



## YORKSHIRE ROWING COUNCIL YORKSHIRE HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE

# SAFETY PLAN 2008

This plan is made available to all participating clubs and is also on display in the York City boathouse

### 1. The Course

The course is identified on the attached plan and is 5.1 kilometers long finishing at Lendal Bridge; the start is upriver. Prior to the commencement of the event the course is inspected for debris or submerged hazards, it is then cleared or buoyed off. The Start Marshals notify the nearest launch of any debris coming onto the course during the start marshaling procedures to have it cleared away.

### 2. DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR INCLEMENT CONDITIONS

In view of the fact that the event takes place during the early spring when there is a chance of floods and poor weather in the area, the organisers have developed a system for monitoring these conditions for the overall benefit and safety of the competitors.

a) FLOODS - The organisers are in communication with the local Environment Agency who operate a monitoring system for the river Ouse and its tributaries. They are able to advise and predict the height of the river along the course for the day and duration of the race.

Colleagues in York with local river knowledge, rowing experience and a good understanding of the event, besides the Leeds Meteorological Office for weather prediction, are also consulted before the organisers decide on the considered appropriate action which will be taken by 6.00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the race :-

- i) Run the event in full.
- ii) Cancellation of specific categories, e.g. Juniors, Novices
- iii) Cancellation of a Division
- iv) Cancellation of the whole event

b) INCLEMENT WEATHER - Local weather forecasts are consulted in the days leading up to the event to ascertain any need to advise competitors of potential difficulties. If icy conditions are underfoot, salt/sand is placed to prevent slips.

#### c) ELECTRICAL STORMS (Lightning)

The organisers will monitor the forecasts and current weather conditions for electrical activity and either cancel the event or notify the competitors of the possibility of a thunderstorm. If thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a flash of lightning, the organisers will assess the risk with a view to stopping the event. Restarting the event will be after thirty minutes from the last clap of thunder. The umpires instructions give clear guidance for the procedures to be adopted if a thunderstorm is in the vicinity.

c) MECHANISM OF COMMUNICATION - Entrants will be advised in the most practical timescale of any adjustments or cancellations. These will take the form of :-

- i) Advising of potential problems when confirming entries and requesting competitors to phone a given number during the Friday evening prior to the race.
- ii) Contacting entrants individually by phone prior to the race.
- iii) In extreme cases of sudden difficulty, withholding racing numbers of affected crews, thereby preventing embarkation.

### 3. RULES APPLYING TO THIS EVENT

- i) The event is run under the ARA Rules of racing.
- ii) Local rules are written up as Race instructions and given to every crew on collection of their number.
- iii) Fosse and Ouse Bye Laws. These apply only in a general way and are not published for the competitors.

iv) The ARA Water Safety Code is used as a basis for this plan.

#### **4. COMMUNICATIONS**

a) **MOBILE RADIOS** - Communication between marshals, umpires, safety launches, start finish and control is by specifically tuned radios. Up to twenty five radios are available to cover the event and their positioning is as shown on the Safety Plan map together with those in the four safety launches which patrol the length of the course.

b) A **CO-ORDINATOR** is appointed to overhear all communications and is the person responsible for co-ordinating any action which needs to be taken in the event of accident or emergency. When conditions limit the distance for communication such that the co-ordinator cannot contact all stations then s/he will instruct one of the stations to act as a relay.

#### **c) TELEPHONES**

- i) The Secretary has the use of a mobile telephone which can be used to contact or for contacting emergency services in the event of emergency Mobile Number 0374 781004
- ii) York City Rowing Club has a public telephone situated outside the bar Number 01904 623959
- iii) Public telephone box on main road near Maddies Landing
- iv) RAC /emergency telephone at Bye Pass Bridge

#### **d) OTHER TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- i) **EMERGENCY** - 999  
WATER RESCUE UNIT launched from King's Staith, York - 999
- ii) Ambulance Headquarters - 01904 666000
- iii) Fire Brigade Headquarters-01904 625272 (not at weekends) 01609 780150 (non emergency)
- iv) Police Headquarters, Fulford Road, York YO1 4BY. - 0845 60 60 24 7 Fax 01904 669313
- v) York District Hospital, Wiggington Road, York, YO3 7HE. - 01904 631313
- vi) The Head Secretary, S. Ward - 01274 567478, Mobile 07966 240509
- vii) The Regional Safety Advisor, Allan Clarke 01937 834212 Mobile 07849 521645

