

Newcastle University Boat Club

Risk Assessment (with action points) for Tyne Single Scullers Head 2023

Last reviewed and updated on 9th August 2023, published 9th August 2023

Location: River Tyne between Blaydon & Scotswood

Date: 9th September 2023

Note on roles

The Boat Club Committee ensures that the club operates generally in a safe way and provides the context for the Organising Committee to operate.

The Organising Committee for the event is responsible for the overall planning and coordination of the event and for operations on the day. Actions can and will be delegated to individuals - a checklist for tasks needing doing will be used.

The Race Committee for an event has a very limited remit - essentially it is made up of the umpires on the day of the event, but with the chair appointed well in advance by the regional umpiring committee chairman. The Race Committee deals primarily with umpiring issues, including disqualification etc. However, the chair of the Race Committee will be consulted in advance on overall arrangements and in the immediate run-up on possible cancellation due to weather conditions, etc.

Note: This assessment is based on the current intention of basing event admin & catering purposes at Tyne Amateur Rowing Club, with use of NUBC and TURC facilities.

| Potential source of risk | Risk Identified | Who/ what is at risk | Seriousness | Probability | Acceptable risk ? | Planned actions to address the risk | By whom? | By when? | Additional notes | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | | Slight, moderate, high, extreme | Very unlikely, unlikely, likely, very likely | Very low or low risk - no action needed; Medium risk - reduce if practicable; High/very high risk - needs action to reduce | | | | | |
| 1 Prior to race day | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Outdoor weather and river conditions | Unsuitable/ deteriorating weather conditions | All participants, spectators, volunteers, marshals, launch crews; also trailer drivers and trailers | Moderate | Unlikely to likely | Medium | Regularly check weather forecasts and inspect water conditions. Cancel competition the day before if severe weather is forecast, so rowers and trailers do not travel abortively. | Organising committee, race committee chairman, safety adviser | During week before | Check daily from 7 days before |
| 1.2 | Entries | Too many entries accepted and thus boats on water | Competitors and launch crews | Moderate | Unlikely | Medium | Organising committee agree maximum entry per category in advance. Ensure sufficient assistance is available to help boat. Include warnings about competitor competence within race information provided. Marshals to refuse to let incompetent rowers boat if they consider they will be a danger to others. | Organising committee and marshals | Month in advance onwards | Guidance for marshals needs to be written and circulated appropriately on the day of the event. |
| 1.3 | River conditions | Unsuitable river/ current/ tidal conditions | Competitors and launch crews | High | Unlikely | Medium | Check tide tables before event. Check wind direction and recent rainfall levels. Inspect water conditions regularly. | Safety adviser | During week before | |
| 1.4 | | Excessive amounts of debris in river, of a size likely to damage boats | Competitors and launch crews. Boats, blades and launches | High | Very unlikely | Medium | Monitor river conditions and cancel competition if necessary. | Organising committee, safety adviser | On day, plan in advance | |
| 1.5 | Clubhouse/s and facilities | Clubhouse facilities or steps not fit for use | All participants, spectators, volunteers, marshals, launch crews | High to extreme | Very unlikely | Medium | Site risk assessments are in place, and information is circulated appropriately. Fire extinguishers, alarms and fire blankets in place and in working order. The kitchen and toilets, heating and lighting in working order in advance of competition. | Host clubs | During week before | |
| 1.6 | Personnel | Too few volunteers to help on the day | All participants, spectators, volunteers, marshals, launch crews | Moderate | Likely | Medium | Ensure sufficient assistance is signed up and confirmed at least 2 days in advance. | Organising committee with club committee and squads | Month in advance onwards | Signing up process to be started a few weeks in advance. All jobs to be filled two days before event to allow for sufficient notification of role or changes in circumstance. |
| 2 Pre-race - on land | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Trailers arriving | Mud, rutted surface, trailers bogged down. | Competitors, volunteers, spectators | Moderate | Likely | Medium | Have helpers to push trailers in very wet conditions. | Organising committee | On day | Helpers rota agreed in advance |
| 2.2 | Portaloos (if required) | Blocked and/ or insufficient for numbers attending. | All participants, spectators, volunteers, marshals, launch crews | Slight to moderate | Unlikely | Medium | Ensure sufficient provision, in place day before competition; order from reputable supplier. | Organising committee | In place day before | Order month in advance |
| 2.3 | Club house/s and their facilities | Bumps/ slips/ falls/ trips. | All participants, spectators, volunteers, marshals, launch crews | Slight | Likely | Medium | First aid provider in attendance all day. Tidy up premises in advance. Put up warning signs if necessary, if dangers etc are present. | Organising committee | Week in advance | Book 3 months in advance |
| 2.4 | Club grounds Car park Trailer parking area, Boat trailers Boats | Bumps/ slips/ falls/ trips. | All participants, members of public | Slight | Likely | Medium | Notices, directions to safe paths for Hadrian's Way users. Higher usage by walkers and cyclists to be anticipated in good weather. Marshals to instruct rowers and helpers to keep Public Rights of Way clear of trailers and boats and blades etc. Equipment and blades to be stored in safe locations clear of steps and access ways. | Organising committee | On day, plan in advance | Check notices are ready one day in advance |
