

The Head of the River Fours: Saturday, 3 November 2018 at 12.00pm

Instructions for Crews

NEW FOR 2018

Crews should note that they are required to properly dispose of all rubbish, including taking this home with them if appropriate facilities are not readily available. Instructions of Officials must be followed in this regard.

PROCEEDING TO THE START

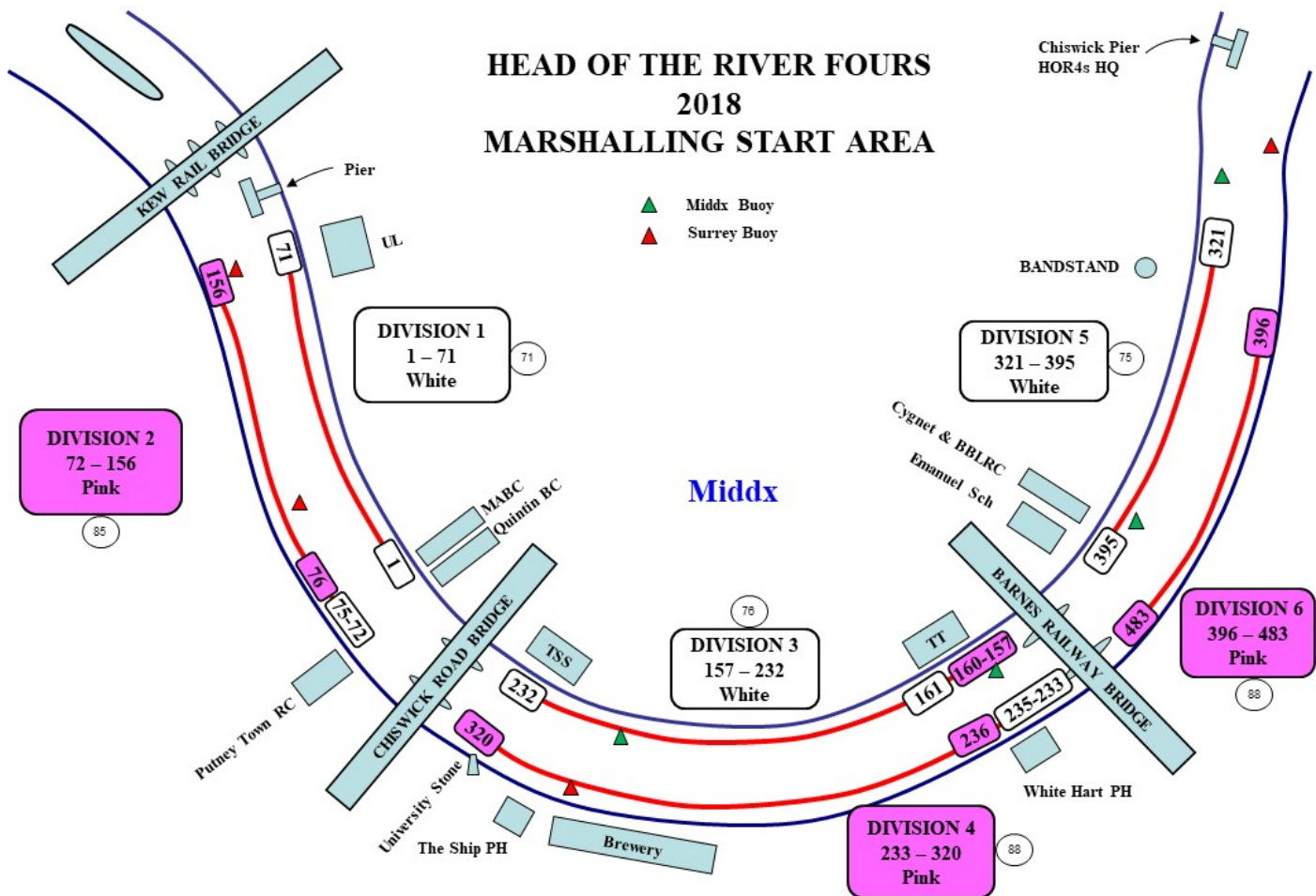
Crews are strongly advised to leave their boathouses in good time – allow 60 minutes to get to the start from Putney and 40 minutes from Hammersmith to take account of the large number of crews on the river. With over 400 crews afloat, all are asked to be alert to the needs of other crews at all times.

