

COMPETITORS' INSTRUCTIONS 2022 V1.00

Updated 21/11/2022

These notes and instructions, together with the event's [Safety Instructions](#) are designed to help you get the most out of your day with us. Please help us by reading and complying with the following.

Safety

Safety is the priority for all Race Officials. All competitors must read the [Safety Instructions](#).

In accordance with advice from the Environment Agency, all river users need to comply with the [Thames Navigation Licensing and General Byelaws 1993](#).

All boats must be appropriately registered and must display the registration plate issued by the Environment Agency, or other appropriate identification indicating that they are registered through the Environment Agency agreement with British Rowing. Competitors must ensure boats are registered in advance directly with British Rowing. For details, competitors should go to <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/club-support/managing-your-club/ea-boat-registration/>

Coaches and teachers in charge of junior competitors must ensure that they are competent and are aware of safety requirements.

All competitors should note arrangements in the Safety section on stopping or suspending racing, and comply with instructions given by Marshals.

Registration

Registration will be open from 08.00.

On arrival please report to Crew Registration situated under one of the bridge arches. You must bring your British Rowing Racing Licence (points card) to registration - random checks will be performed before crew numbers are issued to you. Please register as early as possible to ease congestion.

Race Numbers

Crews will be issued with 2 large paper numbers and 2 smaller self-adhesive numbers when they register. Large paper numbers must be pinned to the back of the warm-up kit and racing kit of the bowman using safety pins for each corner. If all corners are not pinned securely, the number may fold in half making it difficult to make out and this could lead to no time being recorded. The two self-adhesive numbers should be attached to the forward portion of the saxboard on each side of the boat. If boats are to be used in both divisions, please remove the race number from the previous division.

If race numbers are not visible, no time will be taken or recorded.

Course Map

A PDF version of the Course Map is [available here](#).

Please use the boating times on the [Start Order page](#) and printed on your race numbers

Practice Outings

Practice outings are not permitted. Please refrain from firm pressure in the marshalling area. Crews are not permitted to warm up downstream of Marshalling point G (there is no safety support beyond this point).

Boating

Individual crew boating times will be published with the draw.

	Boating commences (Please check draw for boating time specific to your crew) http://wallingford-head.org.uk/draw/	Start time
Div 1	08:50	10.30
Div 2	12:20	14:00

With such a large entry, adhering to the boating schedule is vital.

Crews which boat late can lead to the race start time being delayed unnecessarily.

The boating order has been set to minimise the amount of time that the majority of crews will be on the water - even so, high numbered boats should expect to be on the water for at least 3 hours for each division. Please take sufficient kit and water with you for this length of outing. Marshals will be on the bank and the rafts to help you boat in a safe and quick manner, please listen to their instructions.

Course

The course is 4,000m upstream from just above the Brunel railway bridge to just prior to OUBC's boathouse, 750m below the rafts.

