

# The SKIFF RACING ASSOCIATION



## COXING

Best Practices Guide

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## 1 Introduction

This document has been created as a Best Practices guide to Coxing a Skiff. The information in this document has been sourced from documents provided by various Skiff Clubs, Members of the Skiffing community and British Rowing.

## 2 What is a Cox?

### 2.1 Responsibilities

- **SAFETY:** It cannot be stressed enough that the first duty of a cox is to the safety of the crew and the equipment, and to the safety of other water users.
- Steering
- Commands
- Communication
- Motivation
- Coaching and Strategy where appropriate

The cox is in control from the moment the crew is determined and should give all instructions during boating, throughout the outing and disembarkation. NB Until a cox is confident that they can take these responsibilities, they cannot be expected to do so and so should only go out in a crew which contains a skiffer who takes ultimate responsibility.

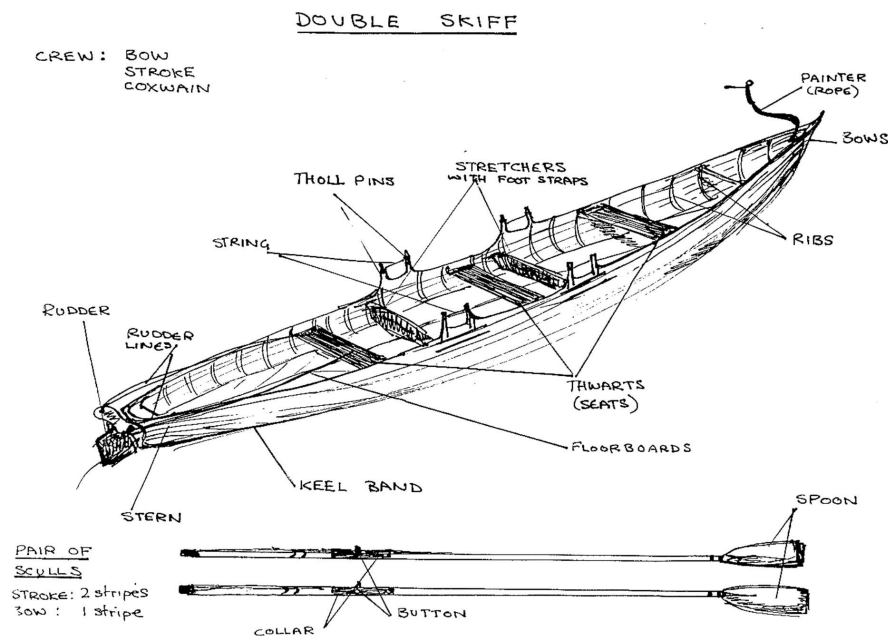
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### 2.2 Coxes Charter

Coxes have the same rights and rowers and scullers:

- To enjoy the sport
- To be kept safe
- Not to be perfect every time
- To improve
- To receive quality coaching
- To be treated fairly
- To be given responsibility
- To be praised
- To eat.

### 2.3 Skiff terminology



### 2.4 Competition rules

**Weight (for races only)** Under SRA racing rules, the minimum weight in coxes is to encourage heavier not lighter coxes; good coxing is about far more than weight.

Coxes need to be heavier than 50kg to compete on a fair level. If the cox does not reach the minimum weight, then weights should be added to the skiff to ensure fair play for all.

The ruling reads:

*There is no classification of Coxswains and they shall sit on the coxswain's thwart. The minimum weight for Coxswains shall be 50 kg, Coxswains who weigh less than 50 kg shall carry dead-weight to make up the deficiency, and this shall be carried beneath the Coxswain's thwart.*

*Coxswains shall be weighed before their first race in the clothing they expect to wear in the event, inclusive of any buoyancy aid.*

**Clothing:** Every competitor shall wear complete clothing. Scullers shall wear a sleeved jersey which shall show the racing colours of the club they represent.

**Life jackets:** All competitors enter a regatta entirely at their own risk (see also Rule J6), but to minimise the risk they should be in good health and able to swim a minimum distance of 50 metres in light clothing and shoes. Coxswains who may be considered at risk, particularly if young, must wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid.

### 3 Off the water

#### 3.1 Manoeuvring skiffs

The skiffs are large, heavy, expensive and despite their appearance can be extremely fragile if not treated in the correct manner. They are THE most important asset the Club has and should be handled with the respect they deserve.

