



Doncaster Rowing Club

Rules of the River Don

SPECIAL NOTES:

The River Don is used by large Commercial Barges who must have unimpeded right of way due to their length, beam and draught, which makes them very difficult to manoeuvre. They must be given maximum clearance, especially by sculling boats to avoid being sucked under their sterns.

ANGLERS.

Please have a respect for others using the river. Many anglers now fish with carbon pole rods projecting well out into the river. These are difficult to see. Try and give them room BUT DO NOT PUT YOURSELF OR CREW INTO THE PATH OF BOATS TRAVELLING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. Study the map and note the stretches of river most frequently used for fishing. The river in the cut above the lock at Sprotbrough is OUT OF BOUNDS to all Doncaster Rowing Club members.

GENERAL

The rules set out represent the essential rules that will ensure river safety and a respect for other users of the River Don.

Coaches, coxes, and crews must make themselves familiar with the rules and the river. Everyone on the water needs to know the course and main areas of danger as well as respect the effect of the stream.

One of the major problems is crews stopping on the river. A crew sitting on the water is a hazard. The hazard becomes very dangerous when the boat is not pulled right into the bank, when on a stretch of the river where crews may well be doing a timed piece of work moving at full speed.

Crews training at maximum speed may not see a boat parked in the fast lane and that may well lead to a lethal situation. You must not stop for a lecture on rowing in the narrower reaches of river defined on the circulation map herein and on the safety board due to high risk of collision with a crew doing a timed piece. It is good practice to inform other crews on the water of any work schedules that may be important to safety and not just do a piece with expectations that others will have to get out of the way - inform others.

REMEMBER: Coxless boats and scullers only have the opportunity to glance behind them. Do not sit immediately in front of them as you will not be seen and may cause a serious accident.

Rules of the River

- 1) All boats **MUST** keep to the **RIGHT HAND** side of the river when facing upstream (ie when seen from the Cox's seat). The bowside of the boat should be close to the bank. This means that boats going upstream to Sprotbrough keep to the Sprotbrough (or northern bank) side of the river, keeping close to the bank as you pass under the railway and footbridge. Boats going downstream to Doncaster Lock must keep to the Club house or south bank side of the river.
- 2) The **OVERTAKING** boat **MUST** move to the centre of the river. The **OVERTAKING** boat has right of way over the boat being overtaken. The boat being overtaken **MUST** keep as close as possible to the bank,
- 3) An **OVERTAKING CREW rowing downstream** has right of way over an overtaking crew rowing upstream.
- 4) **HOWEVER** crews should be very careful on the stretch of river 150m upstream of the boathouse and downstream to the houses above the piling, as novices and learn to row crews may be using this stretch of the river as short laps. When on the Boathouse straight experienced crews should be aware of the differences in speed and steering ability of inexperienced crews and should take special care to avoid collisions.
- 5) Crews that are stationary because they are being coached or rested must do so on a part of the river where they pose no major hazard. Any crew stationary **MUST** be as close to the bank as possible.
- 6) Crews that are performing timed pieces or high input sessions should place a suitable message on the main door whiteboard to ensure that crews boating later know to be vigilant for such activities.
- 7) Crews should understand and follow the circulation plan as shown in the appendix to this document.
- 8) Crews should be visible to other crews, this is particularly important in lower light conditions (Winter). The bow seat in every crew boat and all single scullers are to wear a bright singlet or base layer or t-shirt on top of any other clothing they may be wearing if that item of clothing is not Hi-visibility.
- 9) As far as possible boats should only be turned at the following points:
 - a) At either end of the full reach i.e. Sprotbrough Lock, Doncaster Lock

