



Competitor Information & Safety Plan

Introduction

The Head is operated under the Rules of British Rowing, and the British Rowing Rules of Racing will apply. Please ensure that each coxswain, sculler and crew member takes the time to read and note the safety procedures & race information below that competitors must follow during the Head. The Organising Committee cannot take responsibility for incidents that may occur due to competitors failing to heed this advice. We reserve the right to amend this plan during the event, if circumstances dictate.

- All boats must have secure bow balls, correctly adjusted heel restraints and watertight buoyancy compartments;
- Each coxswain must wear an approved lifejacket / buoyancy aid, and know how to use it. They must not wear wellington style boots;
- Self-inflating lifejackets / buoyancy aids are not allowed in front-loading boats;
- Marshals' inspections will be conducted and omissions may lead to disqualification. The prevention of rowing equipment malfunction is a competitor responsibility.

Trailer Park

The grassy area next to the rowing club car park. This is a public space, so competitors should be aware when moving boats that members of the public unfamiliar with rowing may be nearby. Boats must not be rested on the fence next to the public slip way as this will block access to the river by other river users. Please take appropriate care. Trailer park address is below – get to Waitrose, then keep on going:

St Neots Rowing Club
The Priory
Priory Lane
St Neots
PE19 2PZ

Race Control/Registration

Situated in the clubroom. Collect numbers, advise of scratching or re-schedule race time, crew or race. Crews are reminded that crew or race changes must be agreed with Race Control.

Boating

Boating takes place from the landing stage in front of the clubhouse. The Regatta Field is not available to boat from. St Neots Rowing Club officials will ensure crews are assisted within boating. Please allow at least 25 minutes to reach the start and should row 'light' all the way. We are not able to start the race until all crews are above the start line.

Proceeding to the Start

Crews and scullers wishing to warm up (if boated well ahead of time) may go downstream to the corner (500m from the Club) but then turn and proceed directly upstream to the Start.

Practice outings are strictly prohibited once racing has started.

Note that throughout the head race the river will be used by other vessels such as pleasure craft as such the river navigation rules are unchanged and competitors should keep a lookout for normal river traffic. Crews must row on the right hand side of the river in the direction of travel. Crews must therefore be alert to all river users and ensure they check ahead before they undertake any manoeuvres.

Start Marshalling Area

The Start Marshals are positioned on the bank above the start and will arrange the crews in start order. On arrival at the Start Marshalling area, crews must identify themselves to the Start Marshals, who will advise where to wait/turn prior to their race start.

The Start

Crews/scullers will be sent down to the Start with approximately 30 seconds gap between crews. Longer gaps will be allowed between the slowest fours/fastest doubles and slowest doubles/ fastest singles etc.

Crews are to row past the start and look out for the Start Marshals. They are to row past the Start Marshal 1, then Start Marshal 2 will either direct them further down the river or instruct them to turn and prepare for the start. Crews must not row beyond the safety boat unless explicitly instructed to do so.

Crews/scullers will be given the command to start approximately 30m before the start line. They will then be timed as they cross the start line.

The Course

Main Head 2,600m downstream from the St Neots Campsite to Little Paxton Island.

Mini Head 1,200m downstream from the St Neots Campsite to the upstream end of the St Neots Rowing Club.

A diagram of the course is provided in the Clubhouse.

Overtaking – crews should be aware that overtaking between Coneygeare Bridge and St Neots Marina (the narrowest part of the course for 250m) is not recommended. Elsewhere, the boat being overtaken should maintain an appropriate line to one side or the river to avoid obstructing the faster travelling boat.

The Finish

Main Head

Crews are reminded NOT to come to a stop once over the line they are to gradually slow down until they draw level with the large marker buoy in the centre of the river, they are either to turn around there or further down depending upon the volume of traffic. There is approximately 400m of river between the finish line and the weir, crews/scullers must not go to within 200m of the weir. Crews will be instructed to remain in this area until the last crew/sculler has crossed the finish line, they will then be instructed to return to the club.

Mini Head

Once crews/scullers have passed the finish line they should not come to an abrupt halt but row along to halfway down the Ouse Valley Marina where they will be instructed by the Regatta Field monitor to turn, once they have turned they will then be instructed by the Regatta Field monitor to return to the landing stage.

Safety Boats

Four safety boats will be in use:

- **Safety Boat 1:** Above the Start in the Start Marshalling area (to cover the single/junior scullers who are often out of sight of the start marshals)
- **Safety Boat 2:** Beyond the start; midway between Start and footbridge
- **Safety Boat 3:** At the corner of the wooded area (opposite Priory Centre) in a position to cover the middle portion of the course and to steer any wayward boats back to the correct (right hand) side of the river
- **Safety Boat 4:** Upstream from Crosshall Marina near to St Neots Golf Club.