Even if they are not physically involved in moving skiffs off the water, coxes should know the following so that they can direct others:

Each club will have their own specific instructions for manoeuvring skiffs in and out of the water these are a general guide for when no other instruction is available:

**From the boat house:** A double skiff should be pulled out of the boat house by at least two people with the stern lifted slightly over the iron runners on the slipway so not to damage the keel band.

The keel band is a metal strip running along the full length of the bottom of the boat. Keeping the skiff upright is most important as it will not only ease the effort required to pull it along, because the keel band will be the only thing in contact with the slipway, but will also protect the boat from any damage.

**From the top rack:** If a skiff needs to be removed from the top rack of the boat house allow not less than three people to lower it to the ground. It should be pulled free from the rack until one person can support the stern of the boat. Then as the boat is drawn free it should also be held by two people supporting the boat on either side of the bow seat. When it is free from the rack the full weight of the skiff must be slowly lowered to the ground avoiding any surrounding obstacles such as the coaching launch or boats on the lower rack.

**Personal safety:** Always ensure when lifting skiffs that no one is straining themselves in doing so. Make sure that they lift with a straight back and use their legs to help raise the boat. When lowering from a height take the weight with a straight back and gradually bend the legs to lower it to the ground.

**If in any doubt get help from other club members, there is nothing to be embarrassed about when concerned about the safety of your crew or the boat.**

**On the slipway:** The skiffs should be slid along the slipway slowly and gently. There are no prizes for pushing boats around as fast as possible in and out of the boat house only for getting them over the finishing line first.

Once at the end of the slipway the rudder can be fitted to the boat or can be left until the boat is safely in the water. The last part of the slipway has a sharp incline down to the river frontage. These are effectively steps and should be approached very slowly. Once over the camber the skiff should be lifted from the bow until it has made contact with the river frontage. When contact has been made with this wooden frontage the skiff can slowly slide into the water and yes make sure someone has got hold of the painter (the only rope attached to the bow of the boat). The skiff can now be tied to the bank/ landing stage.

**Removal of boats** from the water is much the same yet they appear heavier as they can take on water, also your crew maybe weary from their exercise on the water (if not, why not?). The skiff should be drawn along the landing stage until it is at a right angle to the bank. It can then be lifted by the bows up out of the water and rested on the wooden frontage.

If this right angle to the bank cannot be achieved then lift the bows slightly onto the frontage and then allow the skiff to float around until it is upright and can be pulled up over the frontage in a straight line. From here it can be dragged by the bow and kept upright by two people pulling on either side of the bow seat.

**Back on the bank** Once clear of the water and on the flat of the slipway, the rudder can be removed if still attached and any water taken on board sponged out. (Ideally the cox should remove the rudder before the boat is lifted out of the water to ensure it could not get caught when the boat is lifted and pulled upon to the landing stage.)

**Bailing boats** Lifting the bows of the boat may help to let any excess water run down the boat which can then be removed. If there is water in the skiff this can be pumped out or bailed out. If this water is not removed it may cause the wood in the boat to rot which will significantly weaken it and will subsequently damage easily.

**Any damage to boats** whether it be foot straps, thumb screws, thole pins or boat damage should be reported to the Captain(s) or Vice Captains as soon as possible, your club may also have a log to capture damage, if it does please make sure you document any damage accordingly. Certain parts of the boat are designed to fail under certain circumstances and so protecting the most important and expensive parts of the boat from damage.

### 3.2 Pre-outing checks

- The skiff - strings tight, tholes firm etc. and report any issues as it may prevent damage to the boat and blades.
- Level of ability of crew – ensure the crew understand all they need to before the start
- Weather conditions and forecast: Heat, snow, fog, rain, wind speed/direction etc
- Flow/currents (check this at <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/> and then visually on arrival at the boathouse)
- Waves from passing boats
- Debris

#### Preparation for an outing:

- Ship the rudder - strings uncrossed.
- Order "in bow", "in stroke" to have crew board one at a time.

*Skiffers should face the bow, put a blade either side of the burden boards and step between the blades by transferring their weight, lay the blades down (spoons towards the bow), turn around and sit down*

- Ensure that your crew adjust and tighten their stretchers
- Untie and stow the painter.
- Cox boards and sits – *NB if rudder lines are in continuous loop - sit over loop (do not have it round body)*
- Check for river traffic before moving off (traffic in the navigation channel has priority).