| 2.5 | Slow/ inexperienced crews on steps | Bumps/ slips/ falls/ trips. | Competitors, volunteers/ marshals and race timetabling | Slight | Likely | Medium | Set boating and starting times, with agreed allowances and time penalties, if required, to be agreed upon and circulated appropriately before the competition. Marshals to ensure prompt boating. Advise rowers of delays at regular intervals (no less than hourly). All rowers to wear boots or other suitable footwear and adjust feet on the water. Warnings / instructions to be included in race information. | Organising committee, race committee, safety adviser | Week in advance and on day if needs be | |
| 2.6 | NUBC steps and grounds | Bumps/ slips/ falls/ trips. | Competitors, helpers, marshals | Slight to Moderate | Likely | Medium | Sufficient marshals present to assist at boating times. Steps to be kept clear of blades and other items. | Organising committee | On day, plan in advance | Marshals to advise caution & extreme care on slippery steps (including central 'ramp'). |
| 2.7 | TARC & TURC steps if used | Bumps/ slips/ falls/ trips. | Competitors, helpers, marshals | Slight to Moderate | Likely | Medium | Sufficient marshals present to assist at boating times. Steps to be kept clear of blades and other items. | Organising committee | On day, plan in advance | |
| 2.8 | Unsafe boats | Drowning, injuries, capsizes, collision, loss of blades, loss damage to boat. | Competitors | Slight to Moderate | Likely | Medium | Race information to underline need for clubs to check boats before competition; race official may check basic boat safety (bowball, shoe restraints, hatches, buoyancy). Boats known to be unsafe will not be allowed to go on water. | Competitors and their clubs, organising committee | Before boating | |
| 2.9 | Unaccompanied and inexperienced juniors | Collisions, race management delays/ difficulties, harm to other competitors. Inability for marshals or safety cover to carry out allotted task because of having to ensure care of junior. | Competitors, Tyne RC, race officials, juniors, safety crews | Moderate; high at low tide. | Likely | High | Guidance to be issued in advance to all parents of juniors. Coaches to ensure competition day sessions are advertised as cancelled by written notices in club and verbal and email warnings. Unaccompanied juniors to be asked to leave club premises by welfare officer. Welfare officer or agreed deputy to be present during the competition. | Organising committee, welfare officer, junior coaches | Week in advance | |
| 2.10 | Kitchen/s | Slips, falls, burns, scalds, contamination of foods, fire, gas escape. Theft/ loss of takings. | Kitchen users, competitors, volunteers, spectators, safety crews | Moderate | Very likely | Very high | All volunteers in the kitchen to be named on kitchen rota, with a maximum of 6 people in at one time. Serving helpers to avoid handling money at same time as direct contact with food. Ensure system for secure deposit of takings as the day proceeds. | Organising committee, kitchen co-ordinator | On day | Ensure that inexperienced kitchen volunteers are supervised by an experienced member of TARC to help ensure correct food safety procedures are enforced. This should be organised before the event. |
| 2.11 | Launches and other craft | Capsize/ engine failure/ damage to club equipment or facilities/ injuries | Launch crews, competitors, volunteers/ marshals | Slight to moderate | Unlikely | Medium | Tie up launches securely when not in use, especially in poor weather conditions or on rising tide. Check equipment before competition. Ensure sufficient assistance to carry launches without dragging over steps. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 3 During race - on land | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | As per pre-race items (2.1 to 2.11) | | | | | All same as pre-race except less people are located within various Club facilities, so risk is less. | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|--------------------|--|--------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 3.2 | Boats & trailers/ changing facilities/ car parks/ clubs | Theft/ vandalism | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, spectators; vehicles and belongings | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Warn in advance of risk. Ensure vigilance during the competition. Offer secure storage if possible. | Organising committee | On day | Regular patrols if possible |
| 4 | After race - on land | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | As per pre-race items (2.1 to 2.11) | All same as pre-race except less people are located within various Club facilities, so risk is less. | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2 | | Tiredness | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, launch crews, spectators | Slight | Weather dependant | Medium | Seating with warm food and drinks. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 4.3 | Effects of racing/ attending the race | Coldness/ hypothermia | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, launch crews, spectators | Slight | Unlikely to likely, depending on temperature | High | Ensure participants have warm clothing. Include warnings in race instructions. Warm showers, warm food and drinks, spare clothing to be made available. Keep waiting times before and after race to a minimum. Adjust start times as necessary well before the competition. | Organising committee, club committee | On day | Ensure that safety crews and volunteers are dressed appropriately, not just the competitors. |
| 4.4 | | Race injury | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, launch crews, spectators | Moderate | Likely | Low | Ensure first aid kit, stretcher, fleece and space blankets available. First aid provider to hand if needed. Call emergency services if serious. | Organising committee | On day | Ensure that first aid kits within all clubs used, and within all safety launches are fully stocked with appropriate and in-date items. |
| 4.5 | Race impacts | Damage to boats | Boats | Slight to moderate | Likely | Medium | Ensure assistance to place damaged craft on trailers or safe location. | Organising committee | On day | |

