

THE SCHOOLS HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE 2011

17 MARCH 2011 - START TIME 13:30

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COACHES, COXSWAINS AND STEERS

And this does mean all of you!

This year's the race is being run as usual from the Long Start at Chiswick Bridge down to Westminster School Boathouse Flagpole Putney starting at 13:30.

Parking in Putney

As in previous years, a one-way system will be in operation at Putney with severely restricted parking. Cars collecting numbers from Ranelagh SC should drive down onto the Embankment by The Dukes Head Pub and depart by the side roads [Glendarvon, Rotherwood, and Festing Roads].

Trailers should be parked as far upriver as possible or in trailer bays on the Boathouse side of the river.

No large buses or coaches will be allowed on the embankment at Putney. The Road is not closed.

All crews must be vigilant when crossing the Embankment road with boats and oars

Crews boating from Putney have received additional instructions.

Numbers

Numbers can be collected from **Ranelagh Sailing Club on the Embankment (See Plan)**. Coaches will be given *three* numbers for their crews *all of which must be used*. It is the crew's responsibility to make sure that their numbers are firmly attached and clearly displayed. **Numbers for crews registered as boating from St.Paul's or Emanuel will be delivered to those boat houses and may be returned there.**

All bibs and Empacher slots must be returned to WSBC, St.Paul's BC or Emanuel boathouse.

- **One** number will be an **Empacher slot number**.
- The **second** will be a paper number, to be pinned to the *coxswain's* back with six fixings.
- The **third** will be a *numbered lycra bib, to be worn by bow on top of his/her racing kit*.

Bibs will be charged for at the full replacement cost of £20 each if they are not returned. They should remain firmly attached to their wearers, so there is no excuse for non-return. If lost, Empacher slot numbers will also be charged for at the replacement cost of £15.

Every Cox must be given a copy of these instructions by a master / coach and a check made by suitable enquiry and, if necessary, simple oral examination that he/she has read and understands them. Other crew members should also read and understand.

They must also have a copy of the Full Course map (Rule 2.2.3), the Start Marshalling map (within the body of these notes) and the Finish Area map (which is the one at the end of these notes).

COXES – MARSHALS AND UMPIRES ON THE BANK MAY ASK YOU QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS AS YOU TAKE YOUR BOATS TO THE RIVER. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THEM.

Before boating, Masters in charge make sure your coxes know how to navigate properly when there is no river closure. Study all the links below for information:

- http://www.pla.co.uk/pdfs/maritime/THE_ROWING_CODE.pdf
- http://www.pla.co.uk/pdfs/maritime/Rowing_Chart_270906.pdf
- http://www.thamesrrc.org/fileadmin/documents/safety_docs/Pocket_guide_colour_A4_spread.pdf

you should watch the online video version of “Coxing on the Thames” available (courtesy of the Womens Head of the River Race) at: <http://www.wehorr.org/video/rowing1.wmv>

This video is very helpful and shows you the best course to adopt in the race.

You should also ensure that your coxes and crews know that:

- That the river closure only closed from 12:45 to 15:15 only and the normal river rules apply before and after. Note that *“Every master of a vessel (of whatever age) is legally responsible for his actions.”*
- Where your marshalling position is (see instructions and plan below)
- How you are going to reach it complying with the navigation requirements before, during and after the river closure.
- That if you are rowing back up river after 17:00 that you have PLA compliant lights available in your boats (and ensure they are used properly)

If you are a Cox and in **any** doubt as to the course you should follow, you **must** ask your coach.

Coxes must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid when afloat.

When afloat, remember that you are on a tidal river. The tide will be running out for about 1½ hours before the race and you must always check that you have enough water under your hull and bank-side blades. This is particularly important as you wait for the start, as the water level will be dropping beneath you, and rocks etc. may lie just below the surface of the water. Beware of the danger of being swept downstream on to **Bridges**. This is particularly important for crews marshalling near Barnes Bridge.

When marshalling you must obey the marshals' instructions at all times. In addition, when you have reached your marshalling position, you must ensure that you do not drift up or downstream with wind and tide. Try to maintain your position relative to the bank. **You may find that this requires almost constant paddling on if the wind and tide are strong and at appropriate points you can be in contact with the bank with one set of blades (say by a bush, tree or other support) and only need to paddle on with one or two persons on the other side. The closer you are to the bank, the less paddling will be required.**

BEFORE BOATING:

Make sure that before you take your boats to the water your blades are close to the point you are going to put the boat on the water but not in the way of where people will walk.

