rowing's Rules of Racing and its 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 does not usually attract a very large number of entries, but there is a safety limit of 90 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* are published when the competition is first advertised via the poster (which includes guidance on who can and should enter) as are access and parking instructions. 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 are 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 1.8, 2.1 to 2.4

3 Weather and water conditions

Tides times are known well 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 weather 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, the course be shortened (in accordance with published alternative start and finish plans), whether it would be possible to run with restrictions on who rows or to cancel completely.

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 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 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 TARC 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 on the day, though he/she may further delegate to others, with clear reporting lines.

A pre-race safety briefing for participating club coaches and individual rowers is not normally held. The instructions issued to clubs (and put on the web site) well before race day will contain adequate information to inform clubs and crews on what to expect. Late changes and/or adverse weather reports will be notified by email, on the web site and via social media if necessary..

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 times are kept to. Crews presenting after the last boating time indicated will be refused permission to boat to ensure prompt start time, unless the coordinator at Race Control in consultation with other officials agrees otherwise.

Control Commission (boat safety) spot checks will be carried out before boating, with an emphasis on younger juniors and novices generally. The club is not required to inspect every boat (see Section 8 re competitor and club responsibilities).

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5 to 1.8, 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 if possible. Mobile phones will be a back-up. Safety launches (usually Red Seal and Sea Cadets) will be in contact with each other by VHF radio as well and the coordinator at Race Control will also have a VHF radio. Appendix 1 with its telephone 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.

Action points: 1.6, 1.7, 3.14

6 Standard procedures on the water

For each Division 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 the Coordinator at 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 the Coordinator to allocate another crew to clear.

The Coordinator 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 the coordinator 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. The Coordinator 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. The Coordinator will call the emergency services should this be advised by the safety launch.

The safety launch crew can decide whether to evacuate the rowers affected immediately or hold until all racing 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 late information issued.

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 winter, the weather could be wet, windy and/or cold and that suitable clothing to wear at the start holding area (or even during the race) should be carried. Competitors and clubs will be made aware that they will 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 or arches of bridges during racing, as advised in the Instructions.

Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.8, 2.7, 3.2

9 Pre-race contact for the competition:

Competition Secretary: Colin Percy
Address: Tyne Amateur Rowing Club
Water Row
Newburn
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 8NL
Mobile: 07985 003304
Email: entries@tynearc.com

Appendix 1

Contact names and phone numbers for the day

[To be completed in week before race day – see Section 5]