## 4 On the water

### 4.1 Getting on board

The cox should hold the boat along the landing stage until their crew have stepped separately into the boat and sat down with their sculls placed behind them. The boat can then be untied, the painter securely placed inside the boat and the cox can take their seated position whilst the crew hold on to the bank.

You may want the crew to put their outside sculls under strings so that the crew is better prepared.

### 4.2 Moving away from the landing stage

Before pushing the skiff away from the bank:

- Check for River traffic before moving off
- Each club has different instructions for pushing off with blades, please check with your club instructions whether pushing with the Spoon or Handle end.
- Move off upstream only when crew has adjusted and is ready (unless conditions and congestion are such that it is better to complete adjustments offshore).

You can follow either of the following processes depending on your club preferences:

Prepare the crews by making sure the riverside blade is under strings prior to pushing away from the bank. Once clear of the bank the bank side blade is placed under strings. (This is much faster than waiting until you push away to do both sides).

OR

Once a reasonable distance from the bank is achieved the stroke blades can then be positioned under their strings. If the conditions are calm enough order the bow blades to be placed under their strings, otherwise wait until the boat is in a safe position by getting the crew to take a few strokes on the stroke side before issuing the command. Move off upstream only when crew has adjusted and is ready (unless conditions & congestion are such that it is better to complete adjustments offshore).

From the start actions should be done by Bow and Stroke in unison. It looks better, is safe and gets the crew into good habits.

NOTE Departing upstream is much safer. The stream gives immediate steerage way even before the skiff has established speed relative to the bank and risk of collision is reduced because everyone (departing or arriving) is going in the same direction.

It is also prudent to test the strength of the current by paddling against it before venturing downstream.

### 4.3 Effects of stream

The flow of the river (the stream) is strongest near the middle of the river and weakest at the sides. The river flow on our reach can vary from negligible to a stream of 5 knots in which safe skiffing is not possible.

It is usual to minimise the adverse effect of the stream when travelling upstream by staying close to the Middlesex (for some clubs this will be different – e.g. Wargrave) bank and to take full advantage of the stream when travelling downstream by steering just to the right of the centre of the river

Immediately at the bank the stream (flow rate) is always zero, but the rate of increase in stream for every foot of distance from the bank is the highest.

On a straight stretch of river with a symmetrical bed, the stream is fastest at the centre (the "eye" of the current). The variation in stream over several feet in mid-river is generally small - but the effects of bank shape, shallows, moored craft, or other anomalies may make the "eye of the current" very narrow and off centre

Water does not change direction until it has to. At bends therefore the "eye of the current" will not follow the inside bank but will run straight and wide and turn late. It may then overcorrect and bounce off alternate banks as the river settles to a new direction.

Narrowing or widening of the river can speed up or slow down the stream but can also cause eddies or other effects.

These variations in the position of the eye of the current cannot easily be seen from the craft. They can be anticipated but should be confirmed with hard won experience of the reach in different conditions.

#### 4.4 Steering and manoeuvring

In a skiff, the rudder should be applied when the blades are out of the water (except in emergencies).

It is essential that the rudder ropes are always kept tight otherwise the exact direction of the skiff cannot be determined.

The rudder should never be applied in heavy doses (except in emergencies), instead light, decisive tugs should be made often.

Coxes should:

- Know where they should be on the river (on the RIGHT: see 5.3 Navigation rules) and where there are danger points (e.g. where the old and new rivers meet on the Walton stretch). For races, walk the course with your crew in advance and if not sure ASK
- Look ahead and behind
- Maintain an awareness of course and other boats
- Actions to avoid collision
- How to call for an Emergency stops/hold it up (if you cannot remember the correct phrases, just shout "Stop!" loudly).

#### Factors to consider when steering and manoeuvring

- **Rudder:** use little and often
  - Use crew members to row on one side or back down
  - Use crew members to apply more or less pressure on one side
- River conditions which may affect steering
  - Stream
  - Currents
  - Waves



- Wash from boats
- Direction of travel; upstream/downstream
- Head, tail, crosswind

#### 4.5 During the outing

If you are in any doubt about passing obstacles on the river, whether it be other boats, the narrow cut at the back of an island or even people in the water then command your crew to stop paddling and to hold the boat up hard. Throughout the outing the cox is the "eyes" for the craft - the crew keep their eyes "in the boat" at all times. Stroke should, however, be watchful astern and alert the cox to approaching craft.

The cox must anticipate all hazards and steer accordingly. See the following section for guidance on techniques of steering see section 6.3 How to steer – Navigation rules.