Make sure you have plenty of warm, dry clothing if it is cold, wet or windy.

PROCEEDING TO THE START

Crews are warned to leave their boathouses in good time - allowing 60 minutes to get to the start from Putney and 40 minutes from Hammersmith to allow for congestion of crews on the river.

Crews in Divisions 1 and 3 proceeding to the start from Hammersmith and below should proceed, and stay, on Surrey bank until they reach their marshalling point. Crews in Divisions 2 and 4 should proceed on Surrey bank until they reach the red buoy at Chiswick Pier at which point they should cross to Middlesex and proceed up river to their marshalling points.

NO CREW should cross the river after 13:20 –any crews proceeding upstream from Hammersmith after this time will be instructed to stay on the Surrey bank and will be started at the end of Division4

With 290 crews afloat all are asked to be alert to the needs of other crews at all times. From **13:20** the centre of the river between CHISWICK BRIDGE and PUTNEY BRIDGE must be kept clear for crews racing. **ONLY CREWS RACING AND PROCEEDING TO START UNDER MARSHAL'S ORDERS ARE ALLOWED TO PROCEED DOWNSTREAM (being towards Putney) AFTER 12.50. ANY OTHER CREW DOING SO WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

This means any crew boating upstream of their marshalling position must allow themselves sufficient time when boating to arrive downstream of their marshalling position and turn into the side facing upstream before **13:20**. Any boat attempting to start other than in its correct position without having received instructions from a Marshal will be **disqualified**.

START & MARSHALLING

This will be on time and without reference to absentees. New entries will be started at the rear of each event. There may be a short pause between Divisions at the discretion of the Marshals.

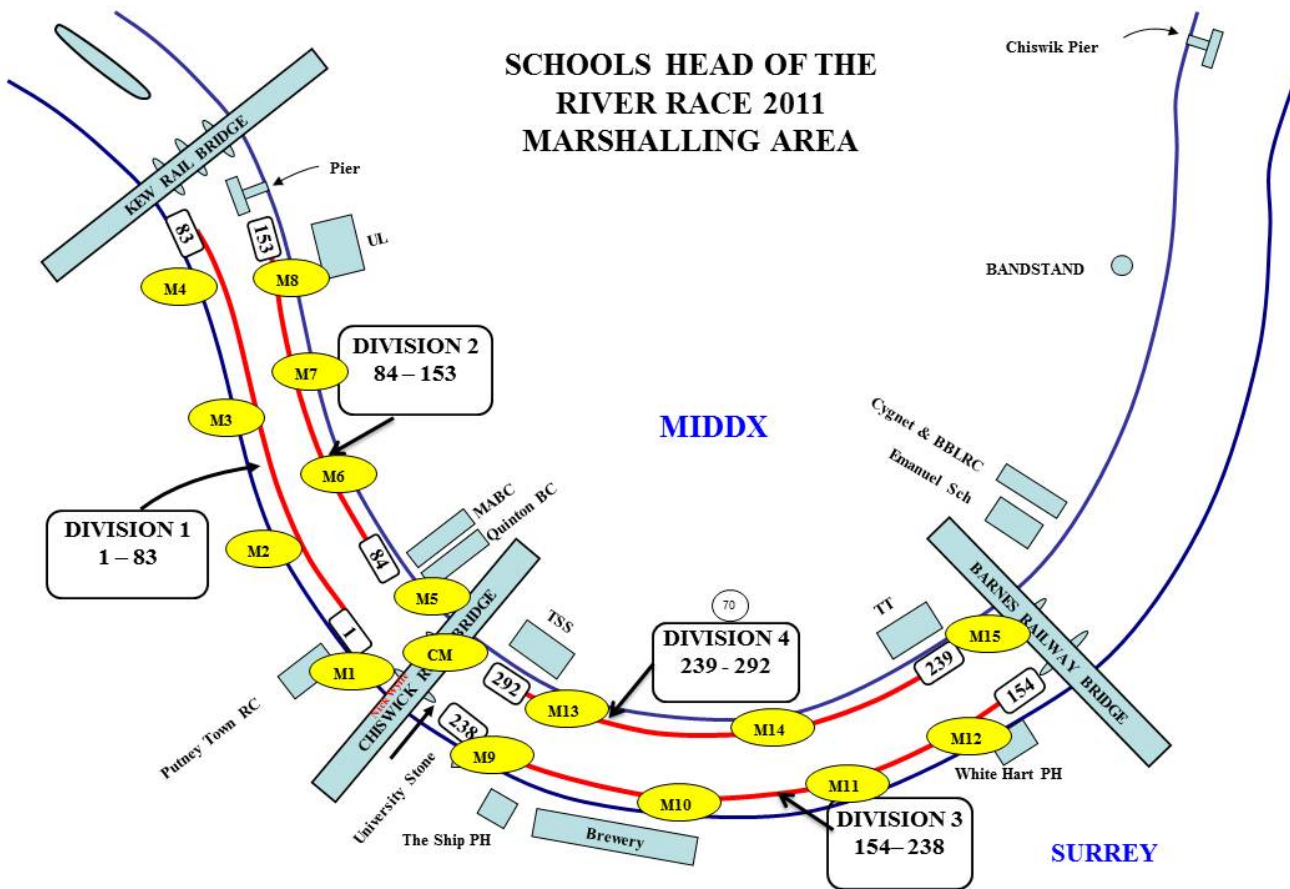
The marshalling arrangements will be new to many competitors. They are adopted as we believe they are safer, they comply with the Tideway Code and, provided everyone does what they are told, should ensure that crews in each boat category start close to each other to ensure fair racing.