From **11:55** the centre of the river between CHISWICK BRIDGE and PUTNEY BRIDGE must be kept clear for crews racing. **ONLY CREWS RACING AND PROCEEDING TO THE START UNDER MARSHAL'S ORDERS ARE ALLOWED TO PROCEED DOWNSTREAM AFTER 12:00. ANY OTHER CREW DOING SO MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.** This means that any crew boating upstream of their marshalling position must allow themselves sufficient time to arrive downstream of their marshalling position and turn into the side facing upstream before **11:45**. Any boat attempting to start other than in its correct position without having received instructions from a Marshal may be **disqualified**.

MARSHALLING INSTRUCTIONS

- Crews must be in the marshalling positions shown on the map below at **11:45 (15 minutes before the start)**.
- Crews in the first two divisions **MUST** be in place above Chiswick Bridge at this time.
- 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 Marshals instructions which must be obeyed at all times.

There are 6 divisions – 3 on Middlesex (White) and 3 on Surrey (Pink).



THE START

This will be on time and without reference to absentees. There may be a short pause between Divisions at the discretion of the Chief Marshal. Time gaps will also be included between events, and the first boat in each event should not turn until express instructions are given by the Marshals.

On being told to turn each division will do so and proceed downstream in numerical order to the Starter in a launch moored to the Surrey buttress of 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 One: Numbers' 1 – 71, Middlesex (White)

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. Crews must not turn until ordered to do so by the turning Marshals.

Division Two: Numbers' 72 – 156, Surrey (Pink)

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. The Marshals will give the instructions to turn.

Division Three: Numbers' 157 – 232, Middlesex (White)

Will be marshalled with crew 232 nearest Chiswick Bridge.

Once Division One has turned, this division will immediately proceed upstream to take its place (upstream of Chiswick Bridge, with crew 157 nearest the bridge).

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. The Marshals will give the instructions to turn.

Division Four: Numbers' 233 – 320, Surrey (Pink)

Will be marshalled with crew 320 nearest Chiswick Bridge.

Once Division Two has turned, this division will immediately proceed upstream to take its place (upstream of Chiswick Bridge with crew 233 nearest the bridge).

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. The Marshals will give the instructions to turn.

Division Five: Numbers' 321 – 395, Middlesex (White)

Will be marshalled with crew 395 nearest Barnes Bridge.

Once Division Three has moved above Chiswick Bridge), this division will immediately proceed upstream to take its place between Chiswick Bridge and Barnes Bridge. Once Division Three has turned then this division will move into its place above Chiswick Bridge with crew 321 nearest the bridge.

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. The Marshals will give the instructions to turn.

Division Six: Numbers' 396 – 483, Surrey (Pink)

Will be marshalled with crew 483 nearest Barnes Bridge.

Once Division Four has moved above Chiswick Bridge, this division will immediately proceed upstream to take its place between Chiswick Bridge and Barnes Bridge.

Once Division Four has turned, then this division will into its place above Chiswick Bridge with crew 396 nearest the bridge.

On the Marshals' instructions this division will take tops off and get ready to turn. The Marshals will give the instructions to turn.

Note:

Crews that are late to the start, and are therefore not started with the rest of the crews in their event, may be liable to incur a time penalty.

DURING THE RACE

The Racing Course is defined by the Fairway as explained in The Tideway Code (i.e. the zone to the centre of the river between the large red and green navigation buoys).

Overtaking: ALL crews have a responsibility to avoid a collision whether they are overtaking or being overtaken and may be penalised or disqualified if judged to have contributed to a collision.

Crews which are being overtaken:

- Should maintain their course. They may give way to a faster crew if they can do so safely.
- MUST NOT alter course to impede an overtaking crew.
- Should make their cox aware of any overtaking crew, particularly if they are in a bow-coxed boat.

