

# **Ponteland Junior Head of the River**

**16 March 2019**

## **Safety Plan as at 13-02-19**

This document should be read in conjunction with the competition Risk Assessment and its 'Actions to address risks' and numbered references in this document refer to those actions.

### **1 Introduction**

Ponteland Junior Head is organised by Tyne Amateur Rowing Club; contact names in full will be given in Appendix 1 to be produced in the week before the event when all are known. Name and number for Race Control on the day is given now in section 9.

Events will be offered under the British Rowing Competition Framework. The events will be run from the Tyne ARC club house, Water Row, Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NL. Boating may also be from Tyne United Rowing Club, Newburn Bridge Road, Blaydon, NE15 8NR, depending on numbers. The course is 2.4km approx (with about 500m further at either end for marshalling) and is shown on the accompanying course map.

The waters are within the jurisdiction of the Port of Tyne and authorisation is necessary and is being sought on the basis of this and other documents. The river will not be closed to other traffic, but this is very limited.

The competitions are for singles, doubles, quads, fours, eights and octs. It will be run in three divisions starting at 10.30am, 12.30pm and 2.30pm. All entrants will be juniors (18 or younger). It is not proposed to invite athletes with disabilities.

The extent of safety cover and other provisions in the event welfare plan recognise that young and relatively novice crews will be entering. The organising committee will ensure that in the case of seriously adverse conditions, rowing will be suspended or cancelled, even if rowers are already at the clubs.

Each division will be run as a completely separate time trial. The races will be run under the Rules of Racing and the Rules of British Rowing with local rules limited to specific hazards such as Newburn Bridge.

### **2 Planning and preparation.**

Authorisation is required from the Port of Tyne (PoT) and at the time of this version is being sought. PoT requires copies of key safety documents and details of insurance. River closure is not being requested, as commercial traffic is minimal and other potential users will all be notified in advance. Emergency services are informed as appropriate to the modest scale of the event. Insurance cover is supplied through British Rowing on its standard event policy.

Other river users on this stretch of the Tyne will be informed in advance, with particular emphasis on other rowing clubs, but also others such as Newburn Water Ski Club who operate close by. Rights of way pass through the various club sites at Newburn and warning notices will be put out

on the day warning of activity. Bookings for externally provided launch safety cover and first aid will be booked early and confirmed in place a week before.

Careful management of entries is important in minimising the risk of having too many crews on the water. Ponteland Junior Head does not usually attract a very large number of entries, but a safety limit of 60 entries per division is in place just in case. In drawing up the start order for each division, care is taken to order crews as far as possible in speed order, fastest first, to minimise the need for overtaking (although the river is broad enough for this not to be a major problem). In addition short breaks will be introduced in the start order within divisions to further reduce need for overtaking.

The overall course map and instructions to crews, will be issued/published when the event is first advertised; access and parking instructions, details of safety briefings and detailed circulation patterns at start and finish will be issued in the week before the event, when numbers and likely weather conditions are known.

The organising committee will ensure that resources related to safety are available in-house, on loan or bought in, notably marshalling launches, loudhailers, radios and timing equipment; all to be checked as working prior to race day. The organising committee will prepare a task rota for volunteer helpers and fully filled out by the Wednesday before the event. Priority will be given as necessary to tasks directly related to safety.

Assistance will be sought from neighbouring clubs in good time if there are insufficient resources at the home club. Volunteers named for key roles, notably launch drivers and water-based marshalls, will be assessed for experience and competence. Written instructions for all volunteer roles and bought in services will be prepared and circulated in advance.

The club or clubs physically hosting on the day (number depends on numbers of entries) will ensure buildings, sites and boating steps are in a clean and safe condition, that toilet and changing facilities are available and arrangements have been made to receive any crews that are wet and/or cold.

### ***Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.1-1.8, 2.1-2.11***

## **3 Weather and water conditions**

Tides times are known in advance, but detailed weather forecasts will not be available until about a week before. During the week preceding the event, the competition safety adviser will monitor weather forecasts each day and inform the rest of the organising committee a week before and then daily from the preceding Wednesday, noting not just the weather, but also the likely interaction of wind and tidal flow.