While Sculling, instructions should be given in time with the stroke, with the command at the finish (so the crew know what is expected in the next stroke).

**Tight turns.** (It may be desirable to "Easy All!" first and allow skiff to slow before initiating tight turns). As always, Bow must synchronise with Stroke to avoid blade clashes (and look good!).

- "Bow-side only, next stroke - go!" (use sculls on COX's right only to pull craft round to left faster).
- "Backing down stroke-side - go!" (use sculls reversed on COX's left only to slow craft and turn sharply to left).
- "Paddling bow-side, backing down stroke-side alternate strokes - go!" (use sculls reversed on COX's left while coming forward, use sculls on COX's right normally during stroke - to spin craft to the left on the spot.)

Shout out in advance to other water users what your intentions are if they are likely to be affected or if you require them to take appropriate action such as a boat heading blindly in your direction (tell them to LOOK AHEAD).

## 5 How to steer

### 5.1 How the rudder works

Pulling the stroke (left) rudder line turns the craft to the left (by pushing the stern to the right) and vice versa.

#### **Holding the rudder strings**

Hold a rudder line in each hand with the hands just above the front of the thwart (seat) and the rudder lines taut and the rudder straight.

Only a very small movement of the hands is necessary. It helps to avoid unwanted movement if part of the hands (usually the little finger) is in contact with the thwart.

Rudder – when the blades are out of the water.: The skiff rudder is so big it affects the grip of the blades on the water if you use when blades are in the water.

Boat is so stable it is not tipped by rudder being on.

Maintain rhythm, comfort of the crew and speed of the boat.

Move the strings or toggles 5cm in each direction.

Account for the apparent delay between applying the rudder and the boat changing course

### 5.2 Steering technique

The least disruption to the scullers is achieved by making very small corrections while the blades are out of the water.

#### **Sit still**

Sit up straight and try to avoid moving. Even small lateral movement can rock the craft and interfere with the run of the skiff and the rhythm of the scullers.

Steering is a secret – nobody should know you are doing it.

Good anticipation and gentle corrective action that does not interfere with the run of the skiff are the essence of good steering.

#### **Look ahead**

Keep your eyes to the distance ahead, picking a fixed marker (tree, building, moored craft etc.) in order to set, and follow a straight course.

If you need to look to the side (e.g. to judge proximity of adjacent craft) make it a very short (1 or 2 seconds maximum) glance and resume your look ahead. Longer looks to the side almost always result in an unwanted turn in that direction.

**Think ahead**

Think ahead as far as possible and plan your course accordingly.

The corrections should be small and gentle.

Do not over-steer - it is better to make two corrections in the same direction than one in each direction.

### 5.3 Navigation rules

The basic rule of the river is that craft should keep to the right.

- Any craft coming in the opposite direction should therefore pass on your stroke side. (i.e. port to port.)
- Some islands (e.g. Thames Ditton Island) have the main navigation channel (where the above rules apply) on one side only.
- Other Islands (e.g. Ravens Ait) form the centre of the River and each channel is regarded as main with two way traffic permitted. It is usual for small craft to go downstream in the Surrey channel and upstream in the Middlesex channel but beware large vessels who may go in either direction—particularly in the Middlesex channel.
- Keep a sharp lookout - overtake with care.
- Always look behind you before moving out to overtake.
- Navigate with consideration for other river users, including anglers.
- Show understanding to others when they are engaged in organised competition.
- Be prepared to give way to sailing craft
- Craft have joint responsibility to avoid collision with other craft, even when racing.

**If you think another craft has not seen you, and are on a collision course, call "ahead" loudly.**

Craft in the navigation channel have priority over those crossing it.

Use lights and be particularly vigilant when visibility is poor.

**Heading upstream:** Keep to the right, (as a cox would see it), and hold a position as close to the bank as possible. When heading upstream, the closer to the bank the boat is, the less the effect of the stream acting against the boat. Thus, the easier the effort to go a set distance.

**Heading downstream:** Although still keeping to the right hand side of the river (as viewed by a cox). the boat should be held towards the centre of the river to gain maximum advantage from the stream.

The river has its maximum speed towards its centre. Thus, to get the most from its energy, the boat should also be near the middle. At bends the flow tends to run wide so the boat should be taken where the best advantage would be gained from the flow.

All craft have a joint responsibility to avoid collision — but some are less manoeuvrable and should have special consideration.

When passing a sailing boat, keep in close to the bank and proceed with caution always aiming to pass astern.