Crews which are overtaking:

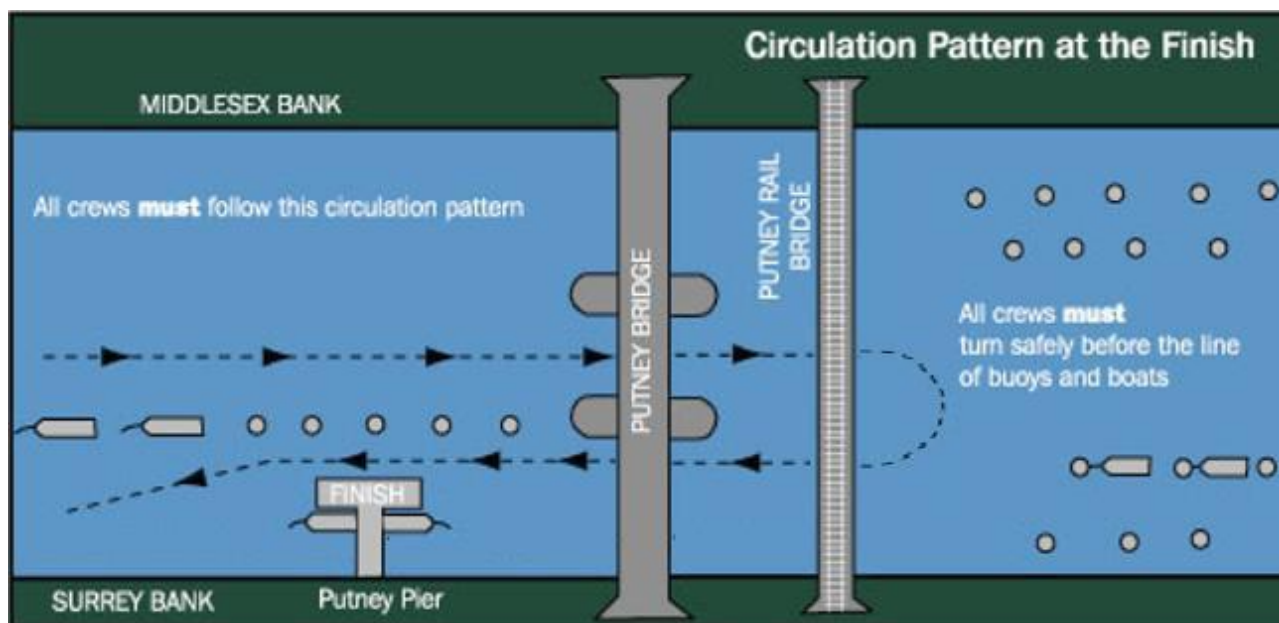
- Should establish their intended overtaking line as early and as clearly as possible.
- Should not expect slower crews to give way although such crews may do so. Note: this rule is different from most head races where the slower crew must give way. This is because of the mixture of boat types (including bow-loaders) within the HOR4s.

Umpires and Observers will be posted along the course.

Racing crews must pass through the centre arches of Chiswick, Barnes Rail, Hammersmith and Putney Bridges. To ensure a finish time is recorded and to avoid disqualification all crews must pass between the Middlesex side of the moored boats at Putney and the finish boat. **As you approach the finish please be aware of the line of buoys separating you from returning crews** (see map below).

THE FINISH

After crossing the finish line all crews must proceed through Putney Bridge and Fulham Rail Bridge before turning. This is a most important safety requirement and failure to comply will result in disqualification.



Due to the ongoing Tideway Tunnel works, the arch of Putney Bridge closest to the Surrey shore (arch number 5) is closed for approximately five years. Therefore, crews will be required to return through the next arch (number 4), and pass in front of Putney Pier. The route behind the Pier will not be available for use. It is absolutely imperative that all crews obey the instructions of the marshals in the finish area.

In the event of significant congestion in the finish area, it is possible that some crews will be requested to turn on to the **Middlesex** bank, and queue along the Fulham Wall until they can safely cross to Surrey. Crews should be prepared for this possibility, and follow the instructions of marshals accordingly.

ABANDONMENT PLAN

In case the race has to be abandoned at any time while crews are marshalling or racing the following procedure will apply and be strictly adhered to:

Crews, on hearing continuous short blasts on air horns and/or seeing marshals waving red flags will immediately STOP. They will wait to be instructed on how and where to proceed by a Marshal. Crews must maintain a sharp lookout for other crews in the vicinity who may not have heard or seen the warnings and are continuing with marshalling or racing. If necessary they must move to avoid any collision with such a crew.