| 5 Before race - on water | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 5.1 | Rowers warming up | Collisions with other boats, bridges, banks, obstacles. Damage to boats, blades, rowers. | Competitors and launch crews. Boats and equipment | Slight | Likely | Medium | Ensure race information is circulated to competitors before the competition. Monitor rowers warming up on water. | Organising committee and marshals | On day, plan in advance | |
| 5.2 | Boats drifting | Collisions with other boats, bridges, banks, obstacles. Damage to boats, blades, rowers. | Competitors and launch crews. Boats and equipment | Moderate to high, depending on water conditions | Likely | Medium | Marshals to give clear instructions, direct to rowers. Keep waiting time to minimum. | Organising committee and marshals | On day, plan in advance | |
| 5.3 | Inexperienced rowers | Collisions with other boats, bridges, banks, obstacles. Damage to boats, blades, rowers. | Competitors and launch crews. Boats and equipment | Moderate | Likely | High | Marshals to give clear instructions, direct to rowers if necessary. Clear guidance given to start umpire before race. | Organising committee | On day, plan in advance | |
| 5.4 | Obstacles in/ near edges of river. | Shallow areas and/or navigational markers | Competitors, boats, launch crews | High | Likely | Medium | Competitors and launch drivers to be advised of any navigation issues during safety brief/ in safety instructions. Course map to show these where known in advance. | Organising committee | Map in advance, briefing on day | |
| 6 On river - boathouse to race start area | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1 | Waiting for race start | Capsize, swamping of boat, damage/ collisions to boats, loss of race number. | Competitors and launch crews | Moderate to extreme | Unlikely to likely - weather dependent as more probable in very poor conditions | Medium | Clear instructions to rowers lining up for start. Rescue launches (Red Seal) and marshalling launches deployed and in position before start of boating. Regular checks on weather and water conditions; launch crews to report back to race control on water conditions. Launches to have emergency kit: throw lines, first aid, life jackets. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.2 | Deterioration in weather, tidal flow and top water current | Capsize, swamping of boat, damage/ collisions to boats | Competitors and launch crews | Moderate | Unlikely | Medium | Instructions issued to launch crews to postpone starts and or return competitors to club house. Have an emergency action plan ready for marshals/ officials/ launch crews in event of cancellation or postponement with competitors returning to steps. | Organising committee, safety adviser to do action plan | On day, plan in advance | |
| 6.3 | Boat not watertight | Swamping, sinking, capsizes | Competitors, safety crews | Moderate | Unlikely | Low | Rescue launch available. Race information to underline need for clubs to check boats before competition. Boats known to be unsafe will not be allowed to go on water. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.4 | Jetskiers/ other motor craft, including rescue/ race launches | Wash causing swamping. Collisions | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, launch crews, spectators. Boats and blades | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Pre race instructions to notify of this. Race launches to control wash and deflected wash at all times, even in emergency. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.5 | Cold weather | Chill or hypothermia | Competitors, volunteers, marshals, launch crews, spectators | Moderate | Unlikely | Low | Race instructions to insist competitors are equipped for chilly/ unseasonal conditions. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.6 | Weather/ fitness / race impacts | Injury to competitor | Competitors | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Safety and club launches deployed, backed up by first aid provider. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.7 | | Illness of competitor | Competitors | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Safety and club launches deployed, backed up by first aid provider. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.8 | Inexperienced rowers | Collision with another boat or obstruction in the river | Competitors, safety crews | Moderate | Unlikely | Low | Rowers to be made aware of hazards and navigation rules in pre-race information. Launches to check for river debris and warn race control if necessary, remove debris if possible. Use temporary marker buoys for obstructions and advise all crews. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 6.9 | Equipment | Breakdown of launch | Launch crew, competitors | Moderate | Unlikely to likely | Low | Ensure that all launches, fuel and engines are checked before competition day to ensure they work/ are sufficient. Provide for back-up launch / engine. | Organising committee | Day before and on day | |
