

# Ponteland Junior Head

23 March 2024

## Safety Plan

This document should be read in conjunction with the competition's *Risk Assessment* and its 'Actions to address risks' and numbered references in this document refer to those actions. The *Risk Assessment* and other competition documents are available at: [www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/ponteland\\_junior\\_head\\_153682.cfm](http://www.tynerowingclub.org/pages/ponteland_junior_head_153682.cfm).

### 1 Introduction

Ponteland Junior Head is organised by Tyne Amateur Rowing Club (TARC). The competition will have an Organising Committee formed out of TARC's ongoing Events Committee. The pre-race contact point is given in Section 9.

The events will be run from the TARC 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 long (with about 300m further needed at either end for marshalling) with the clubhouse at roughly the half way point - see the accompanying *Course Map*.

The events are for singles, doubles/pairs, quads/fours and eights/octuples. 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 some 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. Events will be offered under the British Rowing [Competition Framework](#). The races will be run under the British Rowing [Rules of Racing](#) with local rules as set out in the *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* for this competition, notably use of the correct arch of Newburn Bridge whilst racing and returning to the steps. British Rowing's [RowSafe](#) guidance will be followed by the host and visiting clubs.

### 2 Planning and preparation.

Authorisation is required from the Port of Tyne and at the time of publishing this version it is being sought. The Port requires copies of key safety documents and details of insurance. River closure is not being requested, as commercial traffic is minimal. Emergency services are informed as appropriate to the modest scale of the event. Insurance cover is supplied through British Rowing on its standard events 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 water skiers who can operate close by. Public Rights of Way pass through the various club sites at Newburn and notices will be put out on the day warning users of the rowing 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 the need for overtaking.

The *Course Map* and *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* will be published in good time before the competition date; 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 ensure it is 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 marshals, 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 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, 1.4-1.8, 2.1-2.6***

### **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, plus the related issues of possible topwater and debris in the river.

The Organising Committee will ensure that participating clubs are kept informed of the weather and water prospects for the day via the pre-event contact person 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 some crews and exclude these first.

Conditions along the whole course will be assessed early on race day and the organising committee or delegated officers in discussion with the Chair of the Race Committee 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: 1.2, 3.6-3.12**

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

The Race Control location will be set up early in the day at TARC and remain staffed until completion of the competition and all boats off the water and loaded on trailers. The Organising Committee will appoint a Race Coordinator no later than a week before race day and the Coordinator will take on overall coordination of competition on the day and generally be stationed at Race Control.

A pre-race safety briefing for participating club coaches and individual rowers is not normally held. The instructions issued to clubs (and put on the web site) well before race day will contain adequate information to inform clubs and crews on what to expect. Late changes and/or adverse weather reports will be notified by email, on the web site and via social media if necessary.

The Safety Adviser must confirm to the Coordinator that all safety provisions, notably safety and marshalling launches, are in place before the Coordinator advises step marshals that boating can take commence.

Competitors will have been issued with the final start order with embarking times before the day. Land marshals will ensure that these times are kept to, using amplification equipment as necessary. Crews presenting after the last boating time indicated will be refused permission to boat to ensure a prompt start time, unless the Coordinator in consultation with other officials agrees otherwise.

Control Commission (boat safety) checks will be carried out before boating, with an emphasis on younger juniors and novice crews. The club is not required to inspect every boat under British Rowing guidance, but will almost certainly do this anyway. See also Section 8 on *Competitor and entering club responsibilities*.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5, 2.1-2.8**

#### **5 Standard procedures on the water**

For each Division the start marshalling launches will precede the first crews to boat down the river to the start marshalling areas. The safety cover launches and bank monitors will also be deployed along the river. Locations for all these are shown on the *Course Map*. All will report to the Coordinator at Race Control when in place and the marshalling launches shall give regular reports on how the start marshalling is progressing. All launches will check for debris en route and clear or ask the Coordinator to allocate another crew to clear. Keeping racing and returning crews separate on the straight will be a priority and marshalling launches must be in place on this part of the course before the start of racing.

The Coordinator will check with all marshalling and safety launches, umpires, bank race monitors and finish officials that they are in place before asking the start marshals 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 starter will take advice from the Coordinator and others and may start the race if advised the boat is in a safe position off the main racing line.

Should a commercial craft, powered pleasure boat or other river user appear and be likely to interfere with the racing (most likely from downstream), the nearest water-based marshal or safety launch shall approach the craft and request it to turn around or wait. If the boat master refuses to do so and proceeds, then advice should be given that doing so may contravene Port of Tyne byelaws by endangering others. The Coordinator and the starter should be informed immediately and if necessary racing should be suspended.

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5, 3.1-3.19***

## **6 Emergency procedures on the water**

In the event of an incident occurring, it will be within sight of one of the the dedicated safety launches, a marshalling launch or a bank monitor. Launches will respond immediately and attend. If an incident happens closest to a bank monitor, they will alert the Coordinator by radio and ask for launch attendance. If a racing crew not involved believes an incident has not been spotted, they should report it to the next launch or bank monitor. The attending launch crew should deal with the incident as necessary and advise the Coordinator of what is happening.

The responding 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 the Coordinator in conjunction, if possible with the Chair of the Race Committee and the Safety Adviser, may decide racing should be stopped immediately or other appropriate action taken to safeguard all on the river.

The launch attending an incident may take any appropriate action including stopping other crews without consultation with the Coordinator 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 TARC at Newburn if needed.