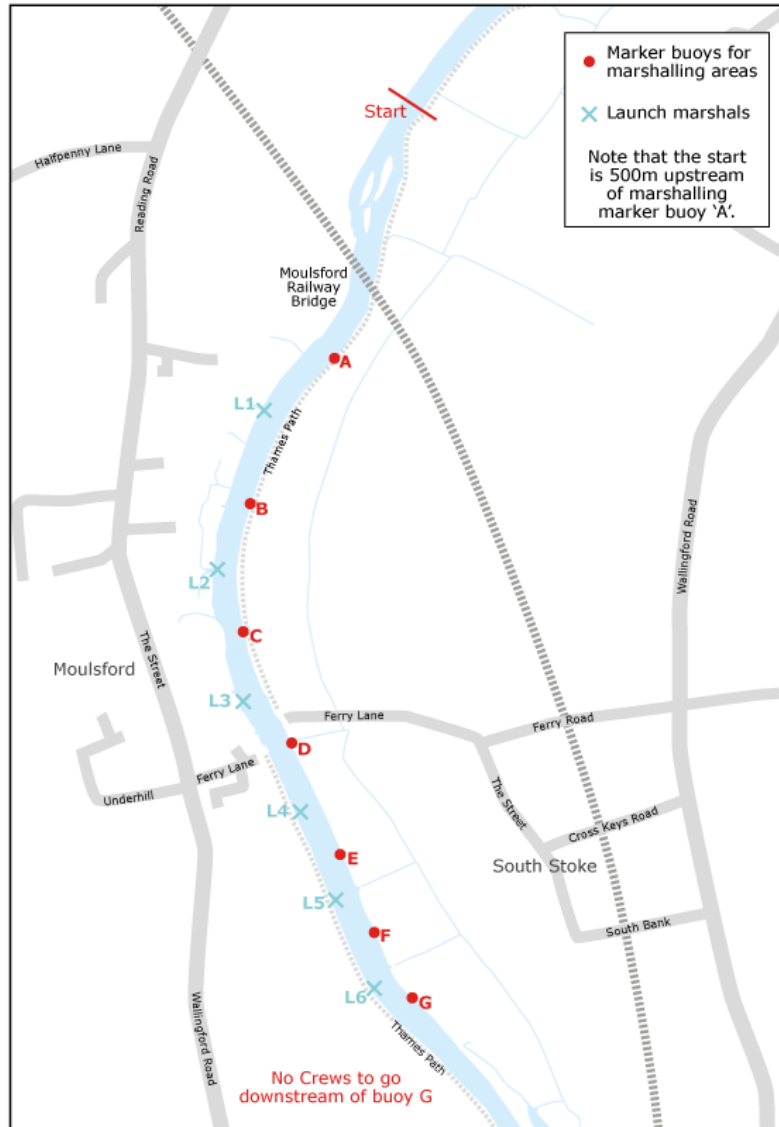
Please note in 2021 the course has been shortened by c. 250m to previous years.

Getting to the start

Normal rules of navigation apply at all times during the event (as laid out in the [Byelaws](#), see above). Proceed downstream with your bow-side blades closest to the bank. The river is not closed to other traffic during the entire event (just during racing): please respect their right to enjoy the river just as much as you do. Perceived hazards (i.e. hidden tree branches beneath surface) along the course will be marked with buoys.

Marshalling Positions

All boats will be marshalled downstream of the Brunel Railway Bridge at the start, use the centre arch of the bridge when travelling downstream. There will be marshals on the bank and afloat to help you find your position. Whilst waiting to start you should turn and point your bows upstream, marshalling in race number order.



DETAILED MARSHALING INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPETITORS

These instructions detail the intended marshalling arrangements for the Wallingford Head. These notes should be studied by all competitors, along with the supplied maps.

There is to be no firm pressure paddling or practice starts once downstream of the start line.

The marshalling area starts downstream of the railway bridge, approximately 500m below the start, and extends for a further 1500m downstream (see attached map). Competitors will be guided downstream by officials on the bank between the start, past the islands and through the railway bridge, and by officials in launches or on the bank below the bridge to help you find your correct location.

Crews are assigned to a start “Group” with each group having a defined marshalling position as follows:

Group	Marshalled between buoys	Launch Marshal	Division 1 Crews	Division 2 Crews
A	A & B	L1	1-15	200-214
B	B & C	L2	16-40	315-239
C	C & D	L3	41-65	240-264
D	D & E	L4	66-95	265-294
E	E & F	L5	96-125	295-324
F	F & G	L5	126-151	325-336

Large buoys showing the letter “A”, “B” etc through to “G” will be deployed against the east bank (see map).

Crews must not go further downstream than buoy “G” as safety cover will not be provided beyond this point.

Crews should assemble facing upstream in numerical order with the first numbered crew in each group alongside the buoy with that group’s letter (i.e. Crew 1 should be alongside buoy “A”). Crews should line up with minimal overlap between consecutively numbered boats. Keep your bows pointing away from the bank if wind is blowing you onto it.

All competitors must be downstream of the railway bridge before the first crews will be allowed to move back up towards the start.

The Chief Marshal will advise when there is approximately 4 minutes to go until the start. At this time **only Group A crews** should remove any extra clothing and strip down to racing kit as required, and ensure they are ready to race. Group A crews will then be instructed by the Chief Marshal to move upstream through the railway bridge and past the islands to the start.