- b) On the wider stretches of the river beyond the first bend upstream from the boathouse
 - c) On the wider stretch of the river in and up to the first house above the metal piling downstream of the boathouse
 - d) When turning a boat at any other point, coaches and crews must do so with great care and circumspection.
- 10) Crews should NOT turn:
- a) On the bend close to, and between the railway and footbridges upstream of the rowing club.
 - b) At the end of the straight downstream by the houses with the piling.
 - c) Below the last tree on the north bank on the Newton Farm straight, in front of the cut or until 30m past the Cut. **THIS IS A RED ZONE (NO GO) WHEN THE RIVER IS IN FLOOD.**
- 11) CREWS LEAVING A LANDING AND CROSSING THE RIVER MUST DO SO AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE and ONLY if the river is clear of any crews approaching the clubhouse area. Crews returning upstream to their landing must not crossover until almost opposite the landing.
- 12) **NO CREWS ARE TO BOAT IN DARKNESS OR TO BE AFLOAT IN DARKNESS.**
- 13) **CREWS ARE NOT TO BOAT IN HIGH FLOOD.** For a crew to boat in strong stream conditions, depends upon the ability of the crew and the judgment of the coach. No crews must go afloat if the water is covering the retaining wall of the concrete landing and no juniors are to boat if the water is covering the downstream landing stage unless very experienced and a coach is accompanying them in a launch. No crews should boat when there are rising flood conditions; this is when the river is high and rising, with excessive rainfall and a high chance of large amounts of driftwood. **The final decision to boat or not rests with the coach in charge.**
- 14) All crews and cox should be 50m swimmers, with a lifejacket for cox.
- 15) Show tolerance to novice crews and coxes, we all have to learn.
- 16) Be aware of "THE WYRE LADY". This pleasure steamer is large and requires middle stream for passage. Launch drivers should reduce speed to reduce the wake when passing boats.
- 17) When setting off, keep to the correct side of river as the flow of the river can sometimes pull crews into the bank on the wrong side of river with risk to damaging boats. To prevent/reduce the risk of collisions there is to be no overtaking in the Hazard Zones as shown on the map at Appendix 1.
- 18) When overtaking make sure there is a good line of sight and enough room to do so.
- 19) Upon egress from the river crews should clean and check the equipment they have used and report any maintenance required using the whiteboard outside the lockup or effect the adjustment or repair themselves if they can.
- 20) Have safe and enjoyable rowing experience.

NOTES: COACHING ON THE RIVER DON.

Coaches have the responsibility to educate all athletes not only the technical aspects of our sport but also the importance of safety and the rules of the river. All athletes have the responsibility to be aware of and abide by the current British Rowing RowSafe rules and the local rules as adopted by the club.

NOTE: The River Don is a commercial waterway and commercial barges will have right of way due to their size and timetable of operation.

- 1) Make sure that your crew is on the correct side of the river.
- 2) If you want to stop the crew to talk to them, make sure that you do so in a safe place and that the boat is as close to the bank as possible. No crews should be inconvenienced or in danger because of your action.
- 3) Avoid giving a rowing exercise when it will impede the progress of other crews, this is especially important when approaching the bend by the railway bridge or the end of the houses.
- 4) Keep slow moving boats as near to the bank as possible.
- 5) Give way to crews that are obviously "Rowing a Course" and coming past.
- 6) Turn crews at the most suitable places on the river.
- 7) Be aware of other river users and try to anticipate their movements, especially boats that do not have coxes like scullers and pairs.
- 8) Be aware of the possibility of crews approaching landing stages on the wrong side of the river.
- 9) Always warn crews, your own as well as others, of approaching danger.
- 10) Make sure that your crew can stop the boat in the case of an emergency.
- 11) Try to avoid pleasure boats by getting your crew out of their way. They can do more damage to you than you to them. Assume they do not know the rules of the river.
- 12) Try, when possible, to go behind pleasure boats as they cannot stop as easily as you.
- 13) Do not take inexperienced crews out in bad conditions. It is better to be safe than sorry.
- 14) Novice crews with novice cox should only be on the water with very experienced coaches.
- 15) Launch drivers should operate at a very slow speed on the "prison straight" as the steel piling on each side does not absorb the launch wake.
- 16) Must always carry a Megaphone to allow them to warn anyone of danger at a distance.
- 17) They must always warn approaching coxless crews and scullers of the presence of the crews they are shadowing. Those crews may not be aware of your presence.
- 18) They should take an active role in the prevention of accidents on the river by educating people on the contents of this document.
- 19) Any group time trials to be held must set the fastest crews off first and leave a big enough gap to reduce the risk of overtaking and collisions with on-coming traffic.
- 20) Leap Frog exercises are only permitted in Hazard areas when overseen by a coach in a safety launch who can see all crews and any oncoming river traffic

