



ROYAL CHESTER ROWING CLUB

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North of England Head of the River race

Sunday 16th March 2025

SAFETY PLAN

The priority at all times is SAFETY

This document should be read in conjunction with the Competitors instructions, standard Risk Assessment and their 'actions to address risks'

1. RULES APPLYING TO THIS EVENT

1.1. The event is run under the British Rowing Rules of Racing and 'RowSafe' guidelines are used as the basis for this plan.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

2.1 The Organising Committee has responsibility for the plan.

2.2 The control room will be located at Royal Chester Rowing Club (RCRC).

Chairman of the Race Committee:	Paul Coady	07580 180206
Club Captain:	Nic Cerulus	07462 457638
Race Secretary:	Liz Coady	07976 082231
Event Safety Officer:	Benjamin Barker	07341 381480
Welfare Officer:	Stephanie Loach	07932 681492



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3. COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 Communications will be via the Umpires' radio net; priority will be given to safety messages at all times.

3.2 Radio users will be briefed on radio procedure and safety protocol in accordance with RowSafe section 2.3.

3.3 Public Telephones are available at RCRC (01244 322468) and The Groves.

3.4 The Plan will be shared with the Local Navigation Authority, CWAC and all interested parties that have use of the river.

3.5 Umpires will receive copies of the Safety Documentation in advance of the event.

3.6 Any incidents should be reported. The organisers must be informed and a BR Incident Report raised if applicable.

3.6.1 Any incidents can be reported to the organisers via the RCRC reporting system: <https://forms.office.com/r/NfuS23RVeN> Or contacting the Event Safety Officer.

4. SAFETY BRIEFINGS

It is imperative that the event runs on schedule.

4.1 Safety briefings will be published online before the event for competitors and coaches to read.

4.2 The briefings will cover all essential aspects of the Safety Plan together with any alternative arrangements deemed necessary by the Organising Committee.

4.3 The Event Rowing Safety Adviser is Benjamin Barker. He will be available throughout the event and can also be reached on the Umpires' radio net or mobile number 07341381480.

4.4 All officials, particularly launch drivers, will be made aware of evacuation points.

5. FIRST AID

5.1 Cover will be provided by the St. John Ambulance Service, stationed near RCRC and the Groves

5.2 Any casualties who require hospital treatment will be taken to the Countess of Chester Hospital, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1UL. Telephone 01244 365000.

5.3 see emergency action plan (EAP) in appendix A for further details.

6. SAFETY BOATS & EQUIPMENT



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6.1 Primary safety boat cover is provided by Chester Commercial Boat Services, supplying 3 large ribs with drivers, who will be accompanied by a fully briefed assistant. Briefings for all Launch drivers and Marshalls will be given before the event and will cover details such as capsizes and boating procedure. All briefings will be held at Royal Chester Rowing Club.

6.2 Safety boats will have radio contact with the Umpires.

6.3 Safety boats will be on the water prior to boating, with particular attention to embarkation areas, and throughout the event until boats are removed from the water at the conclusion of racing.

6.4 First Aid kits, including space blankets, and throw lines and face coverings will be available.

6.4.1. Two allocated safety boats will also carry mobile AED's to ensure coverage along the entire course.

6.5 All safety launch providers will comply with RowSafe section 4.7

6.6 All launches will comply with RowSafe section 7.4

6.7 Throw lines and life jackets will be supplied to marshals and volunteers as appropriate.

6.8 Radios and megaphones will be provided by NWRRC.

6.9 Officials will be provided with high visibility clothing where applicable.

6.10 Clubs will be allocated marshalled trailer parking and boating stations with stages.

7. ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS PLAN

7.1 If the conditions at the event are such that it cannot safely continue as planned, the Organising Committee may decide to abandon or suspend the event or make alternative arrangements

7.2 All participants are expected to respond as directed and comply with the Committee's decision, which will be communicated via the radio net and mobile telephone.

7.3 Criteria for such a decision:

- Adverse weather
- River level and flow
- Tidal conditions, to include tidal debris.
- Serious collision or incident, on or off water.
- Instruction from emergency services.



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7.4 Race officials will ensure that all competitors are safely off the water and/or clear of the incident location.