Marshals will wait for instructions from the Chief Marshal, who will be in constant communication with the Race Safety Advisor, and once the cause and location of the problem has been determined, will proceed to put the abandonment plan into operation.

Depending on where crews have boated, whether or not the race has started and the number of crews still being marshalled, crews may be asked to either paddle lightly downstream under the direction of the Marshals (if they have boated from downstream of the marshalling area), or turn on to one of the banks and wait to be sent upstream (if they boated from one of the clubs at or above Chiswick Bridge).

A crew may be asked to proceed downstream of all marshalling crews before turning on to one of the

banks.

RETURNING CREWS

Crews returning to their boathouses must not impede racing crews and must accordingly give way to these crews. **Returning crews MUST NOT overtake crews still marshalling in order to return to their boathouses.** Penalties or disqualification will be awarded to crews that do. Crews returning to Hammersmith must await the direction of a Marshal stationed on the Surrey side above Hammersmith Bridge before crossing the river to the club houses on the Middlesex side. Crews returning to boathouses above Hammersmith Pier must await the instruction of the Marshal by St Paul's Boathouse before crossing.

All crews returning to Barnes, Mortlake, Chiswick and Kew (including those returning to Putney Town RC) must paddle up the Surrey side to opposite Chiswick Pier where they must await the direction of a Marshal before crossing to the Middlesex side. They must then paddle up the Middlesex side keeping well clear of crews racing **and behind the last crew marshalling in Division Five.** Crews returning to Putney Town RC should await the instruction of a Marshal and only return to Surrey at the normal crossing point by The Ship pub below Chiswick Bridge.

Crews may cross the river only at the designated zones and under the direction of a marshal. When crossing, crews should prepare to cross in the quickest route possible i.e. perpendicular across the river (not a diagonal) and with all crew members rowing sharp half pressure.

Races with late start times: Crews returning upriver after the end of the race must ensure that their boat is fitted with lights. This is particularly important for crews returning to clubs at Barnes Bridge or Chiswick Bridge and beyond, and for crews starting later in the race. Check lighting up time, but lights may be needed earlier if the visibility is poor.

EQUIPMENT

It is your responsibility to ensure your equipment fully meets the minimum standards as specified in the BR Row Safe document and is in full working order. Control Commission inspections on returning crews will operate from the hard by Chas Newens Marine, just above Putney Pier. This hard is for inspections only and **no crew will be allowed to disembark from this hard.** Crews failing to stop for inspection when requested to do so may be disqualified. The Umpire will decide appropriate penalties for crews failing to comply with Row Safe; these will include disqualification for serious breaches. **The British Rowing Boat Identification Code will be strongly enforced.** This is also a Port of London Authority requirement and they will be in evidence during the race. Participating boats without identification will incur a time penalty.

All boats, including those from overseas, must display a **standard six digit boat identification code.** Those who do not may be subject to a time penalty. Further details can be obtained from [British Rowing](#).

RIVER CLOSURE

The river closure starts at **11:00** and covers the stretch of river between Putney Railway Bridge and Brentford Dock. The river reopens progressively from Chiswick as the last crew proceeds down the course and is completely reopen when the last crew crosses the finishing line. Outside these times and areas the normal rules of navigation should be followed.

NUMBERS

Your Empacher number plate must be fixed to the boat with the screw provided. The paper numbers must be securely fastened at each of the four corners to the back of bow and the cox (if in a stern-loader) so as to be visible when the crew is racing and marshalling.

All numbers will be delivered to the host club declared for each crew on BROE2. Numbers may be **returned** via your host club by agreement, but it is the responsibility of visiting clubs to make these arrangements with their hosts. Numbers may also be returned to 103 Brookwood Avenue, Barnes, SW13 0LU on race day or within seven days of the event. **Responsibility for returning numbers rests with each competing crew.** Empacher number plates that are not returned to the secretary undamaged within seven days of the race or are lost or damaged by whatever means will be charged at the rate of £30 per plate to the club.

ADVICE FOR STEERS AND COXES

Obey marshals and umpires: The Marshals/Umpires are all experienced Tideway people and are there to assist you and ensure the safe and fair running of the race. Please obey their instructions at all times, although this does not exempt you from being responsible for the safe navigation of your boat. If you are unsure where you should be during marshalling, do ask a marshal.