Always be prepared to make an emergency stop.

Do not linger close to bridges where you may not be seen.

#### 5.4 Anticipating other craft

- Observe all craft on the river and anticipate their movements. Adjust your course within good time to give yourselves plenty of space and options
- If in doubt, shout, to be sure you have been seen.
- Be particularly vigilant for craft that may not obey the simple navigation rules above:
  - Sailing craft - These are dependent on the wind and may not be able to manoeuvre easily.
  - Day hire craft - They probably do not know the rules and may not be alert.
  - Youngsters - They may not be experienced.
  - Paddleboards
  - Single or coxless scullers are not always vigilant
  - Fast moving fours and eights

## 6 Giving commands

The cox is in control from the moment the crew is determined and should give all instructions during boating, throughout the outing and disembarkation. Commands should be:

- Meaningful
- Clear
- Concise
- Consistent
- Firm
- Positive

Giving commands:

- Orders should be given in a loud clear voice.
- Refer to crew as "Bow" and "Stroke".
- Refer to sides of the skiff as "stroke-side" (cox's left) or "bow-side" (cox's right)
- Reprimand any crew member who does not obey or who acts without orders.

Communication:

- What you say
- How you say it
- When you say it
- How much you say!
- On long distance events some crews appreciate being coached around the course.

### 6.1 Before an outing

Communicate on the plan and goals, and the coxing /technical points to improve

During the outing:

- Work with each other
- Allow time for the cox to cox and the crew to skiff
- After the outing
- Cox feeds back to the crew
- Crew feeds back to the cox

Use your senses

- What can you see?
- What can you hear?
- What can you feel?
- It is best to state action required then "go" or "now" to implement and synchronise action.
- Always give the "go" or "now" at the finish of a stroke so that the crew has time in the recovery to be ready on the catch.

## 6.2 List of commands

Command	Meaning
Come forward together, ready, Go	Prepare to row and start rowing.
Set – ready Used in a race to prepare the crew	Commands the crew to move to the catch, blades buried, and be ready to start the race.
Next stroke... light... Go	Apply light pressure thru blades
Next stroke... half pressure... Go	Apply half pressure thru blades
Next stroke... firm pressure... Go	Apply firm pressure thru blades
Hold it up Check it Down.	Stop the boat. Place blades in the water square on and hold tightly. Equivalent to an emergency stop.
Back it down together	Place their blades at the release position, squared, and push the oar handle toward the stern of the boat. This motion causes the Skiff to move backwards.
Back it down on stroke/bow	As above but specifically refers to stroke or bow side
Hard on stroke/bow	Apply firm pressure on stroke or bow side to assist in pulling the boat in required direction
Pull it around on stroke/bow	Continue to apply pressure on stroke or bow side to pull the boat in required direction
Cox holding their hand up at the start of a race	Indicates to the race umpire that your crew or skiff is not ready
Cox Taking their hand down at the start of a race	Indicates to the race umpire that your crew and skiff is ready to race.
A touch on stroke or bow	Used when skiff is on the stake boat at the start of a race to align the skiff. The cox may ask the bow or stroke sculler to adjust
Get yourselves ready	Prepare to race
Sit up Straight backs Heads up Relax coming forward	Used by the cox to indicate correct posture for the scullers
Light catches	Instructs the scullers to place the blades into the water at the catch as heavy handed catches will affect the run of the boat
Timing, (late, early)	Indicates to bow sculler they are out of sync with the stroke sculler
Work on together	Used to encourage the crew to work together
Squeeze those finishes legs at the finish Finishes	Technique used towards the end of a stroke to push down into the foot plate with your legs to maximise the pressure thru the blades
Eyes in this boat	Used in racing to instruct the scullers to keep their heads straight and eyes in the boat

You are gaining on every stroke	Terms used to indicate that the skiff is gaining ground on another skiff
You are going through them	Terms used to indicate that you are over taking another skiff
Blades down	This command is used to tell the rowers to place their blades back on the water after performing an easy-all (see below).
Heads-up	The command, tells everyone within ear shot that a skiff is being moved, and to be alert as it passes nearby.

