Safety Plan and Risk Assessment 2026

The following notes are distributed to the Clubs racing at Wallingford Long Distance Sculls for distribution to competitors, their coaches, organisers, marshals, umpires and safety personnel and are available on the event website.

They must be read by every person taking part together with the **Competitors' Instructions**, Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing ("Row Safe") and the Course Map.

Regatta Safety Advisor

The Organising committee has appointed Tim Brock as the Safety Advisor. He is a member of the Organising Committee and has produced this document and updated the risk assessment which is annexed in this document.

Race committee

A race committee chaired by Adrian Champion will undertake the duties detailed in the British Rowing Rules ofRacing. In particular, they will decide whether weather or stream conditions are too dangerous to permit racing to continue.

Race Safety

Wallingford Long Distance Sculls is run in accordance with the British Rowing Rules of Racing ("Rules of Racing"). It is compulsory that all competitors comply fully with the Rules of Racing and all aspects of Row Safe.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that it is the responsibility of Clubs, their athletes and coaches to ensure that their equipment complies in all regards with the requirements of Row Safe. It is also the responsibility of clubs to ensure their crews are capable of racing competently over the distances the crews have been entered for. Any crew that is considered not capable will not be allowed to race and the club with be reported to British Rowing.

Race officials may inspect boats chosen at random. Boats that fail to comply with Row Safe and the Rules of Racing will be disqualified from the event. All crews attending Wallingford Long Distance Sculls must comply fully with the rules as laid out in the **Competitors' Instructions**. Specific attention is drawn to competitors and coaches that boats designed to have watertight hatches and/or bungs must have these in place and fitted correctly.

All club/crew coaches are to ensure that their athletes are correctly briefed on Row Safe, in particular in relation to capsize procedures.

Participants who have any potential health problems that might cause problems to themselves or other competitors (e.g. epilepsy) must advise the Entries Secretary 48 hours prior to race day. The Race Committee retains the right not to allow a competitor to go afloat if, in their opinion, the health condition constitutes an unacceptable risk.

Communication to competitors

A WhatsApp channel will be available to competitors, volunteers and crew support staff to communicate any changes to the event, including boating times, race times and any decisions about racing. Information for joining the WhatsApp group will be provided on the website and in Social Media communications.

Clothing

Do think of conditions and the fact that you may be sat at the start area for some time (up to 3 hours). Ensure that scullershave suitable clothing, particularly juniors.

Suspending/Stopping the Race

The primary duty of every Race Official is to care for the safety of competitors and others. It may be necessary to stop the race should conditions alter significantly through the course of the race or a major event occurs (e.g. multiple collisions). Racing will be abandoned or postponed if the Safety Advisor and/or a Race Umpire decide that conditions are unsafe. The Safety Advisor and/or the Chair of the Race Committee shall immediately inform all Marshals and Umpires using the event radio network.

Marshals, mainly club members with knowledge of the river, will immediately instruct racing boats to stop by shouting "STOP RACING" on megaphones and guiding boats into the most sheltered part of the river adjacent to one of the banks. If conditions are equal on each bank, preference should be given to bringing crews in to the towpath bank where assistance can be given more easily.

Launches are to stay in position so as to give cover over the entire course and drivers are to be vigilant and respond to any request for help from Marshals. All launches are equipped with Safety Boxes which include emergency foil blankets which should be used to ensure scullers remain warm.

The Safety Advisor and the Chief Umpire shall decide on terminating the event or re-starting if conditions improve.

Safety cover, incidents, and emergencies

All launches will carry radios and safety equipment as specified by Row Safe. Safety cover will be provided for the reach bounded by the old Wallingford Bridge and the marshalling position of the last boat in each division. Cover will commence 120 minutes before the start of each division, with limited cover provided by safety boats initially. Full cover will be in place 20 minutes before the start of each division. Crews are not permitted to go afloat until safety cover is in place and the Chair of the Race Committee has given approval for boating.

Bank and on-water marshals will be in place to provide line of sight cover for the whole course from 20 minutes prior to the start of the division, until the last boat in that division has cleared the area for which that Marshal is responsible. A safety launch will follow the last crew in each division. On the water safety cover will terminate for each division as the last crew arrives at the rafts.

There will be a medical tent in the boating area which will be the command centre, and point of contact, for all safety and first aid related questions.

A radio system will be in operation. The radio system covers the bank marshals along the course, the start, the safety boats along the course and the finish. This is supplemented by use of officials' mobile phones as a backup in the event of radio failure.

