

MAIDENHEAD ROWING CLUB

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

PLAN

Reviewed and agreed with:

MRC:

**Keri Johnson
Club Captain**

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MRC Safety Adviser**

For General Club Circulation

CHANGE RECORD

| Issue | Status | Date | By | Changes |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Issue | 26 th March 98 | Gordon Fraser/BJB. | Issue to English Sports Council after approval from ARA, EA, RBWM and South Bucks. |
| 2 | Issue | 11 th June 98 | Gordon Fraser | Issued responding to English Sports Councils comments in letter 20 May 1998. |
| 3 | Issue | 25 th June 98 | Gordon Fraser/BJB. | Updated to clarify the points raised in letter dated 19 th June 98 following review by the English Sports Council. |
| 4 | Issue | 3 rd August 98 | Gordon Fraser/BJB. | Updated to further address the points raised in letter dated 3 rd July 98 following review by the English Sports Council. |
| 5 | Draft | 5 th June 00 | Gordon Fraser | Various revisions |
| 6 | Issue | 10 th January 02 | Dean Calkin | Various revisions Inclusion of para. "River States". Change to method of classifying river states. Adjustment of procedures to take account of junior rowing. |
| 7 | Draft | May 2008 | Gordon Fraser | General review bringing plan up to date with current practice |
| 8 | Issue | June 2008 | Gordon Fraser | Issued |

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1. Background.

General Information

i Objective

This Safety Plan is intended to promote safe and responsible use of equipment and running of the club in a safe and organised manner.

ii Mission Statement

Maidenhead Rowing Club views safe and responsible rowing as a foundation for successful recreational and competitive rowing. The club believes -

To row well is to row safely

iii Safety Plan

This Safety Plan supplements the Amateur Rowing Association Water Safety Code¹ and the club bylaws.

This safety plan will be divided into three parts. Part one will provide general information about this plan, Maidenhead Rowing Club and the reach. Part two will cover the general safety of all rowers at all levels and ability. Part three will cover more specifically the safety issues surrounding inexperienced rowers.

The Safety Plan will be made available to each member and new member of the club,. A hard copy will be available in the clubhouse entrance foyer and an electronic copy made available to members on the club website.

iv The Reach

The reach on which the club is situated stretches approximately 3½km from the weir adjacent to Boulters lock down stream to the Bray lock and weir. There are 2 bridges on the reach, these are the Maidenhead road bridge which takes the A4 road across the Thames and consists of three navigable arches and the railway bridge which has two large arches, one of which is on the navigation channel and is known locally as the Sounding Arch. Appendix A, figure 1 shows a map detailing the location of these bridges and other notable features.

¹ The ARA Water Safety Code is currently being revised and will be published later this year under the 'Row Safe' banner.

v Maidenhead Rowing Club Facilities

The clubhouse is situated on the Buckinghamshire side of the river between the road and railway bridges. All club rowing activity is based out of this clubhouse. Motorised coaching and safety launches are moored close to the landing stages adjacent to the clubhouse.

vi The Rowing Year

Rowing continues throughout the year at MRC. At the beginning of the year the river is often in flood and fast flowing, the boathouse is sometimes flooded, this together with extremely cold winter weather can stop or restrict rowing activity. Before the clocks move forward rowing in the evening is restricted to experienced crews and sculls who will display the necessary lights, be accompanied by a coaching launch and will have the Captain's permission. In the late spring and summer months, rowing in the evening becomes more practical and subject to the river status boards permitting and conditions being suitable all active members can row. During the summer, traffic using the river (both rowing and other boats) increases and while rowing times tend to be outside times when other river traffic is busy i.e. early morning and evening, care is required in navigating the river. During the autumn the clocks go back and night rowing restrictions return, as the end of the year approaches cold weather, fast streams and flood water can all return. Specific safety issues to cope with seasonal and weather changes are addressed in Part 2 of this Safety Plan.

vii Changes and Annual Review

The contents of this Safety Plan will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required and modified taking account of any safety issues which are not adequately covered or requirements of the plan which are felt to be inappropriate. The front page will then be signed by the Captain and the Safety Officer after appropriate consultation with the Club Committee.

viii Club Officers

While safety is the responsibility of all members, the club committee will oversee and administer safety. In particular the Club Captain, Vice-Captains, the Club Water Safety Adviser will be specifically tasked in making sure that safe rowing practice is observed.

ix Coaches

Coaches will be responsible for ensuring that safe rowing is adopted by the crews that they coach and also in instances where they see unsafe practices being carried out by other rowers.