### 6.3 After an outing

- Approach landing stage, mooring point upstream, to avoid drifting past
- "Easy all" in a safe position several boat lengths before reaching the mooring.
- "On strings stroke Side!", "on strings bow-side!" (Stroke Side first because approaching upstream the stroke side blades will be nearer the bank and the priority is to be able to get them out of the way.
- It may be appropriate to instruct BOW to "ship" immediately and for STROKE (under instruction from COX) to make the few strokes necessary to reach the landing point.
- Cox disembarks first and is responsible for making fast the craft, unshipping the rudder, and instructing orderly disembarkation by the rest of the crew (usually bow first – This has been changed recently at TVSC – who ask Stroke to get out first thus Bow person does not have to step over strokes skulls ).

## 7 Race Day

Obviously, this is an important day for you and your crews. This is where all your coaching, the crews hard training and your ability as a Cox are put to the test. So, it is vital that you and your crews are well prepared for the race in hand. Make sure your crews know before the race day where and when they will be racing.

Ensure that yourself and crew are at the Regatta site a minimum of forty minutes before the published race time, if possible, allow an hour. This will give you the opportunity to purchase a race programme and check the times of the races you are to Cox.

Mark in the programme your name and the times you are likely to be racing. If you feel that your time on the water will clash with another race or a crew member has races in close succession, then inform the boat Marshall who may be able to put a race back.

Opposition crews can scratch or not turn up so be aware what is happening by asking the boat Marshall.

### 7.1 Study the course before the race

See what the conditions are like, where the navigation channel is, see how the stake boats are positioned, check for any staggers on the start or finish, look out for landmarks along the course so your crew know where they are, what is the best line to take, what sort of start are the umpires announcing, how you should halt your crews after racing.

You should run through a race plan with your crew, this can best be achieved by walking along the course with them and agreeing what actions should be made during the race. This can eliminate any arguments after the race if blame is being lodged by the crew on yourself.

Processional/long distance races will usually have a **Coxes briefing** before each **group of races**. Coxes should ensure they are at the briefing and run through the course with their crew.

Your crew will probably be pretty nervous prior to their race, so make sure you know where they are (usually queuing up somewhere!) and try and calm them down by discussing the successful training outings you have had, the bad ones and what they did to improve on these.

A cox is quite exposed to the elements so make judgements on the weather and wear appropriate clothing. Your crew will not be impressed if you turn up in your heaviest duffel coat to keep out the cold.

Wear light layers of clothes and make sure that your outer garments are not baggy in such a way that they catch the wind like a sail as you go down the course. The splash tops are ideal for coxing as they are totally closed at the front.



## 7.2 Standard race starts:

The following information is extracted from the SRA rules of racing. Coxes should familiarise themselves with these in case of rule changes or updates. Additionally, check if there are any rules relevant to the Regatta you are racing in.

*A crew shall be at the start two minutes before the time of the race.*

*The start may take place without reference to absentees.*

*Any crew late arriving at the start and permitted to race may incur a penalty of one Official Warning at the discretion of the umpire and/or starter.*

*If there is only one crew in a race, the Organising Committee shall decide whether the crew shall be required to scull over the course in a race other than a final.*

### *The Start*

*The umpire, starter or aligner shall prepare the crews for the start with a minimum of delay. An aligner, if provided, shall indicate that the crews are aligned by raising a white flag.*

*He shall then name the crews and tell them how they will be addressed during the race.*

*(a) The starting and timing procedure for non-handicapped events shall then be as follows:*

*The starter shall say 'Get ready',*

*If an aligner is present, the starter shall check that the aligner has raised the white flag before giving the 'Attention' command.*

*The starter shall say 'Attention', at which time he shall slowly and deliberately raise the red flag*

*The starter shall then lower the flag quickly to one side with the command 'Go'.*

*If a crew indicates that it is not ready, it is essential that it takes positive action to be ready as quickly as possible. If the starter believes that one or more crews are delaying the start through incompetence or without good reason, or if wind conditions make it too difficult for all crews to achieve simultaneous alignment down the course, he shall indicate his intentions to proceed with the start by the words 'Hands Down', or verbally in the case of single scullers. If, or when, there is no indication that any crew is not ready, or the starter has indicated his intention to proceed, the starter shall continue with the start. (If there has been a delay, the starter may repeat 'Get Ready' to recall crews' attention to the start procedure.)*

*The start shall be given by the 'Get Ready' – 'Attention' – 'Go' sequence given in the Rule. At 'Get Ready', the crews must get ready to race. At this stage crews may indicate that they are not ready by a raised hand from the coxswain, or verbally in the case of a single sculler. 'Attention'. At this stage, the starter shall be in full control of the start and shall start the race by dropping the flag smartly to the side, at the same time saying 'Go'.*