While Group A is moving upstream, Groups B, C, D, E and F will also move upstream in the marshalling area. **Please keep extra kit on at this time in order to keep warm.** As each subsequent group reaches the railway bridge in turn, you will be stopped for two minutes so that you can strip down to racing kit, before proceeding to the start.

Stay focussed throughout please, be quick when you strip off excess clothing and be ready to go at short notice. Be alert at all times. It is likely that you will also have to stop under instruction from bank marshals between the railway bridge and the start. Please keep within three lengths of the crew ahead of you.

Remember, the start is 500m upstream of the railway bridge and upstream of the islands. Do not start racing until you have rounded the corner upstream of the islands and hear the starter say “Number xxx – go”!

Your time will be taken from when you cross the timing line, about 50m (i.e. 5-10 strokes) upstream of the Starter.

Proper Racing Line

Throughout the race you must keep to the correct half of the river for navigational purposes i.e. bow-side blades closest to the bank. At certain corners on the course (marked on the [map](#)), and in the approach to the finish, there are buoys laid mid-river. The hull of your boat must pass to bow-side/right-as-a-cox-would-look-at-it of every buoy. After the finish you must keep paddling at light pressure away from the finish.

Overtaking

Normal Course

The Wallingford stretch may be narrower and more twisting than you are used to. Good steering is essential, as is compliance with the following requirements in order to overtake safely.

If being overtaken, in general you should move over to allow the overtaking boat to follow the faster line by moving to the centre of the river, or, on a bend, moving to the outside of the bend.

On the straight, and on clockwise/right-handed bends, you are required to move to the centre of the river and to leave space between you and the east bank for the faster boat to pass.

On the three bends marked by buoys (see [map](#)) which are anti-clockwise/left-handed bends, you should move to the outside of the bend, i.e. the east bank, to allow the overtaking boat to follow the shorter line. Marshals on the bends (marshal positions 2, 3 and 9) will give appropriate instructions, especially on the approach to these three bends.

If there is a conflict between these rules, and the marshal's instructions, always follow the marshal's. Once you have been overtaken, move back onto the east half of the river. If several boats come together in one overtaking manoeuvre then the following rules apply. If boat 2 is trying to overtake slower boat 1, and simultaneously boat 3 is trying to overtake both, boat 2 should ease off the pressure slightly and remain behind boat 1 in order to allow the faster boat 3 through, and then resume the overtaking manoeuvre on boat 1.

The principle is always that the fastest boat should be given the clearest run up the course. However, the overtaking boat does have a responsibility not to force a slower boat off the course, or into the bank. Marshals will give instructions to help overtaking, but safety is their first priority, and you may be stopped from overtaking, especially in the S-bends.

After you cross the finish line

After you have crossed the finish line please continue to paddle on beyond Wallingford Rowing Club so you do not hinder crews following you.

Please do not row through the bridge but following race marshals and return to the boating rafts.

Crews returning to OUBC or Oxford Brookes BC must paddle up to Wallingford RC before turning, and should not obstruct any racing crew. There will be buoys in place between Brookes and the finish to enable a return navigation channel. Crews returning to OUBC and Brookes should land bows downstream.

Time penalties

You may be given time penalties for failing to comply with marshal's instructions, for being late at the start, for each and every buoy passed on the wrong side, for failing to give way to a faster overtaking boat and/or for any use of language or gestures likely to bring the sport into disrepute. Remember that this event is held in a public place and that there will be spectators who have no connection with rowing. We expect the highest standards of sportsmanship from each and every one of you. Individual penalties will be added together, but the size of any penalty awarded will not be disclosed. In extreme cases, disqualification may be a more appropriate penalty.

Results and prizegiving

Provisional results will be made available at <https://wallingford-head.org.uk/category/results/> within 60 minutes from the last crew has crossing the finish line; live provisional results shall also be made available via links on our twitter feed on the day.

Results will be posted on the event's website on the evening of the event.

Prizes will be presented in the boating area, next to the catering tent, after the second division results have been published.