7.5 The event will not resume unless the committee is satisfied that it is safe to do so.

7.6 The committee may amend the criteria for the event:

- Restrict participation to experienced rowers only.
- Restrict class of boat
- Amend length of course

7.7 Competitors may withdraw from the event if it is concluded for whatever reason that they cannot participate safely.

7.8 If a safety launch is inoperable for any reason, the Race Committee will review and re-allocate launch positions providing this can be done without compromising safety.

7.9 If communications equipment is not supplied as planned, the Race Committee will consider whether the event can continue by use of mobile telephones.

8. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

8.1 The Race Committee will monitor conditions.

8.2 The Organising Committee will monitor weather conditions prior to the event and consider whether road conditions will allow safe travel conditions, particularly when towing trailers.

8.3 If there is heavy rainfall in the days leading up to the event, river levels will be closely monitored, and this will be communicated to clubs entered whether contingency planning will be needed.

8.4 The Committee will monitor conditions and consider cancelling the event or prohibiting junior, novice or older crews from competing if safety is potentially compromised. The Met Office shall be used as the official reference point for forecasting the weather to help eliminate confusion.

8.5 Competitors are advised to take note of weather conditions on the day of the event, which at this time of year may vary significantly, and dress appropriately.

8.6 The embarkation umpire reserves the right to prohibit boating if crews are not adequately prepared.

8.7 Competitors should have adequate hydration and skin protection (if necessary).

8.8 In windy conditions, the committee may cancel or suspend racing according to the severity of the weather.

8.9 The committee may amend race timings or the course if adverse weather or severe



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river conditions impacts on safety.

8.9.1 The Organising committee has in place a contingency plan to shorten the course and finish near the sandy lane car park if weather and river conditions makes it unsafe to race around the earl's eye bend. If this plan is enacted it will be communicated to crews as soon as possible, either the day before or with deteriorating conditions on the day, before boating commences.

8.10 In case of lightning being present on the course or nearby the committee will enforce the 30/30 rule: when there is 30 seconds or less between lightning and its thunder, all participants will be directed to exit points immediately to seek shelter and will be held there until 30 minutes after the last thunder before leaving their safe shelter.

9. START AND FINISH

9.1 The Start Marshal is to ensure that all crews have passed upstream of the start at the Eccleston Ferry before the first boat of the Division is started.

9.2 Bank Marshals will carry throw lines.

9.3 The Finish Marshal is to ensure that all boats that have finished racing turn below the suspension bridge, or earlier if instructed, and follow the circulation pattern to the allocated stage.

9.4 The Finish Marshal may instruct crews (by number) to turn before the suspension bridge to improve safety.

9.5 Crews not boating from The Groves temporary stages must return upriver to Grosvenor, RCRC, King's School or Queen's Park on the city side of the river.

9.6 Crews crossing to the Queen's Park bank should not do so until they have passed the Grosvenor stage.

9.7 All crews need to be aware of crews finishing the race still moving downstream and obey instructions from race officials in order to avoid collisions.

9.8 A time penalty will be imposed on any crews failing to comply with instructions from Marshals on the way upriver or failing to observe the circulation plan at the finish.

9.9 Competitors are reminded about the weir after the finish of the race and are to follow the instructions of the Marshals to prevent crews from getting too close.

10. CREW SAFETY

10.1 All crews are required to comply with RowSafe.

10.2 It is the responsibility of each crew to check boats are fit for racing. Checks to



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include:

- Secure hatch covers, or for Boats without sealed compartments under seats must attach buoyancy bags into those spaces.
- Bow balls firmly attached
- Heel restraints separately attached to each shoe with cord, maximum 70mm movement
- The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, must be protected by a backstay.
- Blades painted in club colours

10.3 Crews will be asked whether they have checked their boats and may be subject to inspection prior to embarkation.

10.4 Boats which, in the opinion of the embarkation umpire are unsafe, will not be allowed to race without remedial action.

10.5 Crews are required to wear appropriate kit. Hoodies, dryrobes and other loose clothing are strictly prohibited on the water. Additionally, long hair must be tied up.

10.6 Landing stage assistants will be available to assist crew on and off the water.

10.7 Crews will not be permitted to practise between divisions.

10.8 All crews should self-assess if they have sufficient strength and experience to row a 5km race on a tidal river.

10.9 Regional Umpires Commission is responsible for controlling the race and positions of crews before the start of the race. Crews must listen and follow Umpires instructions for their own safety and other river users.