In the event of an on the water incident, competitors should firstly ensure their own safety, and then ensure a Race Official is aware of the problem.

If any persons suffer any injuries, the nearest Race Official will immediately raise Safety and/or the Chair of the Race Committee who will assess the situation and determine the appropriate action.

Persons suffering minor injuries will be taken by rescue launch to the boating area, Cholsey Ferry or the nearest landing stage, notifying race control by radio or by phone. Race Control will then organise appropriate medical support.

In the event of a person being injured on land, Race Control should be informed. The medical tent in the boating area should be contacted in all cases for assistance.

All accidents, collisions or capsize must be reported to Race Control and the online BR incident report form filled in prior to leaving the event..

In the case of a serious incident call the Emergency Services on 999. Do not wait for the event's first aid teams to arrive.

There will be medical safety teams provided at the Boating Area and the Cholsey Ferry. The medical safety crew at Cholsey Ferry will be able to arrange transport back to the boating area. All safety boats have trained personnel with equipment on board, however some treatment may be best provided on land.

Safety boats and rescue points

Safety boats will be located near the following approximate locations. Should an incident occur these positions will change, but they will keep their existing identity in order to reduce confusion:

Safety Start – located around the marshalling area and start of the race to the S bends

Safety Middle – located between the S bends and the road bridge

Safety Finish – located from the road bridge to the boating area.

Please note that a conventional Ambulance may not be able to get close to the riverbank. Do not hesitate to ask for the Air Ambulance if you are at a position inaccessible by road. Safe landing areas, clear of obstructions are shown on the Course Map.

Possible locations are:

Start Area – Helicopter landing - ///punters.giant.violinist

Cholsey Ferry – Vehicle access - ///otters.rejoiced.catapult

S bends – Helicopter access - ///plums.stumps.layover

Oxford Brookes Boat Club – Vehicle access – ///sapping.browsers.mimics

Carmel Straight – Helicopter access - ///outbursts.tangling.inefficient

North of road bridge – Helicopter access - ///ample.clerics.mailboxes

Oxford University Boat Club – Vehicle access - ///belonging.flotation.myself

Boating area – Vehicle access - ///sundial.lamenting.curls

Annex: Safety Risk assessment 2026

Instructions for competitors, officials, visitors, and coaches are available online at www.wallingford-sculls.org.uk from a minimum of 14 days prior to the event. Instructions detail such items as circulation patterns for vehicles and boats, location of facilities etc.

All Boat Movements on the Water are covered by Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing ("The Code") as published by British Rowing. The Code applies to all participants, who are responsible for self-policing the code. Further, coaches, marshals, umpires and all officials enforce the code.

Failure to comply with any part of that code in relation to equipment or behaviour will lead to the crew or participants not being able to go afloat and /or race.

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Measures to Reduce Risk	Overall Risk
VEHICLE & CYCLE MOVEMENTS & USE:				
Fall hazard while unloading boats	Injury to rowers and /or damage to boats	Low	• Reliance on competency of crews and coaches. British Rowing provides guidelines on trailers and towing	Low / Moderate
Collision hazard due to trailers, boats and cars	Injury to rowers and or damage to boats	Moderate	• Car park marshals to ensure trailers and cars are parked to allow adequate space to manoeuvre boats and people and that no speeding is allowed • Traffic to trailer park buildings is restricted to trailers and cars with boats • No spectator cars are allowed into the trailer parks, but directed to alternative parking under marshal supervision	Low
Hazard while navigating in parking area	Injury to rowers and spectators	Low	• Marshalls to advise drivers on parking locations • Speed limits to be maintained using signs and marshals • Marshalls to be in position at all times when parking area in use • Coordination with providers of Parking Areas to ensure all required	Low

			activities are managed by Marshalls	
Hazard for pedestrians when proceeding to racing and spectators	Injury to rowers and spectators or pedestrians	Low	• Speed limits to be maintained using signs. • Marshalls to ensure that the speed limits are maintained	Low
LANDING STAGES:				
Slip hazard due to muddy slope leading to rafts	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• Slope will be treated or covered in straw to provide a non slip surface	Low
Trip hazard due to items being left on landing stages	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• Raft marshals instructed to minimise time crew equipment is left on staging • Blade storage is provided at the sandy bank to keep blades off the floating stages • Shoes to be cleared from the stages by coaches and raft marshals	
SAFETY BOATS:				
Slip hazard and heavy object handling when launching and recovering Safety boats	Injury to safety boat crews and equipment	Low	• Safety boat crews are trained how to launch and recover safety boats from ramps. • Persons not providing safety boat cover will not be permitted near launch/recovery sites while safety vehicles are nearby	
Use of safety boats at high speed may affect water conditions for other river users	Risk to other craft on river and risk of capsize of rowing craft	Low	• Safety boats will only operate at high speed when effecting a rescue, and authorised by chief umpire. • Marshalls will make other crews aware of any imminent danger due to high speed craft	
Use of safety boats may affect	Risk to other craft on river		• Signs will be mounted identifying that a race is in	