2. PART 1 – General Safety.

2.1 Requirements of all active members

All members who intend to row must be in good health and if in doubt should seek advice from their doctor. New members must declare any disability on the application form. Existing members whose health changes to an extent that it could effect their safety while rowing must make their disability known.

All active rowers and coxes must be able to swim 50m in light clothing.

2.2 Assessment of new members

All new members must have their rowing ability assessed and have the clubs Safety Rules explained to them, prior to being allowed on to the water. Those who are assessed as inexperienced rowers will be required to comply with Part 2 of this Safety Plan.

2.3 Equipment

Club equipment can only be used with the Captains permission. Amongst other factors the Captain will take into account the standard of rowing of the person or crew requesting permission and the river and weather conditions.

Boats that are reported as damaged or are in need of repair must not be used. Any damage incurred to a boat or other safety equipment within the club e.g. lifejackets and fire extinguishers, must be detailed in the damage log book, a sign put on the boat signifying it is damaged and then reported to the Captain or a committee member.

No boat is to be used that doesn't have a bow ball properly and securely attached to the boat. Boats without bow balls must be reported as described above

No boat should be used without fully intact heel restraints in place. Heel restraints allow feet to be easily released from the shoe in the event of capsizes. Heel restraints must be checked regularly (at least once a month) by the

oarsman/woman intending to use the boat. Heel restraints should be tested by tugging each shoe upwards so as to check the integrity of the restraint. Should the restraint be found to be broken or breaks on testing then it should be replaced with a new restraint and if not repaired immediately, reported as described above.

Private boat owners are responsible for carrying out the necessary checks on their own boats.

2.4 Navigation

The map in Appendix A Figure 1 shows the river and the landmarks referred to in this section. The area of the river considered safe for rowing extends from Boulters Lock to the white tow path bridge (opposite the blue sign on the Berkshire side) opposite Bray Island. Members must not go further downstream than the white tow path bridge. The backwater at Bray and the water behind the islands above Maidenhead Bridge must not be used.

On the river, boats must keep to the right hand side of the river as they face the direction in which they are travelling (that is the Berkshire side travelling downstream and Buckinghamshire side upstream.)

The main turning points are: at Boulters Lock, immediately downstream of Maidenhead Bridge, just above the Sounding Arch, and beside the warning sign opposite Bray Island. Turning of boats on the river can be done in any place where there are no hazards immediately downstream which the boat may get swept onto and where a good view of other river traffic can be had.

Particular black spots on the river are just above Maidenhead Bridge where boats must never turn due to the risk of being swept onto bridge; the sharp bend at Bray where there is risk of river traffic travelling downstream cutting the corner and colliding with traffic going upstream traffic drifting wide; the narrow channel of the river above Maidenhead Bridge going up to Boulters Lock, where boats should not overtake or travel side by side. Members must be particularly aware at these points in the river. See Figure 1 Appendix A.

Only members of senior status or above or novice/junior crews with coaches can go above Maidenhead Bridge. Members are advised to be extremely cautious when rowing upstream of Maidenhead Bridge, particularly when the locks are open. The Captain, Vice-Captains and Safety Adviser should limit the amount of rowing that takes place in this area.

2.5 Overtaking

When overtaking the faster boat is responsible for collision avoidance. Overtaking must only take place if the river is suitably wide and there is no opposing traffic. You should overtake on the outside (ie in the stream). Overtaking on the inside is permitted after the slower moving boat has called the faster boat through.

Overtaking is not permitted in the following areas:

Between the Sounding Arch and Maidenhead Bridge.

The corner at Bray approaching the lock channel.

When approaching Maidenhead Bridge from Boulters Lock.

In the narrow channels above Maidenhead Bridge.

2.6 Coxing and Steersperson

Any person steering a boat is responsible for the crew in their charge. However, junior coxes who are not legally responsible. If a junior is used as a cox the responsibility for the outing should be accepted by another rowing member of the crew.

