



Competitor Information and Safety Plan

INTRODUCTION

St Neots Small Boats Head is operated under the Rules of British Rowing and RowSafe.

Please ensure that each competitor takes the time to read and note the safety procedures and race information below.

The Organising Committee cannot take responsibility for incidents that may occur due to competitors failing to heed this advice. We reserve the right to amend this plan during the event, if circumstances dictate.

COMPETITORS' RESPONSIBILITY

Competitors are responsible for complying with this Safety Plan.

Whilst we endeavour to provide a safe system at this event, each competitor and competing club also has a duty of care to themselves and others.

Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their boats are safe and prepared to the standards required by the British Rowing Water Safety Code and the British Rowing Rules of Racing.

Competitors are responsible for arranging their own insurance policies (via British Rowing).

Every competitor (and the coach or responsible person for any junior) should ensure that they are suitably attired for the event given the weather conditions and the need to be on the water for a significant period of time, which will include marshalling time at the Start and the Finish.

Race Control may suspend (totally or partially) racing should river or weather conditions necessitate.

CRITICAL SAFETY AND KIT REQUIREMENTS

- **Boat checks:** You must have a secure bow ball, correctly adjusted heel restrains, and watertight buoyancy compartments.
- **Coxswains:** You must wear an approved, non-self-inflating lifejacket/buoyancy aid (no self-inflating lifejackets/buoyancy aids in a front-loading boat). Appropriate clothing must be worn and wellington boots are strictly banned.
- **Competitor health:** Every rower must be in good health, able to swim 50m in full kit and know capsize procedures. Bring warm clothing for long waiting times.
- **Equipment malfunctions:** Preventing gear failure is your responsibility. Marshals will inspect boats and omissions may lead to disqualification.
- **Swimming:** Competitors are strongly discouraged from swimming in the river due to the risk of waterborne diseases and potential presence of underwater obstructions.

KEY LOCATIONS AND NAVIGATION

- **Trailer Park location and address:** The grassy area adjacent to St Neots Rowing Club carpark on The Priory, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2PZ (*drive past Waitrose to find it*).
- **Public warning:** The trailer park is a public space. Watch out for pedestrians and **do not** rest boats on the slipway fence.
- **Registration/Race Control:** Collect race numbers and log crew changes at Race Control, located in the Clubroom (upstairs in the SNRC Clubhouse).
- **River rules:** The river is open to normal traffic during the event. Keep a sharp lookout and always stay on the **right-hand side** in your direction of travel. Practice outings on race day are not permitted.
- **Bridges:** There are two bridges on the course (Coneygeare Bridge and Town Bridge), as shown on the course map. Both are very wide and should not be a hazard, however, to increase safety, marshals will be positioned on the bridges to warn of potentially dangerous steering into or out of the bridges.

RACE DAY PROCEDURES

1. Launching and Going to the Start

- **Boating:** Launch from the lading stage in front of the clubhouse (regatta field is closed).
- **Timing:** Allow at least **25 minutes** to row lightly to the start.
- **Warm-up:** If you boat early, you may row 500m downstream to the corner before turning straight back upstream to the start.

2. At the Start

- **Marshalling:** Identify your crew to the bank marshals above the start. Beware of narrow banks, side winds and reeds.
- **Start:** Crews start at ~15 second intervals. Row past Marshal 1 and follow Marshal 2's instructions to turn. Do not go past the safety boat.
- **"Go!":** You will get the command to build speed ~30m before the timed start line.

3. The Course and Overtaking

- **Main Head (2,600m):** St Neots Campsite downstream to Little Paxton Island. A diagram of the course can be found on the website (www.stneotsrc.co.uk/events).
- **Mini Head (1,200m):** St Neots Campsite downstream to the upstream end of St Neots Rowing Club. A diagram of the course can be found on the website (www.stneotsrc.co.uk/events).
- **Overtaking:** **Do not overtake** between Coneygeare Bridge and St Neots Marina (narrow 250m stretch). Elsewhere, the slower boat **must yield** the line to let the faster boat pass.

4. The Finish Lines

- **Main Head finish:** Do not stop abruptly. Slow down gradually under the large centre marker buoy, turn, and wait at least 200m away from the weir until instructed by a marshal to return to the club.

- **Mini Head finish:** Keep rowing to the halfway point of Ouse Valley Marina, turn when told by the marshal, and await instructions to return to the landing stage.

EMERGENCY AND WEATHER PROTOCOLS

- **In the event of a capsize:** Stay with your boat, swim to the bank if possible, and wait for a safety boat. After recover, go straight to the clubhouse to shower, change and complete an Incident Report.
 - Safety Boats will be positioned on the course and are equipped with throwlines as well as mobile phones/radios in the event of an emergency.
 - **Safety Boat 1:** Above the Start in the marshalling area (to cover the single/junior scullers).
 - **Safety Boat 2:** Midway between the Start and the footbridge.
 - **Safety Boat 3:** Opposite the Priory Centre to cover the middle portion of the course.
 - **Safety Boat 4:** Upstream from Crosshall Marina near St Neots Gulf Club.
- **First Aid:** A qualified First Aider will be in the clubhouse.
- **Junior Welfare:** Each junior competitor or junior crew shall have a named coach, or appropriate responsible adult, that will be available at the event while junior competitors from their club are at the event. This contact must be authorised by the home club as their representative for the event. The coach(es), who must be over the age of 18, must be named on the Club's Entry Summary Sheet, along with a current mobile telephone number for that person, they should also have emergency contact details for all the Junior members of their club competing in the event with them.

If a substitute coach comes to the Head, he/she must report to Registration and register his/her mobile telephone number. The coach is responsible for the welfare, safety and appropriate supervision of his/her junior crew and is expected to know their whereabouts at all times during the event.

Visiting clubs are expected to have in place child protection policies and procedures that conform to British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

The St Neots Rowing Club Welfare Officer will act as the point of contact for any concerns or allegations. Contact details will be available through Race Control.

- The Welfare Officer for the event is **Daniel Grimes**, who can be contacted via Race Control.
- The Safety Advisor for the event is **Oli Brigstocke**, who can be contacted via Race Control.
- **Thunderstorms:** If thunder follows lightning within 30 seconds, racing is suspended. Evacuate the water **immediately** and take shelter inside permanent buildings or cars (the club balcony is **strictly out of bounds**) Racing will not restart until 30 minutes after the last thunder/lightning.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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| • St Neots Rowing Club | 07762 068788 |
| • Emergency: Fire, Police, Ambulance | 999 |
| • Hinchingbrooke Hospital | 01480 416416 |
| • Police | 01480 456111 / 0845 456 4564 |
| • Fire | 01480 474601 |

Mobile telephones/radios will also be available at the Start, Finish and on the safety boats.