Although the instructions may look complicated they are not. Essentially each division (group of crews) marshal with the highest number in the group furthest upstream – this might seem a bit odd to new competitors in Divisions three four and five as, when you are first marshalling you will think you are furthest from the start in your group. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE – so don't try to move up river unless you are told to.

This is because the whole group will be told to move up together so that the crew with the lowest number in each group will be closest to the start when you are told to turn.

Crews will be in the marshalling positions shown on the map at **13:20**. It is imperative that crews in the first two Divisions are in place above Chiswick Bridge at this time. Division one will turn at **13:25**. While marshalling, crews must keep as close to the bank as possible. Boats must maintain their position against the tide and neither allow themselves to become bunched together or allow gaps of more than one length of clear water to open up between them. No crew is to paddle at race or firm pressure in the marshalling area. Once in the marshalling area, crews will be under Marshalls instructions who must be obeyed at all times.

Specific details on how crews should marshal are set out later in these instructions but have a look at the map on the next page first:



This is how it works:

Two important points; when marshalling make sure you do not get too close to the Bridges when you are sitting still – there should be a good clear zone. As you approach the start make sure you leave a gap to the crew in front of you – there is no point bin overlapping, it will slow you down and risk you not being timed.

Now, read all the following not just those instructions relating specifically to your Division.

Division One: Numbers' 1 – 83, Surrey

At **13:25** Marshals will sound sirens for approximately five seconds to signal tops off and ready to turn. Crews must not turn until ordered to do so by the turning Marshals.

On being told to do so Division One will turn under instructions from the marshals in launches who will work up river from Crew No 1 to Crew 83. Crews should not turn until told to do so but when told should turn by moving their bows into the stream and turning towards the middle of the river.

Once turned crews should proceed downstream in numerical order to the Starter at Chiswick Bridge who will start them by saying "Number ... Go!" Timing will begin at the University Stone and not when the Starter says "Go". All crews will have a flying start. Boats are to be closed up until there is

only one length of clear water between them at the start. **On no account are boats to be overlapping when crossing the start line.**

Division Two: Numbers' 84 – 153, Middlesex

Crews will have seen how Division 1 was turned so should know what to do! But just in case – read on.....

Tops off on second siren. The order to turn will not be given until crew 83 (the last crew in Div 1) is proceeding downstream. Then crew 84 will be turned as soon as crew 83 has passed. Again, do not turn until told to by the marshals who will work up river from crew 84 to 153.

Division Three: Numbers' 154-238, Surrey

Once division one has turned, this division will immediately proceed upstream, passing under Chiswick Bridge, to take the place vacated by the now turned Division One (upstream of Chiswick Bridge with 154 nearest the Bridge).

