



Abingdon Spring Head: Competitors' Instructions

To be read by all competitors and their coaches in conjunction with the course map.

- 1. SAFETY** - The event is held under British Rowing Rules of Racing and complies with the 'Row Safe' guidelines. All competitors are required to have read and understood the event Safety Plan.
- 2. EQUIPMENT** - All clubs MUST ensure that the equipment being used by its members is safe at all times for competition, training or recreation as detailed in the British Rowing requirements. Boating marshals will be making random checks on boats with particular attention made to:
 - Heel release mechanisms
 - Bow balls
 - General security of all fixings
 - Rudder lines and steering mechanism
 - Integrity of buoyancy compartments/canvasses
 - General security of all fixings

Stage marshals helping crews onto the water will also make visual checks. Any boat that is deemed unsafe will not be allowed to race.

- 3. ABILITY TO SWIM** - Clubs must ensure that their rowing members are able to swim at least 50 metres in light clothing. If members cannot meet this standard, they should wear a Personal Flotation Device while rowing.
- 4. CAPSIZE PROCEDURE** – In the event of a capsize, crew members should hold onto the boat where it is safe to do so and await assistance from a course safety boat.
- 5. COXES** - Clubs must be aware that it is highly irresponsible to place an inexperienced cox with a crew of inexperienced novices. This can lead to dangerous situations not only for the crew, but also other competitors. Clubs must also ensure that all coxes:
 - i. Are suitably dressed for the cold/wet conditions that can occur at this time of year, including hats and gloves.
 - ii. Wear (and know how to operate) a Personal Flotation Device conforming to BS3595 on top of their clothing.
 - iii. Are aware of the safety procedures, instructions to competitors and potential hazards on the course.
- 6. CLOTHING** - Clubs must ensure that their members (particularly juniors) are suitably dressed for the conditions, including wet and cold weather. Crews may be required to be on the water for a long period of time, in particular after racing. Marshals are instructed to assess JUNIOR crews going heading to the start. If their kit is deemed insufficient, crews may be turned back. Heat is lost from the head, so crews should wear hats if conditions are cold.

Crew members with long hair are advised to secure their hair in a braid, tight ponytail or other secure style that will not cause the hair to tangle with any equipment during a capsize and does not obscure an attached race number.
- 7. PARKING** - There are significant space restrictions for onsite parking. **No parking for cars is available on site: this includes cars carrying boats.** All cars must be parked at Abingdon Rugby Club, Lambrick Way, Abingdon OX14 5TJ (what3words:will.cowboy.crunch). It is a short 10min walk from the rugby club to the rowing club. Competitors must park in the designated car park: street parking is prohibited for all competitors. Due to the limited number of trailer parking spaces available on-site trailer parking will be designated to specific clubs prior to the day with maps provided to clubs to indicate where onsite they are required to park. **Trailers are not permitted to attend on the day without prior approval.** A map detailing parking is available online.
- 8. REGISTRATION** - A representative of each club must report to Race Control at Abingdon RC to collect race numbers. The race numbers must be worn by Bow in crew boats and also Coxes in stern-loaded coxed boats. Please ensure



Abingdon Rowing Club
established 1958

Abingdon Spring Head: Competitors' Instructions

the race numbers are securely attached and visible on race kit. Any number not clearly visible or partially covered by clothing or hair may result in NO TIME being recorded.

9. BOATING AND ROWING TO THE START -

In order to ensure all crews are able to boat and proceed to the start on time, crews should boat at the time specified by the draw and under direction of the boating marshals. Crew should boat from and return to the landing stage assigned to them in the draw. Crews boating from the Sailing Club will boat from and return to the sailing club pontoons, crews boating from Abingdon or the Army Rowing Club will boat from and return to the Abingdon/Army pontoons. On arrival at the stages, crews are asked to boat quickly and efficiently: adjustments should be made before arrival at the stages or once on the water. Crews boat with bows pointing upstream (towards the finish) and then row upstream keeping close to the bank to the turning marshal, where they turn and proceed downstream on strokeside (non-club side of the river) towards the start. Once past the rowing clubs, crews should move across the river to bowside (club side) and proceed to the start, following direction from course marshals and umpires. There is one marshalling area, along the bank downstream of the Culham Reach. Crews in the marshalling area should line up in numerical order with the lowest number upstream. Once called, crews are to row up to the start. **Please see detailed instructions for the marshalling area overleaf.**

10. CONSIDERATION TO OTHER PEOPLE - When handling boats to/from the trailer care must be taken to ensure others are not injured. The cox or responsible person should give instruction to the handlers so as to avoid any accidents.

11. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER COMPETITORS - Dangerous situations, damage to equipment and injuries can occur through thoughtless acts. Every year there are several complaints about a crew's chances of winning being ruined when other competitors have deliberately not given way to the racing line, baulked, steered across etc. Please treat all other competitors with respect, both on and off the water. If you are being overtaken whilst racing, give way to a faster crew, and always follow the instructions from umpires and race officials.

12. SAFETY ON THE RIVER – Please take time to review the Safety Plan for further details. Competitors must obey instructions given by the river or bank side marshals at all times and stay clear of the weir downstream of the marshalling area.

During the race, slower crews should give way to faster crews. Normally this means the slower boat moves to the middle of the river, but at in the bends at Donkey Bridge, the faster crew should take the inside of the bend.

13. IF AN ACCIDENT OCCURS – If an accident occurs, competitors can help by:

- Continuing up the course and informing a safety launch or marshal who will have radio contact.
- Stopping to give assistance where there is someone in difficulty in the water, unconscious, or in danger of being run down by oncoming crews.

The priority for all of us is the safety and well-being of our fellow rowers and scullers.

14. DAMAGE TO BOATS/EQUIPMENT: In the event that any damage sustained due to collision, or other incident, the responsibility will lie with the crew that caused the incident. Any incidents should be reported to race control and an Umpire's report may be requested for any disputed incidents. Clubs should submit a British Rowing safety report in the usual way.

15. THE FINISH - Times will be taken as the bows cross the finish line. DO NOT STOP after finishing but continue paddling upstream round the bend to clear the course and avoid impeding other crews. Crews should then continue upstream to the finish marshal area. Crews will be asked to wait for the last racing crew to clear the course before heading back to the raft. Crews are not allowed to return to the course until the race has finished. At that point, crews will row downstream (towards the start) on the bowside (non-club side of the river) to the turning marshal (positioned in a launch opposite Abingdon School BC), then spin under instruction from the marshal before



Abingdon Rowing Club
established 1958

Abingdon Spring Head: Competitors' Instructions


proceeding upstream (middle of the river) to the landing stages to land at the same pontoon from which they boated. Please follow marshal and umpire instructions at all times: failure to follow the marshals' instructions will lead to time penalties or disqualification.

- 16.OBJECTIONS & DISPUTES** - Any objections or disputes must be lodged at Race Control within twenty minutes of the end of the race. These will be relayed to the Race Committee Chair, whose decision will be FINAL.
- 17.RESULTS** - Provisional results for each division will be available approximately thirty minutes after the last boat in each division has finished. Final results will be displayed on the Abingdon Rowing Club Head Website at the end of racing.
- 18.HAVE FUN** - We hope you have an enjoyable day, enjoy the racing, beer, homemade cakes and locally sourced BBQ!



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Abingdon Spring Head: Competitors' Instructions