Coxes with sufficient experience are classified as “Green Card” coxes. Coxes must be either Green Card coxes or accompanied and supervised by a senior competent rower or coach. Only green card coxes may coxswain boats under amber and red/amber conditions without authorisation from the Captain or Safety Advisor. A list of green card coxes will be displayed in the clubhouse. Inexperienced coxes must not take boats out without an experienced crew member or a coach to supervise the outing.

Coxes must wear an approved lifejacket at all times while in the boat.

Coxes must be dressed suitably for the conditions on the river at the time of year.

2.6 Junior Rowing

Junior rowing must be supervised by a competent adult coach.

A junior is defined as an under-18, but competent members over 15 years of age may be treated as Adult rowers and afforded a reduced level of supervision.

A limited number of under-15s may also be approved by the Captain, Junior Vice Captain or Safety Advisor for specific training only with reduced levels of supervision.

2.7 Disadvantaged rowing

Disadvantaged rowing will be subject to the conditions and rules as laid down in this plan, as well as having able bodied persons available and ready to help whenever there are disadvantaged rowers on the water.

2.8 Boating

On removing the boat from the boathouse, care must be taken in observing and warning other members or members of public using the footpath.

Boats will be placed in the water facing upstream and will then follow the following boating plan:

Boats will travel up to a position just downstream of Maidenhead Bridge to turn if they wish to go downstream. Figure 2 in Appendix A shows the boating pattern.

2.9 Landing

Boats will land pointing upstream.

2.10 Coaching

All coaches must be experienced rowers and be willing to take the responsibility for the safety of their crew.

Coaches using the coaching launch and their drivers must wear approved life jackets at all times.

2.11 First Aid and Hospital Treatment

There is a first aid kit in the boathouse and also in the safety kits carried on the coaching and rescue launches.

For injuries that cannot be treated with basic first aid, the nearest hospital is Wexham Park, Telephone numbers for emergency services are listed next to the telephone by the entrance in the middle bay of the boathouse the clubhouse.

2.12 Coaching and Rescue Launches

Each launch must carry a launch safety kit whenever it is being used. The launch safety kit will comprise of a whistle, grab line, thermal/exposure blankets, knife and a first aid kit. As well as the launch safety kit, a life belt, a paddle and a bailer must also be carried. Only approved drivers can use the MRC launches.

The Captain, Vice Captain or Safety Advisor will approve launch drivers based on their experience and ability to handle motor launches.

A list of approved drivers will be displayed on the clubhouse notice board.

The launches used in the dark must be fitted with and display the appropriate red, white and green lighting.

2.13 Rowing in the dark

Rowing in the dark is restricted and subject to the Night Time Rowing Rules which are included in Schedule 1 of this plan and which are changed from time to time to meet changing conditions and skill levels.

Crews rowing at night must have bright white lights both on the bow and stern of their boats pointing fore and aft of the boat and angled in an upwards direction so they can be seen by larger boats looking down. Rowers must also wear light coloured clothing to aid their visibility to other river traffic.

2.14 Adverse Weather Conditions and Winter Rowing

At times of adverse weather conditions the Captain, Safety Advisor, nominated coaches or other committee members may restrict or suspend rowing should he or she feel it unsafe for whatever reason.

When there is a strong stream running, rowing will be suspended or restricted to certain categories of rowers in accordance with the paragraph entitled river states. This is most likely to be during the months of October to May. All crews and scullers on the water must ensure they stop well upstream of the usual turning points.

Rowing will be suspended and no boating will be allowed when temperatures are very low, there is large amounts of ice on the water or when the visibility is reduced to 400m or less. It should be noted that this distance extends well beyond the Sounding Arch which has often been mistakenly used as a visible landmark to determine whether it is safe to row. At times of fog it must be realised that conditions vary with time and along the reach. When there is fog the Captain, Safety Advisor or nominated coaches will decide if it is safe to

row and may limit and organise boats to ensure safe rowing. If conditions worsen then boats should carefully return to the clubhouse.

Rowing will also be suspended if there is threat of an electrical storm. If there is a gap of less than 30 seconds between the thunder clap and the lightning strike, boats must immediately turn around and head back to the clubhouse as fast as possible. Rowing will not commence until there has been no further thunder or lightning for at least 30 minutes.

