



COMPETITORS' INSTRUCTIONS 2026

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 [EA Boat Registration - British Rowing](#)

Coaches and teachers in charge of junior scullers 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 07.30.

On arrival please report to Crew Registration situated under one of the bridge arches. You must bring your British Rowing Racing Licence (points cards) 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. You must pin the large paper numbers to the back of the warm-up kit and racing kit of the bowman using safety pins for each corner. If you only use 2 pins, 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 scullboard on each side of the boat. If boats are to be used in both divisions remember to change numbers.

If your race number is not visible you will not receive a time.

Course Map

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

Practice Outings

Practice outings are not permitted.

Boating

Individual crew boating times will be published with the draw. Please refer to the [Start Order page](#).

	Boating commences	Start time
Div 1	08.30	10.30
Div 2 - Short course	14.00	14.45
Div 3	13.00	15.00

The rafts are located immediately downstream of Wallingford Bridge. With such a large entry, adhering to the boating schedule is vital. Two times are given in the schedule

- **The first time** is when you should join the queue near the rafts so that your boat can be checked by the control commission. (As a reminder you must have the following: a secure bowball, heel-restraints and hatch covers fitted. All boats must display a boat identification code in accordance with the rules of British Rowing).
- **The second time** given is when you should be on the water, crews not on the water by this time may not be allowed to boat. **CREWS BOATING LATER THAN THEIR ALLOCATED TIME WILL BE PENALISED. 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 highest numbered scullers will be on the water - even so high numbered boats should expect to be on the water for 3 hours or more 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.

Please ensure that you have all your equipment with you and sufficient support to ensure you are boated as quickly as possible. When returning from racing please clear the raft as swiftly as possible (please keep your shoes in the boat or ensure that there is some available to bring them to you as you land), you will not be allowed to wait around on the rafts.

Course

Long Course - Divisions 1 & 3

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

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

No crews are to go beyond Buoy G.

Short Course - Division 2

The course is approximately 1,250m upstream starting from the Oxford Brookes Boathouse to just prior to OUBC's boathouse, 750m below the rafts. There is space to warm up between the marshalling area and the S-bends but beware of crews going to the long start.

Getting to the start

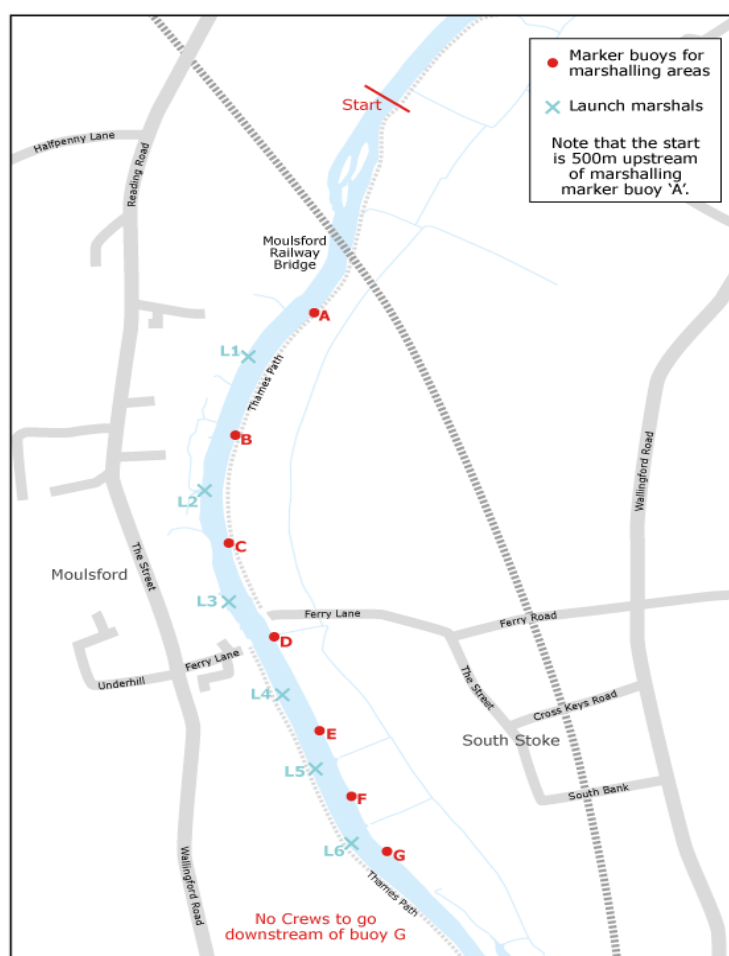
Normal rules of navigation apply at all times during the event (as laid out in the [Byelaws](#), see above). Hence to get to the start you must proceed downstream on the west half of the river (i.e. the right-hand side as a cox would look at it, or bow-side blades closer to the bank if you don't know what a cox is!) keeping a good look out for other scullers and indeed other river users. The river is not closed to other traffic during the event: please respect their right to enjoy the river just as much as you do.

The race course will be marked off with buoys to control racing lines and where there are perceived hazards (i.e. hidden tree branches beneath surface).

Marshalling Positions

Long Course - Divisions 1 & 3

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 on the east half of the river in number order. Having turned to point upstream, you are again on the correct side of the river if your bow-side blade is the one closest to the bank!



Short Course - Divisions 2

All boats will be marshalled in the Brookes' straight upstream of the S-bends. Crews should not pass through the S-bends. 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 on the east half of the river in number order. Having turned to point upstream, you are again on the correct side of the river if your bow side blade is the one closest to the bank.