-  **Marshal**
-  **No Entry**
-  **Safety Boat**
-  **Umpire**
-  **First aid**

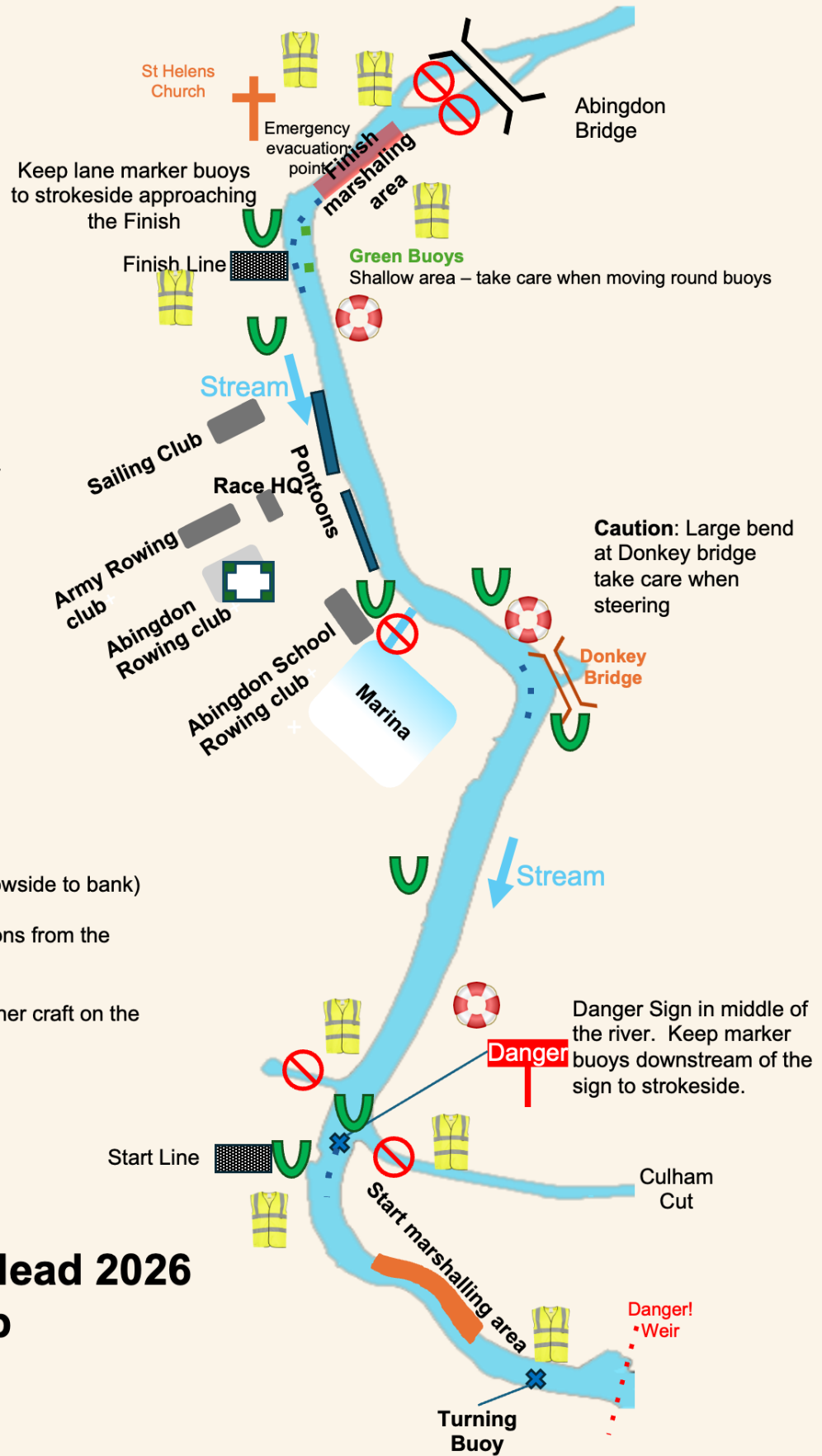
Watch out for other river users when boating off and returning to the pontoons

Always Keep Right (Bowside to bank)

Always follow instructions from the marshals

Pay attention to any other craft on the course

Abingdon Head 2026 Course Map





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Main Start Marshalling Area:

- Boats line up (bow upstream) in race order on the bank downstream of the start. Boats will be called to row upstream being careful to keep lane marker buoys to strokeside as you approach the start. Boats are called to race from the banks by start marshals.

Finish area:

- Boats should continue to paddle after crossing the finishing line to avoid impeding other crews. Crews should keep marker buoys to strokeside as they progress downstream to turn at the turning buoy when instructed to do so by marshals. Crews should then make their way upstream to the finishing marshal area. Crews will be asked to wait until the last racing crew has cleared the course before heading back to the raft using the normal circulation pattern.