On the third siren this division will tops off and ready to turn. A Marshal will give the instruction to turn and will again work up river from crew 154-238.

Division Four: Numbers' 239-292, Middlesex

Once division two has turned, this division will immediately proceed upstream to take its place (upstream of Chiswick Bridge with 239 nearest the Bridge).

On the fourth siren this division will tops off and ready to turn. A Marshal will give the instruction to turn and work up river from crew 239-292

DURING THE RACE

The River is closed during the race so, contrary to the normal navigation rules, you **are** allowed to follow the deep water line in the middle of the river, which is the fastest course.

If you are being overtaken, you must move out of the way of the overtaking crew leaving them with the best stream, Any crew impeding an overtaking crew will be liable to a time penalty or to disqualification.

There are a number of Marker buoys along the course. They are about a metre tall and are green on the coxes left hand side and red on the coxes right hand side. You must steer to the Surrey (right as the cox views it) side of the green buoys and to the Middlesex (left as the cox views it) side of all the red buoys. **Any crews passing the wrong side of these buoys may well be disqualified.** Anyway – there is no point in going the wrong side of the buoys as it is a much slower route down the course.

Towards the end of the course there is a line of moored boats marked by a very big black and yellow buoy (looks like a big oil drum on it's side). You must pass these boats and buoy at least five metres to the Middlesex side (left as cox sees it).

If a member of your crew falls overboard, you **must stop and help them**. Shout loudly to any crews behind if you do. Following crews must take avoiding action. If help is needed for any reason, the crew should raise an arm and shout to the nearest marshal, safety boat or official to attract attention. All parts of the river are within vision of an official or marshal.

There is a very, very small chance that the race may have to be stopped whilst you are racing. If this happens you will be told by the nearest Marshal who will be very obvious because he will be waving a red flag, sounding an air horn, and shouting at you through a megaphone to **STOP**. If this happens you must stop – checking all around you to check that it is safe to do so and then **listen for instructions**. It is most likely you will be told to move to the side of the river and told to stop awaiting further instructions. As long as it is safe to do so you should get your crew to put tops on as soon as possible and to keep warm.

AT THE FINISH

The finish is marked with a banner on the wall on the Middlesex (left as the cox sees it) side of the river. At the finish, you must keep paddling (for about 10 strokes) to avoid impeding following boats. You should then turn, as instructed by marshals, above Putney Bridge using the route shown on the Finish diagram below.

Under no circumstances should you:

- Cut through the line of moored boats
- Turn so close to Putney Bridge that you might be swept onto the pillars of the Bridge
- Cut into the queue of boats waiting to pass through the gap between Putney Pier and the line of moored boats.

All of the above actions could lead to a serious accident and your disqualification.