#### **5. MEDICAL AND FIRST AID**

- i) **MEDICAL OFFICER** - The medical officer in attendance at the event is Dr Jamie Macleod who will be available between York City Rowing Club and Scarborough Bridge and will be in radio communication.
- ii) **FIRST AID COVER** - First aid cover will be provided by The British Red Cross who will be situated in York City Rowing Club, s gym and within easy reach of the event Control Center and at the Start marshalling area. Both teams will have radio communication with the Control Center.
- iii) **HOSPITAL** - All accident and emergencies are taken to York District Hospital, Wiggington Road, York.
- iv) A warm zone at the York City boathouse is available for those suffering from the cold, hot showers in both changing rooms and hot drinks are served in the gym most of the day.

#### **6. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**

IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT THE APPOINTED CO-ORDINATOR WHO WILL BE SITUATED AT YORK CITY ROWING CLUB (THE CONTROL POINT) WILL RECEIVE ALL REQUESTS FOR AND MAKE THE DECISIONS AS TO THE LEVEL OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE REQUIRED i.e. USE OF SAFETY LAUNCHES, NEED FOR BRITISH RED CROSS, NEED FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES. THE CO-ORDINATOR WILL HAVE RADIO AND MOBILE TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION.

i) **ACCIDENTS ON THE WATER** - In the event of competitors being injured, capsizing or becoming ill whilst rowing the quickest way of rescue and access to emergency service is by safety launch. Although there are several access points from the main road ( A19 ) safety launches can transport competitors to meet either the stand-by ambulance or the emergency services ambulance at the following points :-

- i) St. Peter's School landing Stage.
- ii) St. Johns B.C. landing Stage
- iii) York City R.C. Landing Stage
- iv) Rawcliffe Landings at the start

There are two location between St Peters landing and the start where access is available to the river on foot and only a short distance from the road, if necessary these locations will be used to aid any crews or safety launches.

They are :- Maddies Landing (access at A19 Clifton without allotments) and Waterworks Bend.

ii) ACCIDENTS ON LAND - Competitors and supporters congregate around the landing stage areas at St. Peters School, Leeds University B.C., St. Johns B.C. and the esplanades between Lendal and Scarborough bridges besides York City Rowing Club where the control, administration, results, prize giving, food and drink is situated. At all these points there is radio communication to summon help either from the British Red Cross or the Emergency Services through the Co-ordinator.

iii) SAFETY LAUNCHES - There are six safety launches each with two crew. All crew wear life jackets and distinctive yellow tops. Their responsibility is :-

- a) To patrol the river whilst competitors are making their way to the start. This includes the marshaling area where congestion can cause accidents.
- b) To ensure that the course is clear for the races to proceed.
- c) To be positioned along the course between land observation and where quick response can be made to any part of the course.
- d) To warn officials and crews of any dangers whilst the race is in progress e.g. commercial or private boats/launches refusing to wait until racing is finished before traveling on the course.
- e) To sweep the course at the end of each division to ensure all competitors have completed safely.

Each safety launch carries an ARA Launch Rescue Kit containing a lifejacket, throwbag, thermal blankets, knife, whistle and first aid kit. A loudhailer is also provided for each crew.

The crews of the launches have in most part previous experience or a qualification in launch control, an appointed safety launch co-ordinator holds a briefing meeting about procedures etc. before embarkation.

## **7. START AND FINISH**

- i) START MARSHALS - Start marshals are co-ordinated by a chief marshal who briefs them on procedures. Part of these procedures is to act as safety lookouts to avoid collisions and arrange the crews in a safe position close to the bank facing upstream awaiting the signal to turn. One marshal is positioned approx. every 40 metres. Loudhalers provided.
- ii) FINISH MARSHALS - The finish marshals ensure that crews continue to proceed downstream past Lendal Bridge without stopping to reduce any hazard to those still racing. They also ensure crews proceed downstream following the flow pattern for turning and returning to the landing stages. Loudhalers provided.
- iii) SAFETY MARSHALS - The safety marshals continue the work of the finish marshals by ensuring that returning crews do not present a hazard to those still racing. This is particularly important at the Scarborough Bridge bend. Loudhalers provided.