Safety boats will be in position 45 minutes before the start of each division until all boats have disembarked after the conclusion of the last division.

Bridges

There are two bridges on the course, as shown on the course map. Both are very wide and should not be a hazard, however, to increase safety, race monitors will be on the bridges to warn of potentially dangerous steering into or out of the bridges.

First Aid

A qualified First Aider is available in the Clubhouse. Any junior requiring first aid treatment should be escorted to the First Aider by a responsible adult, who will be expected to remain with the junior throughout his/her stay.

The St Neots Rowing Club Welfare Officer, Rob Offord, who can be contacted via Race Control.

Safety Advisor

Fergie Brazier – contact via Race Control.

Telephone Numbers

St Neots Rowing Club	01480 472302
Emergency: Fire, Police, Ambulance	999
Hinchingbrooke Hospital	01480 416416
Police	01480 456111 / 0845 456 4564
Fire	01480 474601

Telephones are situated in the Clubhouse, on the Market Square and mobile telephones/radios will be available at the Start, Finish and on the safety boats.

Competitors' Responsibility

Competitors are responsible for complying with this Safety Plan.

Whilst we endeavour to provide a safe system at this event, each competitor and competing club also has a duty of care to themselves and others.

Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their boats are safe and prepared to the standards required by the British Rowing Water Safety Code and the British Rowing Rules of Racing.

Competitors are responsible for arranging their own insurance policies (via British Rowing).

Every competitor is expected to be in good health and to be able to swim for a minimum of 50 metres in kit and be familiar with what to do in the event of a capsize.

Every competitor (and the coach or responsible person for any junior) should ensure that they are suitable attired for the event given the weather conditions and the need to be on the water for a significant period of time, which will include marshalling time at the Start and the Finish.

Competitors and coaches should be aware that the marshalling area beyond the Start is narrow and care must be taken to ensure that crews do not get stuck in the reeds due to the possibility of side winds.

Accidents and Emergencies

The majority of the course is visible to race monitors and/or Race Control. Race monitors are equipped with throwing lines and safety boats are positioned on the course and in contact with Race Control.

In the event of capsize crews should stay with their boat until assistance arrives and if possible make for the bank. All capsized crews are to return to the Clubhouse to shower and change into dry kit. The First Aider based at the Clubhouse can give immediate medical aid and are in touch with the Emergency Services.

A British Rowing Incident Report form must be completed for all water-based accidents, collisions or capsizes; forms are available at Race Control. British Rowing Competition Medical Return forms will be completed by First Aid staff for all incidents.

Race Control may suspend (totally or partially) racing should river or weather condition necessitate.

Swimming

Swimming in the river is discouraged. In addition to the risk from water-borne diseases, there is the possibility of underwater obstructions, entanglement by weeds and the presence of glass and other sharp objects on the riverbed.

Training

Due the time restraints between divisions, training paddles are prohibited on the day of the race.

Junior Welfare

Each junior competitor or junior crew shall have a named coach, or appropriate responsible adult, that will be available at the event while junior competitors from their club are at the event. This contact must be authorised by the home club as their representative for the event. The coach(es), who must be over the age of 18, must be named on the Club's Entry Summary Sheet, along with a current mobile telephone number for that person, they should also have emergency contact details for all the Junior members of their club competing in the event with them.

If a substitute coach comes to the Head, he/she must report to Registration and register his/her mobile telephone number. The coach is responsible for the welfare, safety and appropriate supervision of his/her junior crew and is expected to know their whereabouts at all times during the event.

Visiting clubs are expected to have in place child protection policies and procedures that conform to British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

The St Neots Rowing Club Welfare Officer will act as the point of contact for any concerns or allegations. Contact details will be available through Race Control.

Thunderstorm Safety Plan

If the time between hearing thunder and lightning is 30 seconds or less (and that the direction of the thunderstorm passes over the Small Boats Head Course area) then we will react by evacuating all personnel from the river and advising all competitors, coaches and Small Boats Head staff to take shelter. Race Control will make the decision once severity and direction of storm is established.

Co-ordinators responsible for each area will report back to Race Control when their area has been evacuated. (Areas are: Start, Safety Boats, Boating, Race Control, Finish).

Crews on the river should make their way back to the landing stage as quickly as possible but also be prepared to de-boat anywhere on the Small Boats Head course, if advised to do so, depending on the severity of the thunderstorm.

Safe locations for taking shelter are: inside permanent buildings and enclosed vehicles. The Clubhouse is considered to be safe but the balcony will be put out of bounds – doors locked, and people moved from under it.

Unsafe locations are: on the water, in the open, under trees, in small structures (tents and awnings).

Activities won't restart until up to 30 minutes have elapsed since last sight or hearing of lightning/thunder. The Race Committee will make the decision.