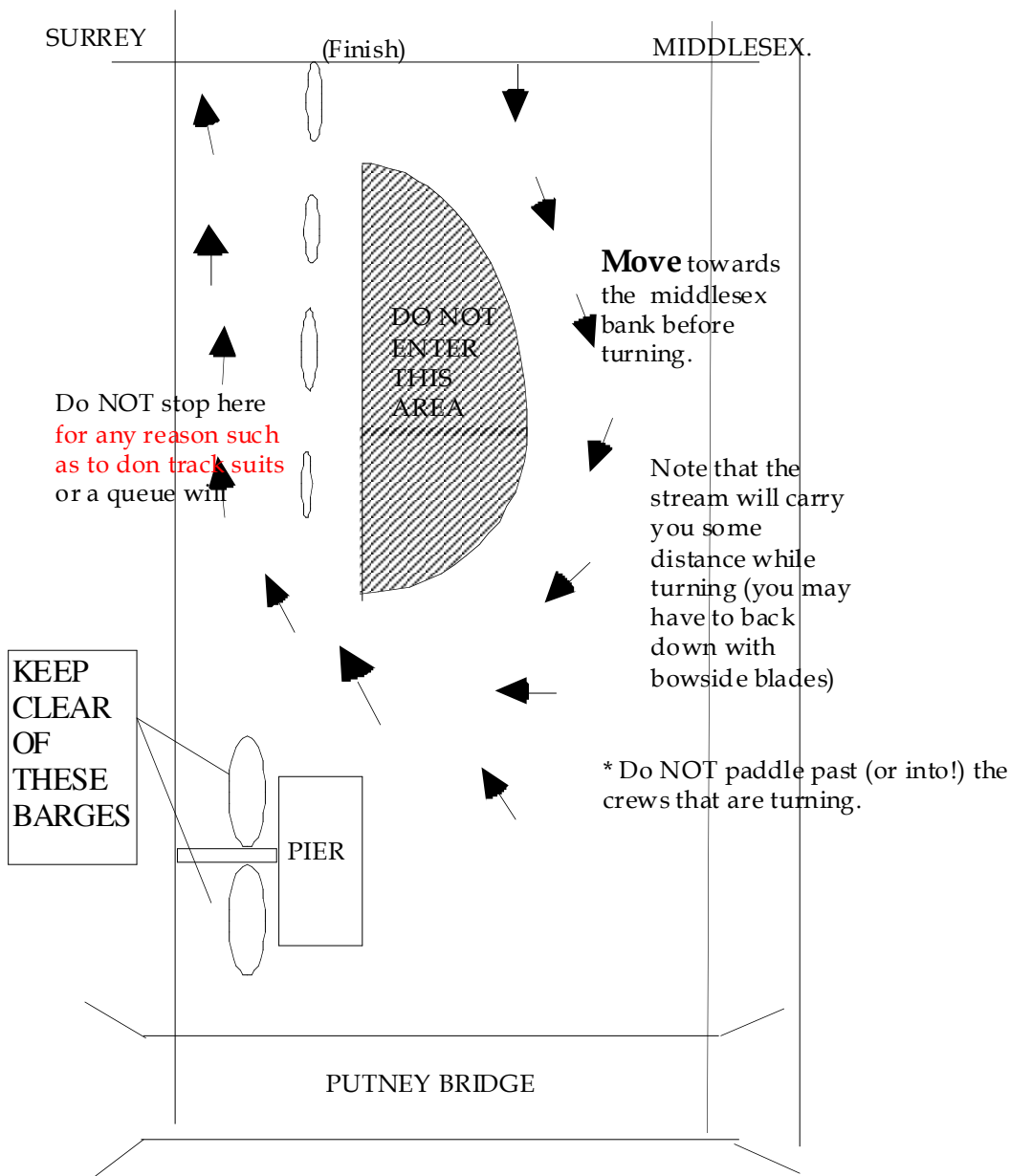
Having turned round you should return upstream on the Surrey (Putney – left as the cox sees it) side of the river passing inside the line of moored boats. Before you reach the moored boats you must keep well into the bank, away from other crews still racing. If you impede a racing crew you will be disqualified.

If you are returning to points above Putney then you should keep close to the Surrey (left as the cox sees it) all the way up, and through, Hammersmith Bridge. You must stay in single file and do not overtake. Do not stop to put tops on until after Barn Elms or when disembarking. (if then you do stop to put tops on move into the bank – preferably into a bay).

Above Hammersmith Bridge crews must stay on the Surrey side of the marker buoys and if wanting to cross to Hammersmith[Middx] should stop and await instructions to cross from the marshal who will be stationed at this point. Crews wanting to cross to Sons / Latymer should move up above St Pauls and await instruction to cross. Crews going further up river should continue upriver on the Surrey bank until you reach the crossing point at Chiswick Pier where you will be told when it is safe to cross.

If it is after 17:00 or the light is failing put your lights on!

LOOK AT THE FINISH AREA BELOW!



If you fail to turn before the pier, you may be instructed, by a marshal, to paddle through the bridge before you turn.

HAVE A GOOD RACE (NOW LOOK AT THE MAPS AND READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS AGAIN!)

Scratched Crews Please email david.riches@westminster.org.uk any scratchings as early as possible or leave voice message on: **0208-780-1876**, or at Ranelagh Sailing club when you collect your numbers.

Results will be e-mailed to schools in the evening after the race and be available in the evening on the Schools' Head site: www.wsb.org.uk/shorr Prizes will be sent out in the following days.

Coaches are reminded that radio communications with crews is strictly forbidden in Tideway races and please to take very great care if cycling on the towpath. Always give right of way to pedestrians.