2.15 River States

A fixed river status board is prominently displayed at the entrance of the clubhouse indicating when rowing is suspended or restricted respectively. It is the Captain's, Safety Adviser's and nominated coaches responsibility to ensure that the appropriate status is displayed at all times.

The Claire's Court Rowing Master can change the river status when conditions change during School hours.

The River Status Board rules are listed in Schedule 2 of this plan and are subject to change from time to time to suit changing conditions, skill levels and other safety factors.

The Captain, Safety Advisor and nominated coaches have the responsibility of ensuring the board reflects the appropriate status and may over ride the board and call boats in if they feel that the crew/sculler is not capable of handling the conditions or the situation is unsafe.

The river speed measured at the meter house on Bridge Gardens should be used as a guideline to determine the above status. [above river speeds need to be checked against the Bridge Gardens meter]

2.15 Unescorted outings

Members in small boats (singles, doubles and pairs) are encouraged to boat when there are other boats on the water.

2.16 Other River Users

Members are expected to show respect and courtesy to all other river users. This includes bank fisherman and other boat users. Particular attention should be paid to avoiding snagging the lines of fisherman. Other boat owners may appear to be inconsiderate in travelling too fast and causing large bow waves, but in most cases this is done through ignorance not intent. Members are asked to be polite when informing them that they are travelling too fast.

Many large boats have high-momentum and lack manouverability. MRCs rowers should give way to these boats wherever a risk of collision exists. This is most likely to occur opposite the club, and when turning.

2.17 Falling In

In the event that a boat capsizes and the crew are in the water, the following should be done:

- i The crew ensures that everyone is safe and any assistance needed to ensure a particular persons safety is provided by the rest of the crew. The crew should always stay with the boat unless it is close to and approaching a serious hazard, such as a weir.
- ii In a small boat (single, double or a pair) the boat should be returned to an upright position (if this is possible), and towed into the bank against the stream with one person grasping the bows and using the lifesaving kick stroke.

For larger boats, the crew should position themselves by each rigger and guide the boat to the bank swimming into the stream allowing the stream to help push the boat into the bank.

- iii Once ashore everyone must be checked for injury and hypothermia. If anyone is found to be suffering from injury or hypothermia, medical assistance must be sought immediately. Injured persons must not row back to the club. Persons suffering from hypothermia must be kept warm, if necessary using the body heat of others to help warm them.
- iv On return to the boathouse, persons suffering from cold should have a warm shower as soon as possible to help increase there body temperature. If hypothermia is suspected, the person should be actively rewarmed using clothing, thermal blankets and hot drinks while proper medical help is sought.

If other boats are present when a capsizes occurs, rowers are expected to stop their training and give assistance. Sometimes even simple obvious advice can be of great assistance to a disorientated rower who has just capsized.

2.18 Weil's Disease

All members should be aware of the risks of Weil's disease. A copy of the warning received from the Amateur Rowing Association is included in Appendix C.

2.19 In the Event of an Accident

Accidents are categorised into 2 types, reportable incidents and recordable incidents.

Reportable incidents are defined as accidents that involve injury or damage valued over £100. All such incidents need to be reported to the Club Water Safety Adviser and Club Captain or in their absence another committee member as soon as possible after the event. The crews responsible must complete an ARA Incident Report form available at <http://www.ara-rowing.org/upload/files/Association/WaterSafety/SafetyIncidentReportForm.pdf> which should then be passed to the Club Water Safety Adviser for signature who will then send it to the Thames Region Rowing council and copied to the ARA. Reportable Incidents must be recorded in the Incident Log Book kept on the table in the entrance to the club by those involved in the incident

Recordable incidents are defined as incidents not captured by the above definition such as capsizing, near miss's and collisions where no damage or injury occurred. These must also be reported to the Club Water Safety Adviser and recorded in the Incident log book by those involved in the incident.

2.20 Breaches of the Safety Plan or the Water Safety Code.

All breaches in the Safety Plan or the ARA Water Safety Code shall be reported to Safety Advisor or the Captain. Members will first be warned that they have breached club safety rules, if the member continues to ignore the safety rules listed in this plan then the committee will suspend the membership of the club member.