other (non-competitive) river users			progress above and below race • Environment Agency and lock keepers have been notified of event taking place • Medical teams at strategic places to enable rapid response and reduce travel of safety boats	
PRIOR TO RACE START:				
River conditions affecting ability to navigate safely	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Low (depending on September weather)	• Conditions will be monitored prior to the event to ensure conditions are appropriate. • Crews will be restricted if water speed is considered unsafe for specific aged crews • Racing will not proceed if the EA have specified Red boards at Benson Lock (unless crews are already waiting at the start).	Low
Collision with other boats on way to start or in marshalling area	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• On water safety cover provided from 20 minutes prior to start • Reliance on competency of crews and coaches, and compliance with the Code • Traffic rules are circulated to athletes prior to the event, non-compliance may lead to race penalties being applied	Low
Long wait in marshalling area prior to start	Potential for hypothermia	Low, varies according to September weather	• Reliance on competency of crews and coaches supported by British Rowing Coach education programme • Raft marshals to advise crews, especially coxes, thought to have	Low

			inadequate protection for the current conditions • Competitors are asked to wear appropriate clothing for the conditions	
DURING A RACE:				
Incidents involving other race crews	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• All racing is carried out under British Rowing Rules of Racing and in compliance with the Code. All races are observed by marshals at all times • Bank marshals along the course will advise boats to move as necessary if there is a safety issue • No warm-up on the course and warming up is restricted to the marshalling area under strict instructions of the bank marshals	Low
Capsize	Potential for hypothermia	Low (in September)	• Umpires and marshals along the course can summon safety boats with emergency blankets	Low
THUNDERSTORMS				
Lightning	Severe injury, death or damage to equipment and structures	Low	If thunder or lightning is observed all racing will be suspended and crews informed to clear the water. All tents are to be evacuated, and all spectators to be advised to get into vehicles, to close doors and windows. Then await the all clear. • All clear will be provided by the Chair of the Race Committee only, and only once no thunder or lightning has been observed for 30 minutes. • In the case of lightning, all	Very Low

			blades MUST be put flat on the ground and not held by athletes or coaches	
ON THE COURSE:				
Overhanging trees on the race line	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• Overhanging trees have been cut back to minimise the possibility of interference • Buoys will be placed to warn crews of any underwater obstacles. • Marshals to warn boats if safety may be compromised	Low
Cruisers, narrow boats and other river traffic	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• Lock Keepers at Benson Lock and Cleeve Lock will be given hand-outs for boats entering the rowing reach and giving advice • Marshals will ensure that the bends are clear before start of racing and keep particularly vigilant in guiding cruisers etc. in the area of the bends	Low
Bends (1km into race)	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	• Extra marshals allocated to keep crews visible at all times and advise on safe line	Low
Four-arches railway bridge (above start)	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Low	• Take care going through narrow arches and under control of marshals	Low
INCLEMENT WEATHER				
Squalls, heavy rain, sleet, snow, fog, severe crosswinds, etc.	Severe injury, death or damage to equipment and structures	Low (in September)	• Race Committee to assess race conditions and agree time delay(s), postponement of racing, cancellation of all racing, or cancellation of classes of crews felt to be at particular risk in the conditions • Participants will be advised	Low

			of the situation over the public address system and WhatsApp	

Decisions affecting the race

Depending on conditions leading up to the race and on race day there may be changes on what racing can be provided to crews. This will be based on the following criteria:

EA Boards	Wind speed	Visibility	Air Temperature	J16 and older	J15 and younger
Red	NA	NA	NA	No racing	No racing
Amber	>15mph	NA	NA	No racing	No racing
Amber	<15mph	>300m	> 5 degrees	Racing	Long course only
Amber	NA	<300m	NA	No racing	No racing
Amber	NA	NA	< 5 degrees	Racing	No Racing
Green	>15mph	NA	NA	No racing	No racing
Green	<15mph	>300m	> 5 degrees	Racing	Racing
Green	NA	<300m	NA	No racing	No racing
Green	NA	NA	<5 degrees	Racing	No racing
Green					