The organising committee will ensure that participating clubs are kept informed of the prospects for the day via the event secretary and/or the web site. The organising committee will review the need to cancel the event in advance throughout the week if prospects are poor. The safety adviser in conjunction with the Chair of the Race Committee can at any time on the day suspend or cancel racing, either as a whole or for particular classes of entry. Where it is thought possible to run reduced numbers in a division, particular note will be taken of the possible young age or lack of experience of crews and exclude these first.

Conditions along the whole course will be assessed early on race day and the organising committee or delegated officers shall decide if the event can proceed as planned or whether it is necessary or likely that either restrictions on who rows or complete cancellation is necessary at that point. This will be repeated before each division.

Should a risk of thunderstorms and lightning be identified in advance, the organising committee will consider this information and decide whether to cancel early. If lightning occurs on the day, then the 30/30 rule will apply: rowing shall stop when the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds (or less), and shall not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last lightning. If crews are on the water, they will all be instructed to return to the home club and land there or at one of the adjacent clubs as quickly as possible.

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5, 1.6, 6.1***

#### **4 Pre start on race day**

Race Control will be set up early in the day and remain staffed all day. Race Control will take on overall coordination of the event, though tasks may be delegated to others with clear reporting lines.

A safety briefing for all participating club coaches and individual rowers may be held before each competition gets underway. The instructions issued to clubs in good time before the event will have contained the same information, except for late changes and up-to-date weather and water reports, so crews should all be well briefed in any case.

The safety adviser will confirm to race control that all safety provisions are in place before advising that boating can take place – notably launch-based marshalls and safety cover. Crews will have been advised that the normal rules of river navigation will be followed on the way to the start, i.e. follow the south bank, but do not apply during the race.

Competitors will have been issued with the final start order before the day. Land marshalls will ensure that these are kept to. Crews presenting after the last boating time indicated will be refused permission to boat to ensure prompt start time, unless race control in consultation with other officials agrees otherwise. Control Commission checks will be carried out before boating, with an emphasis on younger juniors and novices generally. The club cannot guarantee to inspect every boat however (see later re competitor and club responsibilities).

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 2.11-1.11, 5.1-5.5***

#### **5 Communication**

The main means of communication will be by UHF radios so that there is good communication to/from all parts of the course. At 2.4km only the short length of the course should mean good reception at all points at all times. Mobile phones will be a back-up. A telephone number list will be established in advance and issued via the club web site on the preceding Thursday and in printed form on the day.

***Action points: 6.1, 7.3, 7.4***

## **6 Standard procedures on the water**

The start marshalling launches will precede the first crews boating and starting to move upstream to the start marshalling areas. The safety cover launch and bank monitors will also be deployed then along the river in accordance with the course map accompanying this document. All will report to race control when in place and the marshalling launches shall give regular reports to Race Control on how the start marshalling is progressing. All launches will check for debris en route and clear or ask race control to allocate another crew to clear.

Race control will check with all marshalling and safety launches, umpires and finish officials that they are in place before asking the start marshalls and start umpire to initiate the race. The race course should be clear of all but marshalling and safety launches at the time of the start. However, if a racing boat is held back for any reason and is on the course when the start is ready, the start umpire will take advice from race control and others and may start the race if advised the boat is in a safe position off the main line.

Should a commercial craft, powered pleasure boat or other river user likely to interfere with the racing appear (most likely from downstream), the nearest water-based marshall shall approach the craft and request it to turn around or wait. Race control and the start umpire should be informed immediately and if necessary racing should be suspended.

All participants should make themselves aware of the Port of Tyne Byelaws and ensure compliance at all times.