The Coordinator or any other race official should call the emergency services immediately should this be necessary in the event of a serious incident. This should be reported to the Coordinator, who will log this and all other significant actions throughout the day.

***Action points from Risk Assessment: 3.9-3.12***

## **7 Communication including with Port of Tyne and emergency services**

The main means of communication will be by UHF radios. At 2.4km, the short length of the course and its location next to the clubhouse should mean good reception at all points at all times. Mobile phones will be a back-up. Appendix 2 with its mobile phone number list and a clear communication protocol will be established by the Wednesday before race day and issued on the day to those who need it in full and key numbers will be available to all on the host club web site on the day.

Port of Tyne's Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) unit monitors and controls all commercial shipping, fishing and leisure movements on the River Tyne. Tyne VTS is operated on a 24-hour basis, using the call sign 'Tyne VTS', with Channel 12 as the primary maritime VHF radio frequency. Telephone number is 0191 257 2080 and email [TyneVTS@portoftyne.co.uk](mailto:TyneVTS@portoftyne.co.uk).

Race Control will ensure that Tyne VTS on VHF channel 12 or via the phone number above is contacted (a) immediately before the events starts, (b) on completion of the event and (c) in the case of a serious on water incident. Depending on the nature of the incident and whether rescue or just medical aid is required fire, ambulance or police may be called.

Communication with crews on the water prior to, during and after the race may be by both water and land-based officials. This may vary between simple instructions, e.g. to keep boats in line pre-start, through to urgent instructions to change course or even stop during racing, in the interests of safety. The *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* asks crews to listen out for and comply with such instructions. All relevant officials will have loudhailers.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.5, 1.7, 3.10, 3.15**

## **8 Competitor and entering club responsibilities.**

The responsibilities of and precautions taken by the host club or clubs 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 competition on the *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* and any further information supplied to them.

The instructions emphasise two things for competitors and coaches to consider. First is that all crews should have sufficient strength and experience to row a 2.4km race on a large tidal river. And second is that as the competitions is in March, the weather could be cold and/or wet and/or windy and suitable clothing to wear whilst waiting 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. No competing crews will be allowed to boat before the times published for this in the official *Start Order* for their race, as safety cover cannot be guaranteed.

Participating clubs are asked via the *Instructions to Clubs and Crews* to check all standard safety items on every boat before loading their trailers at home and again on the day before proceeding to the steps. Volunteers from the host club or clubs under the direction of an umpire will undertake safety checks of boats before they proceed to the water. They will endeavour to do this for all boats, but cannot guarantee that this will be 100%; the prime responsibility for safety remains with the participating club, as per British Rowing guidance.

Competitors through coaches or directly should make themselves familiar with the British Rowing *Rules of Racing* as they apply to head races and to any local rules published in the *Instructions to Clubs and Crews*. All clubs will already be very familiar with *RowSafe*. In addition participating clubs should make themselves aware of the *Port of Tyne General Byelaws* and the *River Tyne Rowing Club Safety Code* and ensure compliance at all times.

**Action points from Risk Assessment: 1.8, 2.5, 2.6, 3.3**

## **9 Race Control and other contact points**

The pre-event contact for other clubs regarding entries and for others on any other matter is:

Colin Percy            Tyne ARC            07985 003304            entries@tynearc.com

The Coordinator for race day will be appointed no later than a week before and will be the primary contact in Race Control on the day, based at TARC. See Item 7 above for more information on communication including publicity for the names and mobile phone numbers of key personnel.

## **Appendix**

### **Launch cover**

*Safety launches (provider Red Seal)*

Two on the water. No marshalling duties but can direct crews if there is an imminent safety risk. Location shown by red spots on *Course Map*, being approximately one third and two thirds along the course, towards north bank.

*Marshalling launches (provider Tyne ARC)*

Five on the water, spare sixth one if possible. Main duty is marshalling boats before during and after the race, though they will also undertake safety duties and respond to incidents as necessary - they can assist crews if needed and a safety launch is not nearby. Locations shown by purple spots on *Course Map*:

- Above start line, to guide boats in turning and to feed in to start; then to proceed downstream after all started to assist in TARC steps area during boat landing.
- Alongside country park (upstream of slipway and downstream of start) to monitor boats moving up from the club steps close to the north bank and organise in race order for the start; after the race starts, to monitor boats during racing and also to marshal any returning boats waiting to land at TURC after racing.
- Near TARC steps, to supervise boats getting on to the water and heading upstream to the start; the launch then monitors for possible conflict between boats racing downstream and those coming in to land.
- A short distance upstream of the finish on Newburn straight, to ensure finished crews returning to the club steps stay in to north bank as they head back.
- Just downstream of the finish, to supervise boats that have finished moving a bit further downstream and then turning to go back to the steps along the north bank.

### **Bank monitor cover**

There will be three personnel on the shore other than at the clubs or at the start and finish. They will monitor the racing on the course and report back on incidents (impeding others, poor positioning, etc) afterwards. Locations shown by beige spots on *Course Map*:

- On north bank just east of the country park slipway by the *riverside* car park (there is a bench with a good view to sit on)
- On Newburn bridge (or on south bank towards Tyne United, if better able to observe what boats are doing), watching boats approaching the bridge during racing and warning crews of proximity of bridge if hitting it is an imminent risk - may be augmented by an umpire to help.
- On south bank approximately 500m below Newburn bridge

Launches and monitors will have UHF radio and mobile phone backup.

Tyne Amateur Rowing Club  
Water Row  
Newburn  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE15 8NL