NOTES: COXING ON THE RIVER DON

A cox is in charge of the boat and the first responsibility that any cox has is the safety of the crew of the boat and that the boat does not endanger any other river users. The second responsibility is to follow the direction of the coach and to steer the boat along the most suitable course. The skills of a cox are greatly respected and can be developed by sculling, studying books and gaining knowledge and understanding from the experienced. The cox has the responsibility to be aware of the current British Rowing RowSafe document and the locally adopted rules as well as river knowledge as shown on the map of the River Don. Below are some notes on important safe coxing practice.

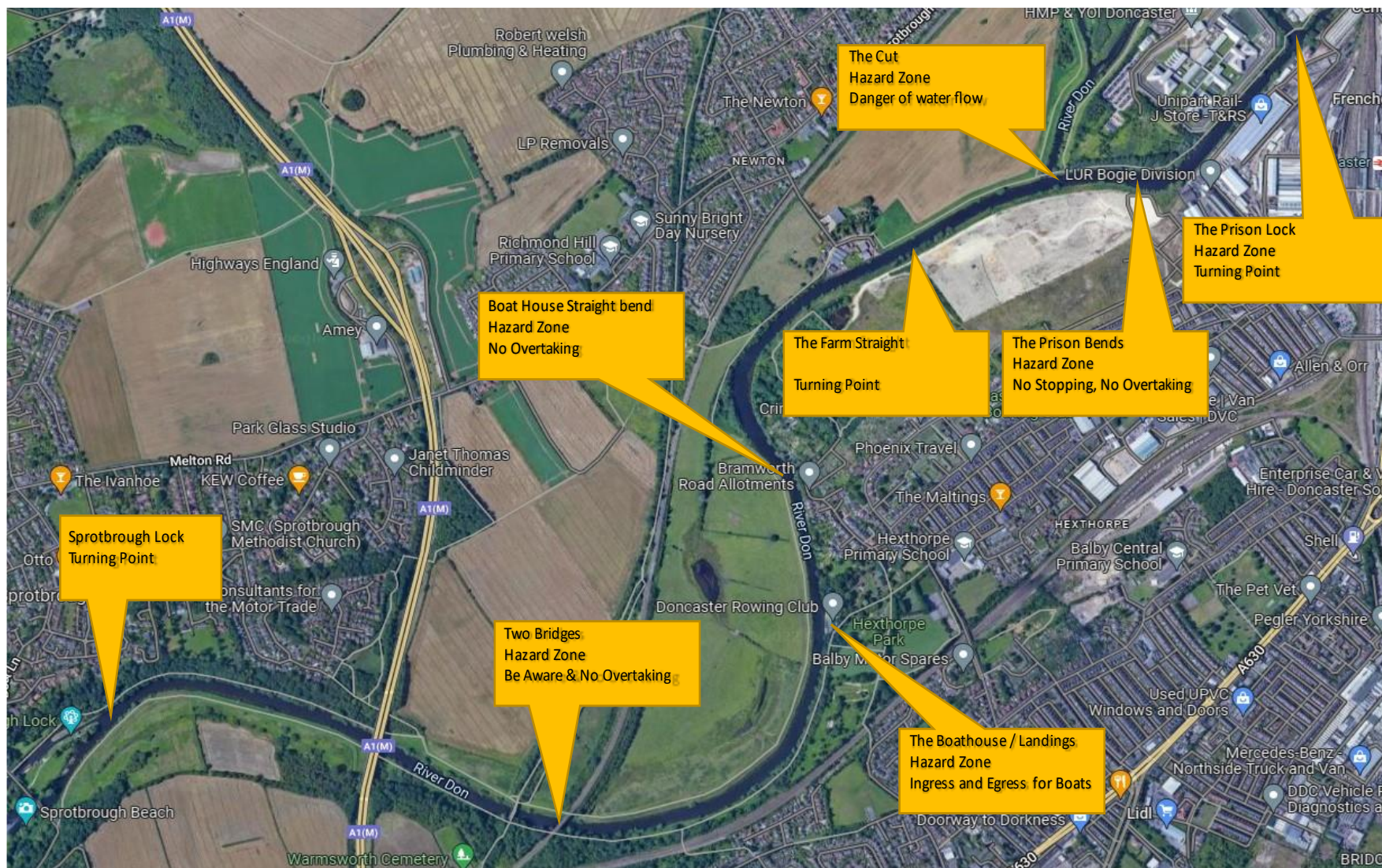
- 1) It is good practice to boat with the BOW pointing UPSTREAM. This enables the cox to have control over the boat. This is most important when there is a stream on the river. At the landing it also prevents crews leaving the landing and causing problems with traffic coming downstream. Boats must not leave the landing stage unless the river is clear. After leaving the landing stage the crew must make its way across to the other side of the river. Any adjustments by crew members must be carried out before leaving the landing stage or while the boat is held close to the bank on the other side of the river. Adjustments **MUST NOT** take place in mid-stream.
- 2) Turning the boat:
 - a) Make sure that you are in a safe position to turn. There are places that other users expect boats to be turning.
 - b) Check to make sure that you are not going to impede other crews. This check will involve a look over the shoulder to determine if there are going to be following crews that will be up to you before the turn is complete.
 - c) Turn as quickly as possible, trying to leave room for any passing crews.
 - d) If possible, use the stream to help the boat round. This is done by, if turning to go downstream, then bowside take a few strokes so that the fast water in the middle of the river pushes the bow. If turning to go upstream, then part crossing the stream by bowside rowing then leaving the stern in the stream as the turn is completed; this not only speeds up the turn but leaves the boat in a correct position.
 - e) When completing a turn move off or right into the bank. **DO NOT JUST SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER.**