How the Tideway is different from non-tidal rivers: Because the Tideway is tidal, your boat is not stationary when you are eased. It could be moving at 3-4mph astern or ahead.

- If you are turning, do so promptly.
- Do not turn above (up stream of) an obstruction like a bridge, moored boat, island, buoy etc. unless you can complete the manoeuvre before being swept onto the obstruction by the stream.
Remember that the stream direction on the Tideway changes depending on whether the tide is coming in or going out.
- When eased, remember that if you are not parallel with the bank you are likely to be swept about by the stream. As the tide falls the river becomes much shallower and shoals appear particularly towards the sides.

Turning to start your race: When your Division is ordered to turn, use the blades nearest the bank to row on with long strokes until the bows of the boat are in the centre of the river. Then complete your turn on the spot.

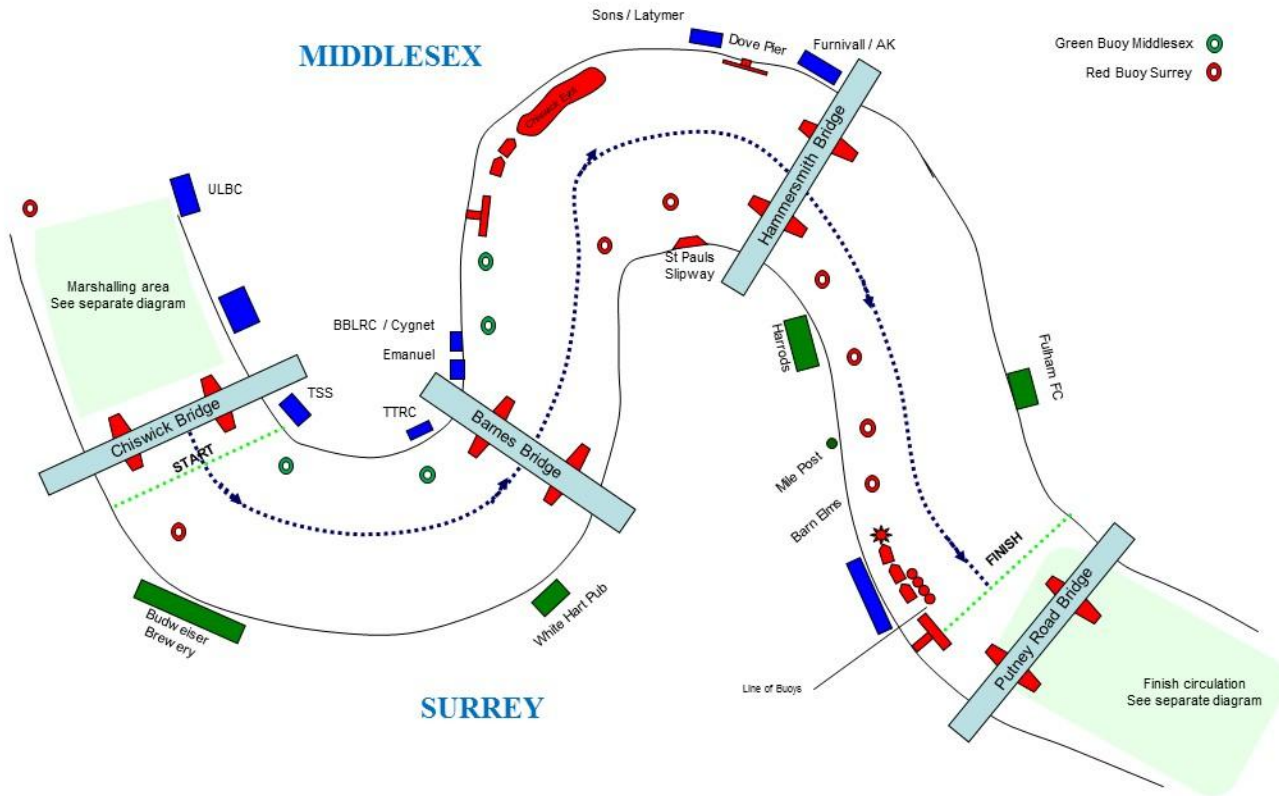
Finding the best racing line: If you are unsure of your best course at any point, it is as well to remember you will lose only a small amount of time if you are in the middle of the river but not quite in the stream. You will lose large amounts of time if you get in the slack water at the side.