*The starter shall slowly and deliberately raise a red flag, at the same time saying 'Attention'. At this stage, the starter shall be in full control of the start and shall start the race by dropping the flag smartly to the side, at the same time saying 'Go'. Between 'Attention' and 'Go', crews must be ready to start on the start order; crews shall not be able to delay the start procedure after the 'Attention' instruction is given and must start when the flag is dropped and the 'Go' is given. If, after raising the*

*flag and saying 'Attention' the starter is not satisfied that all is well, the red flag shall be lowered slowly, and the starter shall say 'As you were'.*

*The start sequence shall then begin again from 'Get Ready'. There shall be a positive and deliberate pause between 'Attention' and 'Go'. The pause between the raising of the red flag and the start command shall be variable.*

*At 'Get Ready', the crews must get ready to race. At this stage crews may indicate that they are not ready by a raised hand from the coxswain, or verbally in the case of a single sculler.*

### 7.3 Handicap Racing

*(b) The starting and timing procedures for handicap races (including veteran) shall be as follows:*

*The starter shall declare the handicaps to be applied and explain the starting method, and ensure that any stake-boat persons know the order of starting.*

*The starter shall then conduct a normal start but at the word 'Go' only the crew(s) with the greatest handicap will start.*

*After the first 'Go' the starter shall, using a stopwatch, count the handicap time up from zero in whole seconds ending with the word 'Go' when the second crew(s) will start, and continue thus until all crews have started. The red flag shall be raised and dropped for each start.*

*For example, in a three-crew race where the second and third crews have, respectively, a 5 second and 9 second handicap relative to the first crew, the starter shall say 'Go, one, two, three, four, Go, six, seven, eight, Go'. The counting shall be made audible to all crews involved, and the crews remaining at the start after the first 'Go' shall maintain themselves in a state of readiness for subsequent starts.*

*The elapsed time of the winning crew shall be the time from the first 'Go' to the finish less any starting handicap applied to that crew*

### 7.4 False starts

*A start is 'false' if any boat leaves its starting position before the word 'Go'. It is not 'false' if a boat fails to start when the word is given, unless some unforeseen incident prevents the starting signal from being seen or heard. The point 50 metres from the start should be clearly marked. If both umpire and starter are present, the umpire has the responsibility of giving an Official Warning.*

*If the umpire, starter, or aligner considers the start false, he shall recall the crews to the start by saying 'Stop' and waving the red flag.*

*The decision to recall the crews shall be made before they have completed 50 metres of the course.*

*The crew or crews causing the false start, or deliberately sculling on after the race has been stopped, shall be given an Official Warning by the starter or umpire.*

*In the event of a false start by any crew in a handicap race, the normal 'false start' procedures shall apply except that the 50 metre proviso shall not apply.*

*If a crew refuses to start again or incurs two Official Warnings, the umpire shall disqualify it from the event.*

*A start is 'false' if any boat leaves its starting position before the word 'Go'. It is not 'false' if a boat fails to start when the word is given unless some unforeseen incident prevents the starting signal from being seen or heard.*

*The point 50 metres from the start should be clearly marked. If both umpire and starter are present, the umpire has the responsibility of giving an Official Warning.*

#### 7.5 Obstructions and 'off the course'

*A temporary obstruction on the course may be another boat, an object in the water, or any other item that should not be there including swimmers or animals. In these circumstances the umpire should monitor the situation and should warn the crew in plenty of time if the crew needs to take avoiding action; the umpire may, in this case only, give steering advice to the crew. The umpire also has the option of stopping the race and declaring a verdict, or re-sculling the race from the start or the point of stoppage. In these circumstances the umpire should warn the crew in plenty of time so that the crew may take avoiding action; he may, in this case only, give steering advice to the crew.*

*In the case of a similar temporary obstruction off the course, whether legitimately there or not, a crew in danger of collision should be warned to return to the course or, if necessary, stopped. The race would not be stopped.*

*A permanent obstruction, on or off the course, could be any structure that may provide a risk of damage or injury to boat, equipment or crew, and may include the bank, staging, moored boats or heavy buoys. The umpire should delay warning a crew for as long as possible, consistent with safety, to give the crew every opportunity of recognizing the obstruction itself. But, if the warning is ineffective and a collision seems imminent, the crew should be stopped. In deciding the point at which a crew should be warned, the umpire should bear in mind the experience of the crew involved. A crew warned or stopped because of obstruction may continue to race after it has corrected its course, unless the race itself has been stopped.*