11. LOCAL NAVIGATION RULES

11.1 Crews should be aware that the river remains open to other users, who are not necessarily aware of the event or the rules of the river.

11.2 Normal navigation rules are suspended during racing; commercial boats such as the Lady Diana will use the city side of the river throughout the day and carry a marshal in radio contact with race officials to warn or direct as necessary.

11.3 Steersman, coxes and sculler should take particular care and remain vigilant.

11.4 Competitors should remain on The Meadows side of the river when proceeding to the start. (The river is wide enough to facilitate overtaking if necessary).



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11.5 The weir beyond the finish and suspension bridge is clearly signed and marked; crews must not approach this area.



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APPENDIX "A" - EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

1. The Organising Committee has responsibility for co-ordination of the emergency plan, a hard copy of which will be available at the control room at RCRC.
2. The committee may postpone or stop the event if deemed necessary.
3. Competitors should familiarise themselves with the course and circulation plans, by reading the competitors instructions.
4. St John's Ambulance will be on standby near RCRC and the Groves to provide first aid or advice as appropriate. Marshalls can contact St Ambulance via radio. Marshalls are identifiable as they will be wearing a Blue Royal Chester Rowing Club High-viz jacket.
5. Any casualties who require hospital treatment will be taken to the Countess of Chester Hospital, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1UL. Telephone 01244 365000.
6. Safety launches will be deployed in the marshalling areas at either end of the course as per section 6 and as shown on the course map. Drivers will be accredited and brief crew members.

Position as follows:

L13 - boat marshalling area

L12 - start line to A55 road bridge

L10 - start line to Heron Bridge

L9 - Heron Bridge to "Red House" restaurant

L6 - Red House to finish.

7. In case of life-threatening emergencies individuals will be brought to the preceding evacuation points as swiftly as possible. If an AED is required for resuscitation, the individual should be brought directly to the nearest accessible landing point, where a mobile AED will be brought to them by launch or from one of the publicly accessible AED's, these locations can be found on the course map.

7.1. the following steps should be taken in case of a severe medical emergency or collapse on the course:

1. Safety launch, umpire, crews notice the incident and flag it to the nearest safety launch
2. Extraction of the individual into the launch which should have a qualified first aider, and determine where the nearest safe landing zone is.
3. Begin CPR/assessment as appropriate



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4. Communicate landing zone to safety team via radio, who will call for a mobile AED to be brought to that location
5. Extract individual from the launch onto land and continue first aid care and begin use of AED if appropriate
6. During this time, the safety adviser will be in touch with emergency services and St Johns ambulance to assist first aid and ensure emergency care is provided as soon as possible.

ALL SAFETY MATTERS HAVE PRIORITY IN THE USE OF THESE LAUNCHES

Accidents on the Water

8. In the event of collision, capsize, sinking or other water based incident, the nearest race official is to inform race control and direct the nearest safety launch to the site of the incident.

The following information should be relayed:

- a) Location
- b) Type of boat
- c) Nature of incident
- d) Casualty assessment.

9. If necessary, 999 will be dialled for an ambulance to meet the safety boat.

The principal vehicular access points close to the river are:

- *The RCRC landing stage and The Groves (CH1 1SD) SJ 411 611*
- *Queen's Park (CH4 7AE)*
- *Sandy Lane (CH3 5UL) SJ 420 660*
Access ONLY from the south via Caldry Vally road (one way system)
- *A55 Expressway bridge and Eccleston Ferry (CH4 9JE). SJ 414 621*

10. First Aid arrangements as per section 5.

Land Based Accidents or Incidents

11. In case of fire or other land based incident, the RCRC Safety Plan will be initiated, a copy of which will be readily available and persons present should muster at the Assembly Point.

As all club houses along the Dee will be used on the day by competitors, Visitors should adhere to all safety precautions of the club they are using. This can include one way



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systems and fire procedures and precautions.

Document Control

	Name	Title	Signature	Date
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Editor V25.1	B Barker	RCRC Safety Adviser	<i>BB</i>	10/02/2025
Review		NWRRC Safety		
Authoriser		NWRRC Safety		