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 5.1-5.5, 6.1-6.8, 7.1-7.7***

## **7 Emergency procedures on the water**

In the event of an incident occurring, it should be within sight of a safety launch and the launch will respond immediately. If a crew not involved believes an incident has not been spotted, they should report to the next safety launch. The launch crew should deal with the incident as necessary and advise race control of what is happening. Race control will call the emergency services should this be advised by the safety launch.

The safety launch can decide whether to evacuate the rowers affected immediately or hold until all crews are past. If the incident is serious and immediate evacuation is necessary, then Chair of the Race Committee or the safety adviser in conjunction with others may decide racing should be stopped immediately or other appropriate action taken to safeguard all on the river.

The safety launch may take any appropriate action without consultation with race control if needed urgently to safeguard crews or others. Racing can be restarted if deemed safe by those directly involved in attending the incident. Evacuation should be to Tyne ARC at Newburn if needed.

All actions will be monitored and logged by race control.

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 4.3, 6.1-6.8, 7.1-7.7***

## 8 Competitor and entering club responsibilities

The responsibilities of and precautions taken by the host club are outlined above and in the Risk Assessment. Competitors must take some responsibility for their actions, and they should be advised as such by their clubs through coaches or otherwise. Coaches of juniors in particular must ensure that all competitors are fully briefed before the event on the instructions to crews and on the day of any further information from the briefing.

The instructions to crews emphasises two things for competitors and coaches to consider. Firstly that all crews should have sufficient strength and experience to row a 2.4km race on a large tidal river. And secondly that as the competitions is March, the weather could be cold and/or wet and/or windy and suitable clothing to wear at the start should be carried. Competitors and clubs should be aware that they may not be allowed to boat or race if these expectations are not met.

Club volunteers as agreed with the Chair of the Race Committee and under the direction of an umpire will undertake Control Commission checks of boats before boating, but cannot guarantee this will be on a 100% basis. As far as possible competitors will be given time to rectify faults. Participating clubs are asked via the *Instructions to Crews* asked to check all standard safety items on every boat before loading and again on the day before proceeding to the steps.

Competitors through coaches or directly should make themselves familiar with the Rules of Racing as they apply to head races and to any local rules published, most notably the need to use only the south middle arch of Newburn bridge during racing.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.4, 2.4, 4.3**

## 9 Race Control and other contact points

The pre-event contact for other clubs and for the safety launch providers is Colin Percy. He is also to be the primary contact in Race Control on the day based at Tyne ARC and thus the central point of contact via UHF radio and mobile telephone as necessary:

Colin Percy	Tyne ARC	07985 003304	entries@tynearc.com
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Other phone numbers are being collated as at 13-02-19 and a list will be available from the Thursday before the competition the club web site at [www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont\\_head\\_mobiles\\_270818.cfm](http://www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont_head_mobiles_270818.cfm) and in printed form on the day. It will be inserted into this Safety Plan as Appendix 2 when ready.

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## Appendix 1

### Launch cover

#### **Safety launches (provider Red Seal)**

No marshalling duties. Locations shown by red spots on course map.

Two in total, one about one third of the way down the course, one about two thirds the way down course.

Launches will be inter-visible. Each will have UHF radio.

#### **Marshalling launches – provider Tyne ARC, possibly other clubs**

Can offer assistance and recovery as well. Locations shown by purple spots on course map.

#### ***Six launches in all:***

- above start
- just upstream of slipway
- just upstream of clubs on north bank
- about half way down straight
- just below finish
- in finish marshalling area

Each will have UHF radio.

All to have mobile phones as well; numbers to be collated no later than the Thursday before the competition and put on web site at

[www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont\\_head\\_mobiles\\_270818.cfm](http://www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont_head_mobiles_270818.cfm).

## Appendix 2

### **Telephone contact numbers**

All key officials will mobile phones as well as some having radios; telephone numbers to be collated no later than the Thursday before the competition and put on web site at [www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont\\_head\\_mobiles\\_270818.cfm](http://www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/pont_head_mobiles_270818.cfm).

Race Control main contact will be:

Colin Percy 07985 003304