

Risk Assessment for the Champion of the Thames Rowing Club VIIIs Head, Sunday 18 May 2025.

Champion of the Thames RC has a Duty of Care for the competitors, officials, and the general public at large, whilst the event is being held. This risk assessment was carried out by Ian Knights (Water Safety Advisor) using the guidelines published by British Rowing (BR) and the BS8800 1996 risk level estimator:

		<i>Probability of accident</i>		
		Highly unlikely	Unlikely	Likely
Severity of outcome	Slightly Harmful	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
	Harmful	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
	Extremely Harmful	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

Those events that remain classed as "moderate risk" are those that involve the possible immersion of more than one person, which, following the BR guidelines, should be classed as potentially "extremely harmful". The likelihood of all of such events has been assessed, in light of our risk reduction measures, as "highly unlikely" resulting in a "Moderate" severity of outcome. Further reduction to "Tolerable Risk" is impossible under this scheme.

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Severity of outcome	Measures to reduce risk	Likelihood after measures	Severity of outcome
<i>On Land</i>						
Fall hazard whilst moving boats	Injury to rowers and/or damage to equipment	Highly Unlikely	Harmful	- Reliance on competence of crews - All competitors boating from their own boathouse (familiar surroundings)	Highly unlikely	Tolerable
Collision hazard on towpath between cycling spectators/ coaches and members of the public	Injury to spectators / bank parties / members of public	Unlikely	Harmful	- Signs placed along towpath, together with the presence of marshals and at either end warning the public an event is in progress. - Marshals to intervene if they observe unsafe use of the towpath	Highly unlikely	Tolerable
<i>Prior to race start</i>						
Navigation through Green Dragon Bridge	Restricted visibility on corner – potential for collision	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Marshals in vicinity of bridge. - River closure for non-racing crews to reduce the number of other vessels on the water	Highly unlikely	Moderate

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Severity of outcome	Measures to reduce risk	Likelihood after measures	Severity of outcome
Collision with other boats on the way to the start or in marshalling area	Potential for serious injury to rowers and/or damage to equipment	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marshals in position along course before boating begins - River Closure in place for non-competing crews Reliance on competency of crews and compliance with <i>Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing</i> - Spot checks on boat safety may be carried out - In event of reduced visibility, crews will be instructed not to boat 	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Long wait in marshalling area prior to start	Potential for hypothermia	Highly Unlikely (late May weather)	Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marshals to advise crews thought to have inadequate protection for conditions on the day. - Marshals will carry thermal blankets and be extra vigilant if weather is cold. - Marshals to ensure prompt marshalling of boats at the start. - Reliance on competence of crews and coaches to be properly equipped. 	Highly Unlikely	Tolerable

During Race

Collision between racing crews	Possibility of serious injury to competitors/damage to equipment, possibility of capsize	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crews to be started at sensible intervals to avoid the need for overtaking where possible. - Marshals can observe the entire course and will intervene if necessary - Racing carried out under guidance of BR water safety code. - Spot checks on boat safety will be carried out prior to crews boating - Racing to be stopped in event of a capsize on course or rower ejected during race 	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Collision between racing crew and static object, e.g.: bank or moored powerboat	Possibility of serious injury to competitors/damage to equipment, possibility of capsize	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marshals at key locations on course (especially Ditton Corner and the beer tree), and will intervene as needed. - Spot checks on boat safety will be carried out prior to crews boating - All boats are coxed! 	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Collision at finish area	Possibility of serious injury to competitors/damage to equipment, possibility of capsize	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marshals at finish will instruct crews to keep moving after course completed - Spot checks on boat safety will be carried out prior to crews boating 	Highly unlikely	Moderate

Inclement Weather

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Severity of outcome	Measures to reduce risk	Likelihood after measures	Severity of outcome
Thunderstorms	Possibility of severe injury/death; damage to equipment	Highly Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Race committee/Chief Marshal to apply 30-second/10-minute rule. When gap between visible lightning and thunder is 30 seconds or less racing to be stopped and water to be cleared as fast as is safely possible.	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Squalls, heavy rain, sleet, snow, strong crosswind,etc	Possibility of severe injury, death or damage to equipment	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Race committee check forecast via Met. Office website, and inspects river 24 hours prior to the race. - Race committee to assess conditions and agree time delay(s), cancellation of all racing or cancellation of crew classes felt to be at particular risk in the conditions. - Participants to be advised by marshals and at race control.	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Fog significantly reducing visibility	Possibility of severe injury, death or damage to equipment	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Race committee to assess conditions and agree time delay(s) or cancellation of all racing. - Participants to be advised by marshals and at race control.	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Floods / strong stream	Strong stream increasing possibility of collision/ swamping / making safe navigation difficult	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Race committee to cancel all racing if they consider conditions dangerous or if the Conservators of the River Cam so advise. - River levels to be monitored via the Environment Agency website	Highly unlikely	Moderate
General events						
Worsening of existing condition in competitor or spectator: e.g. asthma attack	Severe illness / fatality	Highly Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	- Reliance on crews to know of existing conditions and required treatment. - Marshal to summon emergency services by mobile phone. Marshals hold GPS/Postcode lists for all access points to the river to guide emergency services. Qualified first aider will assist as needed	Highly unlikely	Moderate

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Severity of outcome	Measures to reduce risk	Likelihood after measures	Severity of outcome
Transgression of powered craft on course	Collision with possibility of severe injury, death or damage to equipment	Highly Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event advertised in advance to local boating community and with the Conservators of the River Cam. - Marshal at Baits-bite lock will warn boats arriving at the lock that the river is closed for racing. - Marshals at Green Dragon / railings will warn boats moving downstream well before the finish. - Race Committee will have liaised in advance with commercial boat operators <p>If boats should fail to stop all marshals will be informed by radio and the racing will be stopped.</p>	Highly unlikely	Moderate
Infection contracted from contact with river water	Weils Disease (Leptospirosis), or unspecified gastro enteric infections causing diarrhoea and/or vomiting	Unlikely	Extremely Harmful	Instructions issued in advance to competitors highlight these risks. Competitors are advised to cover open cuts prior to boating, wash any cuts sustained during the race immediately afterwards, and to keep water bottles in waterproof plastic bags.	Highly unlikely	Moderate

S O Ian Knights, 28 January 2025