*If two boats are converging in 'neutral water', i.e. very close to the line that the umpire judges to separate their proper courses, and the umpire considers that there is danger of a foul or interference, he may raise the white flag and name both or use the phrase "Both crews move apart".*

#### 7.6 Finish

*A crew has completed the course when the bows of the boat cross the finish line. If a competitor, other than a coxswain, falls out of the boat, the crew may still be placed. If a coxswain falls out of the boat, the crew shall be deemed not to have completed the course; the verdict shall be 'Not Sculled Out'*

*F18 Instructions to crews given from the bank should be phrased: '..... Club, move to Bow , or '.... Club move to Stroke ' as appropriate.*

*If this fails, the umpire may try 'bow-side' or 'stroke-side', or any other words to achieve the desired effect.*

#### 7.7 PROTESTS

*A crew may make an immediate protest at the end of a race against an umpire's decision. A protest should be signalled to the race umpire, if launch based, by the raising of hands as soon as the crew has passed the finish line, or, failing the umpire, to the chief judge.*

*A protest at a bank-umpired race may be made through the chief judge to the co-ordinating umpire. A protest may be made by an official club representative on behalf of the crew.*

## 8 Glossary of Rowing terms

Here are all the important terms you may need to look up.

**Base Rate:** The stroke rating at which your crew will row most of their race. It depends on several factors including experience, fitness, and boat size.

**Blade:** The end of the oar that grips the water. They are also called the spoon. Macon blades are shaped like long champagne glasses. Hatchet blades look like meat cleavers.

**Bow:** The front of the skiff. Also, the name for the rower in the seat in the very front of the skiff

**Button:** Item that circles the shaft of the blade and rests against the oarlock, also called a collar.

**Catch:** The point, at the end of the recovery, when the blade is placed into the water for the beginning of the next stroke.

**Check:** How much the boat is slowed down during the recovery by poor rowing technique.

**Collar:** see button.

**Crab:** Action caused by turning of the oar blade so that it is trapped under water and cannot be removed at the release.

**Downstream:** This refers to the direction the water in a river is flowing. The water is flowing toward the end of the river. Items in the water float downstream.

**Drive:** The part of the stroke when the blade is in the water and the rower is pulling on the handle/pressing with the legs.

**False Start:** When a crew at the starting line of a race moves before the other crews and is warned by the officials. Two false starts and the crew is disqualified.

**Feather:** To gradually turn the blade so that it goes from parallel to the water to perpendicular (square) with the water just before the catch. The reverse action happens at the release. The blade comes out square and is made flat again. The feathering hand is the hand closest to the rigger; it turns the oar and is also called the inside hand.

**Head Race:** A long race in which rowers race a twisting course typically 3 -5 miles miles long.

**Hull:** The actual body of the Skiff.

**Jumping the Start:** When a crew tries to beat the other crews off the starting line by anticipating the referee's starting command; going before the others are ready.

**Keel:** To have keel is to have a balanced, level boat. This also is the term for the centre line of the boat(lengthwise).

**Mistake:** Something you learn from.

Navigation: Port (red) and Starboard (green) are nautical terms of orientation that deal unambiguously with the structure of vessels referring respectively to left and right sides of the vessel.

**Paddle:** This tells a crew to row with just enough pressure to move the boat. The paddle command is also used to bring a crew down from full pressure at the end of a workout piece or race.

**Recovery:** The time between the release and the catch when the oar is not in the water.

**Release:** The point at the beginning of a stroke when the blade comes out of the water.

**Rudder:** Part of the boat that sticks below the water and is used to steer the shell.

**Rudder Lines:** Strings the coxswain uses to move the rudder and turn the skiff

**Run:** This is how far the skiff travels between strokes

**Sculling:** This what you call rowing when you use two oars either in a single (1x), double (2x),

**Shaft:** The main body of an oar. Also called the loom.

**Start:** The beginning of the race. Also, the term for the first four strokes, and subsequent tens' taken at the start of a race.

**Stern:** The back end of the boat.

**Stroke:** The rower nearest the stern of the boat, who sets the pace for the rest of the crew. Also, the sum total of the motion of the oar, from the catch to the release.

**Upstream:** This refers to the direction the water in a river is flowing. This is where the water is flowing from. Toward the beginning of the river.

**Wake or Wash:** Turbulence from a motorboat that can swamp or capsize a boat.