Where damage has resulted from a failure to adhere to the safety plan, the member(s) may be asked to contribute to the cost of the damages.

2.21 Safety Awareness and Risk Assessment

Safety is the responsibility of all members whether on or off the water. The Club expects members to be aware of the rules listed in the Safety Plan and to think about safety each time, before boating.

As well as complying with the safety plan rules, all members should carry out their own risk assessment prior to going out and they should satisfy themselves on the following issues:

Weather

River state (level, flowrate and water temperature)

Type of boat and suitability for existing conditions

Crew competence

Steerspersons competence

3. PART 2 – Inexperienced Members.

Inexperienced Members are defined as those members who have just begun to row or have been absent from the sport for a long time and whose standards are still at novice level

3.1 Inexperienced Rowers

Inexperienced Rowers will be required to join and complete the clubs Learn to Row programme after which they will be required to join a squad to continue to develop their rowing

3.2 Inexperienced Coxes

Inexperienced coxes must be supervised by a coach or senior experienced oarsperson. Inexperienced coxes are not allowed to go out with inexperienced crews unsupervised.

Appendix A – MAP of the River.



Figure 1

BOATING PLAN

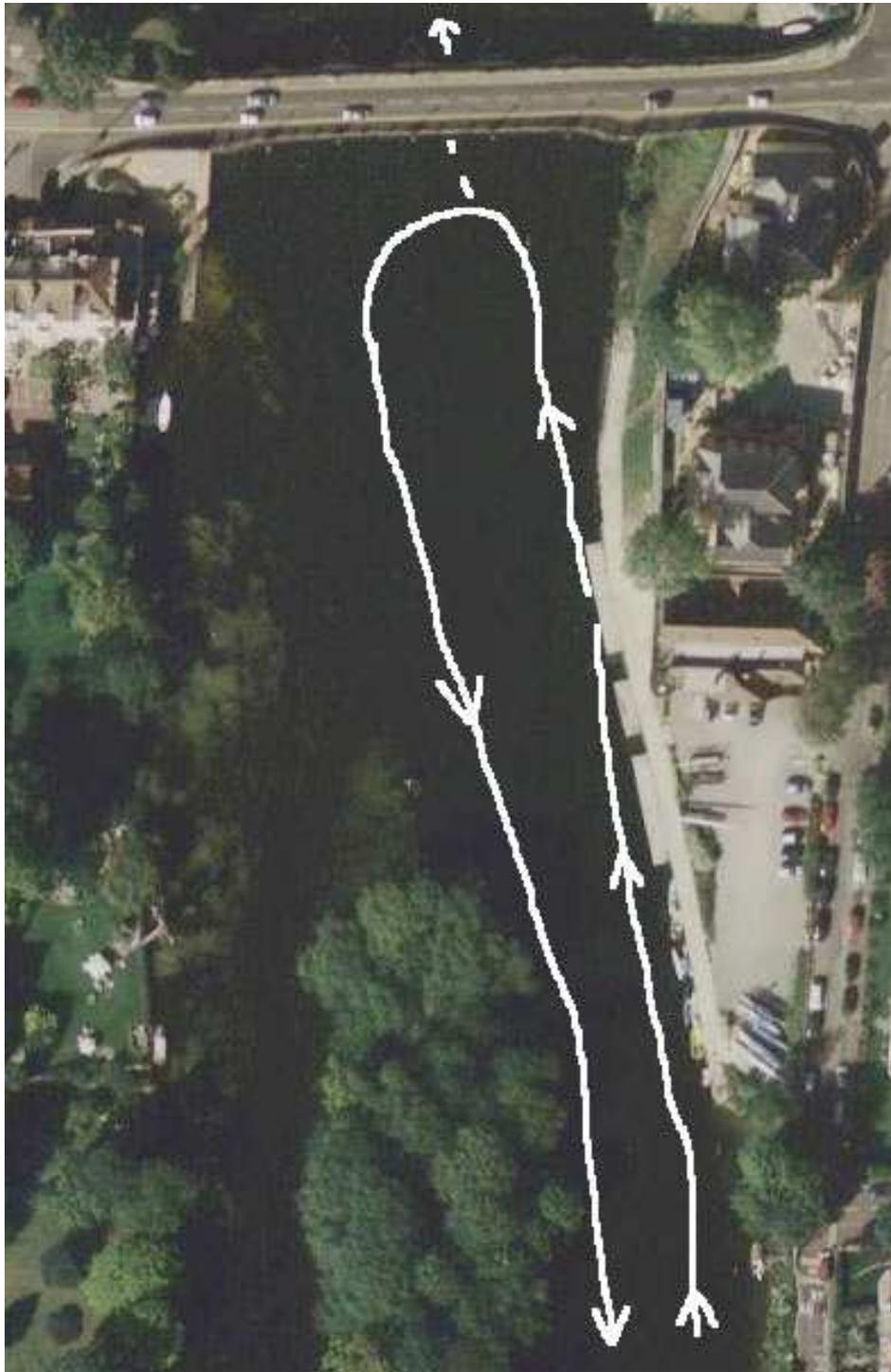


Figure 2

Appendix B – Weil’s Disease.

What is it?

Weil’s disease is a bacterial infection carried in rat’s urine that contaminates water and wet riverbanks. The bacteria do not survive for long in dry conditions. It can occur in any water, including swift streams and rivers. The likelihood of becoming infected is greater from stagnant or slow moving waterways.

How serious is it?

It can be a serious illness requiring hospital treatment and can lead to kidney or liver failure. One patient in 19 dies with it. Weil’s disease is a notifiable illness.

How do I catch it?

The bacteria are absorbed through the skin and mucous membranes of the mouth and eyes. It gets into the bloodstream more easily if you have a minor cut on your skin or feet.

What should I do about it?

If you fall ill with the symptoms after boating, particularly from 3 to 19 days following then see your Doctor immediately. The most common symptoms are; temperature, an influenza type illness, joint and muscle pains, (pains in the calf muscles are often particularly noticeable). Tell your doctor that you have been boating and where. Ask him if you can have a blood test for Weil’s disease. Tell the ARA who will advise their medical panel.