BUOYS ON THE COURSE

There are large navigation buoys on the course, green on Middlesex and red on Surrey. Every year there are incidents where crews have hit one or several of these buoys. **Crews are reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain a proper look-out.** Crews are also reminded that as the tide flows out and river becomes lower, the buoys will shift position slightly. Thus the position of a buoy on the way to the start may differ when the crew is racing later. When racing, crews **must** pass on the outside of these buoys i.e. **not** between the buoy and the shore.

HEAD OF THE RIVER FOURS

BUOY DIAGRAM - not to scale



NAVIGATION AND SAFETY RULES

During the river closure crews should be in the middle of the river when travelling with the tide and as near the bank as conditions allow when travelling against the tide.

Outside the river closure follow the instructions at: <http://www.boatingonthames.co.uk/Rowing>
This applies to both Tideway and non-tideway crews.

All steers and coxes must be familiar with the Rowing Code of Practice for the Tidal Thames between Putney and Richmond before boating at any time. This can be found on the link above.

Incidents whilst boating on the tideway either during the race or otherwise should be reported to the Regional Rowing Council using the appropriate reporting system.
<http://www.thames-rrc.org/index.php/safety/incident-reporting>

SAFETY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL

A CREW THAT IS UNAWARE OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS OR SIMPLY IGNORES THEM IS A DANGER TO ITSELF AND ALL OTHER CREWS.

Responsibility and Competence

All crews must comply with the regulations laid down in the British Rowing Rules of Racing & The Water Safety Code and adhere to the standards set out in British Rowing Guide to Good Practice in Rowing.

All Coxes and Steers should read and understand these. All Coxes and Steers should be familiar with the contents of the Video "Coxing a Tideway Head" at <https://youtu.be/RSI8XiXfpng>.

Rowing on the Thames – PLA Code of Practice

Navigation rules for rowing boats on the river Thames are not consistent along its length. The current arrangement on the Tideway allows rowers to “work the slacks” to minimise some of the hazards of rowing on what can be a fast flowing tidal river, with bridges, moorings and sandbanks.

Those of you who are both familiar with the Tideway, or are new/visiting are required to familiarise yourselves with the current arrangements.

Remember normal navigation rules apply before river closure and after the last crew has finished.

Crews are required to have read the PLA Navigation Rules:

Code of Practice for Rowing on the Tideway: https://www.pla.co.uk/assets/THE_ROWING_CODE.pdf

Safety Control

Safety Control will be located at Chiswick Pier.

2018 race – safety cover will be provided from approx. 11:00 until approx 14:30. Crews likely to be returning upstream after this time are advised to carry a mobile phone, together with the number of their host club, in case of an emergency.

First Aid

Ambulance & First Aid facilities will be available at:

Chiswick Bridge (University of Westminster)

Chiswick Pier House (Corney Reach) (First Aid only)

Hammersmith Bridge (Rutland Arms)

Putney Embankment (Opposite Putney Pier)

Rescue Boats: will be stationed along the course

Hospitals: Local hospitals have been advised of this event.

Anyone in need of assistance should notify a race official who will be able to summon help.

If a member of the crew should fall out of the boat it is essential that the crew should stop and help.

Following crews must take avoiding action and alert rescue craft.

River Authorities

PLA, Coastguard and River Police

These authorities are aware of this event and will be in evidence on and off the water.

Looking After Yourself

You must follow the standards for safety set out in British Rowing Guide to Good Practice in Rowing, and particularly the requirement at section 2.1 to wear personal floatation devices if you cannot demonstrate the ability to meet the swimming standard or there is a medical problem which presents a risk that you may become unconscious or immobile.

You should be capable of completing a ten mile outing and may be on the water for three hours.

Hypothermia: Layers of clothing are more effective than one warm garment. The outer layer should be wind and waterproof.

Dehydration: Yes, even in November! Carry water with you for after the race.

Towpath/The Public

In the interests of spectator and bystander safety, supporters and coaches must not follow the race on bicycles.

Owing to the particular safety considerations of this race, the use of megaphones and radio equipment is prohibited for all parties except race officials.