## **8. RACE MONITORS**

Race Monitors are positioned along the course so that between them, they can observe the course in its entirety, certain positions along the river have the monitors in boats (not safety launches) special instructions are issued to these boats on safety protocols as they are not stable (tin fish) to extract any crew from the water. They are provided with megaphones and radios to give instructions to crews to avert collisions and to summon rescue if necessary. The role of Race Monitor will, where possible, be undertaken by a Registered Umpire. The positioning of Monitors is indicated on the plan of the course.

## **9. RACE CONTROLLER**

A Race Controller is situated at Maddies Landing with radio communication. The Controller has contact with the Chief Start Marshall, all the Race Monitors, the safety launches and the Control Centre at York City Rowing Club. The duties of the Race Controller are to instruct the starter when it is safe to start the race, summon safety launches in the event of an accident, halt racing if a situation demands it and through the control center summon emergency services.

## **CLUBS' AND COMPETITORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) **EQUIPMENT** - All clubs **MUST** ensure that the equipment being used by its members is safe. This is not only for events, but at all times for training or recreation. To address this issue at the Yorkshire Head of the River the following procedures will be in place :-
  - i) Marshals will be making random checks on boats looking in particular at :-
    - a) Heel release mechanisms, bow balls, buoyancy compartments/canvasses, rudder lines and the general security of fixings.
    - b) Stage marshals who will be helping crews onto the water will also be giving visual checks.
    - c) Any boat that is unsafe will not be allowed to race.
  - ii) **ABILITY TO SWIM** - Clubs must ensure that its rowing members are able to swim at least 50 metres clothed as part of its procedure for election.
  - iii) **CAPSIZE PROCEDURE** - As part of its safety training clubs should advise its rowing members to hold on to the boat in the event of a capsize where it is safe to do so and await assistance.
  - iii) **COXSWAINS** - Clubs must be aware that it is highly irresponsible to place an inexperienced coxswain with a crew of inexperienced novices. This can lead to dangerous situations not only for the crew, but also other competitors.
  - iv) **CLOTHING** - Clubs must ensure that their members (particularly Juniors) are suitably dressed for the wet and cold conditions that can be encountered at the time of the Yorkshire Head. Marshals and Monitors are instructed to assess JUNIOR crews going upstream and if necessary, depending on conditions turn back those who may be at risk from the conditions, because of inadequate clothing protection, particularly from waiting at the start.
2. Clubs must also ensure that all coxswains :-
  - i) Are suitably dressed for the cold/wet conditions that can prevail at the time of the Yorkshire Head.
  - ii) Wear (and know how to operate) a lifejacket conforming to BS3595 on top of their clothing.
  - iii) Are conversant with the safety procedures, instructions to competitors and potential hazards on the course.
  - iv) Attend the Coxains and Scullers meeting
3. **KNOWLEDGE OF THE INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPETITORS, SAFETY PROCEDURES AND POTENTIAL HAZARDS** - It is not only the coxswain who must be conversant with the above. The whole crew must be aware of the instructions etc. and be prepared to put them into practice.
4. **CONSIDERATION OF OTHER COMPETITORS** - Dangerous situations, damage to equipment and injuries can occur through thoughtless acts. Every year there are several complaints about a crews chances of winning being ruined when other competitors have deliberately not given way the racing line, barked, steered across etc. There have also been examples of crews having finished the race and when returning to the landing stages have impeded racing crews through ineptness and lack of concern for others. There are however instances each year when dangerous situations have been avoided through warnings being shouted by competitors to other crews, particularly in coxless craft.
5. **CONSIDERATION TO OTHER PEOPLE** – When handling boats to/from the trailer care must be taken to ensure passersby are not injured, the cox or responsible person should give instruction to the handlers so as to avoid any accidents. Keep walkways and cycle paths clear where possible.
6. **IF AN ACCIDENT OCCURS** - Competitors can help in the case where an accident occurs by :-
  - i) Continuing down the course and informing a safety launch or marshal who will have radio contact.
  - ii) Stopping to give assistance where there is someone in difficulty in the water, unconscious, or in danger of being run down by oncoming crews. It is a difficult decision to stop racing, but the priority of us all is the safety and well being of our fellow rowers and scullers.
  - iii) Being aware that the emergency services have easier access to the “Minster“ bank via the A19 and where possible make for that bank.