Start arrangements



Once all boats have passed downstream of the start, and the start area is clear of river traffic, the starter will set crews off at approximately 10-15 second intervals. Marshals will instruct you to move up towards the start - please make sure you have removed any excess kit and are ready to race well before you reach the start. In the last 100m before the start you may be asked to ease for a few seconds or, conversely, to row at increased pressure to open or close the gap on the crew in front. Please listen for and react immediately to any such instruction. 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 east half of the river (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 the east/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.

Please do not stop until you have at least passed Wallingford RC. You must not pass the finish line again until after the last crew has finished. Crews boating from Oxford Brookes or OUBC must wait beyond the end of the ramp at OUBC with bows pointing upstream until racing is complete and told it is safe to turn by the marshals.

Overtaking

Normal Course

The Wallingford stretch may be narrower and more twisting than you are used to, and there are overhanging trees. 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, 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.

Short Course

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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, for any use of language or gestures and/or for any unsportslike behaviour 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.

Parking

TRAILER PARKING:

Trailers can only access the trailer park from the A4074/A4130 roundabout and through Crowmarsh Gifford. Going through Wallingford Town Centre is not an option as there is no left-hand turn access into the trailer park.

For 2026, as in previous years access will be via Stephen's Field. Please follow signs and marshals' instructions.

Address for boat trailer parking:

The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8EB

- Trailer parking will open at 06:30
- Only boat trailer parking and disabled parking is permitted in the riverside car park. (Boat rigging can be done in the field located on the other side of the bridge from the riverside car park).
- Please note that longer boat trailers will not be able to park in the boat trailer park due to height barriers at the entrance.
- Only towing vehicles are permitted to park in the trailer parking area.
- There is no access to the boat trailer park the day prior to racing as a height barrier at the entrance will be locked preventing access.

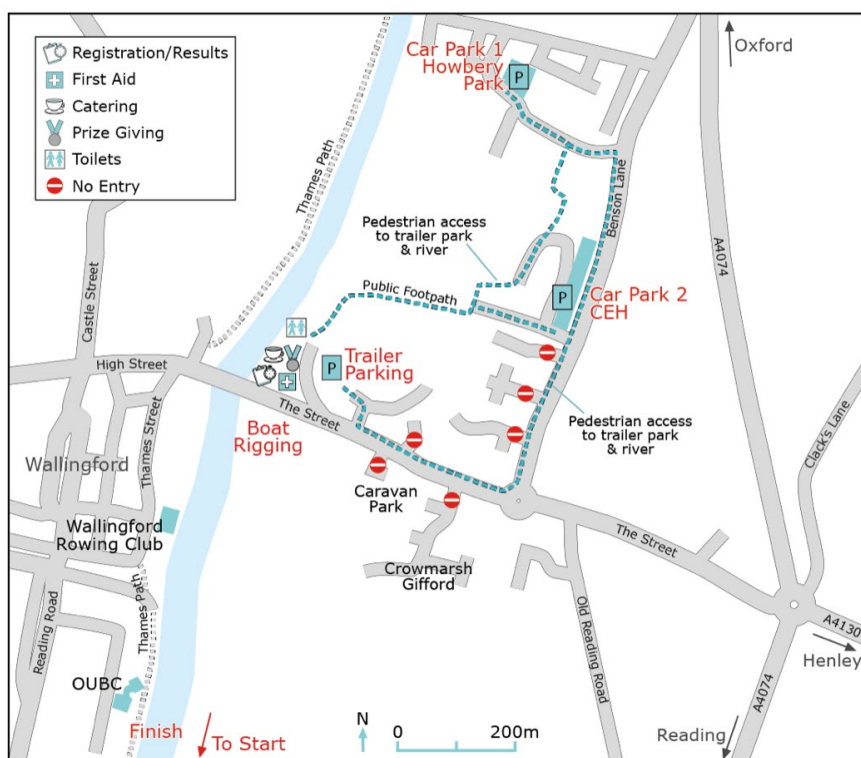
COMPETITOR and SPECTATOR PARKING

There will be a car park available for competitors and spectators to use on the day. Car parking is free. Please follow the marshals' instructions. Car parks will open at 06.30.

Competitors Car Park – Car Park 1 Howbery Park - approx. 1.2km / 10-12 mins walk to river
 Postcode/Sat Nav Ref: OX10 8BA, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, Oxon.
 Please only park on the car park area as directed by car park marshals.

Directions to river from Howbery Park by foot:

- Walk from Howbery Park back to Benson Lane. Turn right and walk along the road until you reach a mini roundabout. Turn right and this will take you down to Wallingford Bridge and the Riverside car park.



NB Car parks will be locked up at 18.00 after the event. Please remove your vehicle in good time after racing and derigging.

- Disabled parking will be allowed in the trailer park area - please present a blue badge.
- **As a courtesy to local residents and shoppers, competitors are requested not to park in town or on grass verges.**
- Please do not park in any residential areas and side-roads in Crowmarsh Gifford. We receive many complaints each year from residents about competitors and spectators not adhering to this request.
- No parking is allowed on the bypass bridge or on the grass verges along the bypass for safety reasons. Please park in one of the allocated car parks and walk along the towpath to the Bypass bridge if you are a spectator.



Refreshments

Hot and cold drinks, breakfast baps, burgers and snacks will be available in the boating area from 8am until racing has finished.

Toilets and showers

There are toilets in the boating area. There will be no changing facilities this year.

Results

Provisional results will be made available at Wallingford RC and in the boating area about 60 minutes after the last crew has crossed the finish line. Results will be posted on the event's website on the evening of the event.

Prizes

Prizes will be presented in the boating area after the second division results have been published.