In brief;

Wash and shower after boating.

Cover any abrasions with a waterproof plaster.

Use footwear to avoid cutting feet.

If you have flu like symptoms after boating, go to your GP early and tell him/her that you are an oarsman/cox/coach

Advise the ARA.

Appendix C – Risk Assessment for Maidenhead Rowing Club.

| RISK ASSESSMENT FOR MAIDENHEAD ROWING CLUB | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Hazard | Who might be harmed? | Is the risk adequately controlled? | Further action to control risk |
| Injury from protruding boat riggers in boathouse | Club member, potential new member, especially beginners and juniors | Awareness at induction, no running in the boathouse allowed, boats stacked in safe uniform manner | |
| Injury in removing boat from boathouse | Club member, member of the public | Cox or another rower must lead the boat out of the boathouse watching out for bystanders or passers by | |
| Strain injury while rowing/training | Club members and potential new members | | Coaching correct technique, correct training programme. |
| Drowning from falling in | Club member, potential new member, especially beginners and juniors | Swimming declaration when joining,, heel restraints checked, training to avoid capsize, rescue launch, life jackets | Swim test and capsize drill practised, rescue launch on standby |
| Hypothermia (particularly from falling into cold water). | Club member, potential new member, especially beginners and juniors | Restricted rowing in cold weather, briefings when appropriate and supervision by coaches. | |
| Tripping, slipping on landing stage | Club member, member of the public. | Keeping landing stage clean and clear of obstruction. | Road salt to be provided in winter months to stop slipping on ice |
| Injury from collision with other boat | Club members, other boat users | Training, navigational rules, restricted rowing in poor visibility and at night. | Increased awareness |
| Injury or drowning from being swept downstream onto an obstruction | Club members and potential new members | Awareness at induction of turning points. Club Captain/Safety Adviser restricts/suspends rowing during adverse river/weather conditions | |
| Medical ailments of club members | Club members | Declaration of fitness when joining | Full membership declaration |
| Weil's disease | Club members | Awareness when joining | |

SCHEDULE 1 - NIGHT TIME ROWING RULES

(Insert current Version)

SCHEDULE 2 - RIVER STATUS BOARD RULES

(Insert Current Version)