| 6.10 | Obstacles in/ near edges of river. | Shallow areas and/ or navigational markers | Competitors, boats, launch crews | Moderate; high at low tide | Moderate; high at low tide | Moderate; high at low tide | Competitors and launch drivers to be advised of any navigation issues during safety brief/ safety instructions. | Organising committee | Day before | |
| 7 On water during race | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1 | Mud/single banks | Shallow areas and/ or navigational markers | Launch crew, competitors | Moderate; high at low tide | Moderate; high at low tide | Moderate; high at low tide | Pre-race briefings and include in race information (course map, etc). Launches and marshals to warn crews. | Organising committee | Week before and on day | |
| 7.2 | Obstacles in/ near edges of river. | Shallow areas and/ or navigational markers | Competitors, boats, launch crews | Moderate / high at low tide | Likely | Medium | Pre-race briefings and include in race information (course map, etc). Launches and marshals to warn crews. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 7.3 | Boats in trouble (swamping or capsize etc) | Collision between racing boats, through bad overtaking, bad steering, not allowing opponent sufficient water etc | Competitors | Moderate | Likely | Medium | Pre race instructions issued to rowers. Rescue launches at regular points on course. Radio contact with marshals/ launches/ race control. Call emergency services if required. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 7.4 | Failure of radio communications | Launch/ marshals losing means of communication | All participants | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Check equipment before hand; have spares. Mobile phones to be available as alternative, preset with necessary numbers if possible. Numbers to be issued to all key personnel. | Organising committee | Day before and on day | |
| 7.5 | Other collisions, causing obstruction forcing rowers to halt. | Bad coxing | Competitors, boats | High | Unlikely | Medium | Launches available. Race instructions. Have an agreed warm-up area and instructions/ marshalling. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 7.6 | Competitors | Stopping on finish line | Competitors, boats | Moderate | Likely | Medium | Marshalling launch at finish to encourage rowers through and well beyond the finish line. Clear race instructions on this. | Organising committee | On day; instructions issued in advance | |
| 7.7 | | Turning and crossing path of racing craft | Competitors, boats | High | Likely | High | Sufficient launches and marshals to prevent unauthorised movement and crossings. Instructions about crossing points in race information. | | On day; instructions issued in advance | |
| 8 On water - after race | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1 | Queue for landing at steps | Hypothermia/ tiredness/ lack of concentration | Competitors, boats | Moderate | Likely | High | Launch and marshals on the bank to monitor and instruct progress. Advise rowers to put on warm clothes and feet out of shoes in readiness. Helpers ready to assist landing. | Organising committee | On day | |
| 9 After the event | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9.1 | Launches | Going adrift/ trespass by members of public/ theft | Boats, engines, equipment | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Ensure launches not left unattended and safely put away after use. | Organising committee | On day | Helpers rota agreed in advance |
| 9.2 | Boat loading | Slips/ trips/ bumps/ scrapes/ poorly secured boats | People, passers by, boats, blades | Slight | Unlikely | Low | Ensure no blades, clothes or other equipment left on steps, grounds. Warnings to public path users. | Organising committee | On day | Helpers rota agreed in advance |
| 9.3 | Trailers leaving | Mud/ rutted surface/ trailers bogged down | Visiting rowers and helpers, boats | Moderate | Likely | Medium | Have helpers to push trailers in very wet conditions. | Organising committee | On day | Helpers rota agreed in advance |