- 3) You are not to turn close to the railway and foot bridges (Two Bridges) or less than 50m upstream of the Cut on the Newton Farm straight, or in front of the cut or until 30m past the Cut. If turning above the Two Bridges consider the stream and how much room you will need. The faster the stream the more room is needed. If you feel that you are too close then row past the cut and turn below or back down until you have a safe distance. The current will push the boat towards the wooden posts at the entrance to the Cut. There is no horizontal barrier. Be decisive if you hesitate the stream will take charge.
- 4) The cox is in charge of the boat even if a coach is present. Responsive action needs to be taken at all times. When asked to easy by the coach:
 - a) Do your check to make sure that you do not impede others.

- b) Move to the bowside bank and easy.
 - c) Don't hesitate to interrupt if the boat is drifting out into the river. Quickly give instructions to keep the boat in close to the bank.
 - d) Be on the lookout for other boats. Warn coxless boats. Be ready to ask your crew to shorten their oars IF IT IS SAFE so to do.
- 5) On a river the boat usually drifts in the direction that the upstream end is pointing. This means that if you are parked up then the upstream end needs to be pointing into the bank. You will be pushed and held close to the bank. The stronger the stream the greater the effect.
- 6) Overtaking is a manoeuvre that needs considerations.
- a) Is it clear ahead and check over your shoulder for following boats.
 - b) Is the boat that you want to pass close to the bank. If not shout that you want to pass.
 - c) Move out when about 1 length from overlapping (going upstream if you move out too soon you will probably never catch them).
 - d) As soon as you have clear water move back to your side.
- 7) The rudder works by creating drag on the side of the boat towards which you want to turn; this means that it also acts as a brake and slows the boat down. On a straight stretch of the river keep the boat on course by small rudder movements. Pick a distant steering mark and correct as soon as the boat wanders off. Remember that there is always a response lag both before and after. Once the boat has changed direction it will continue to do so even after the rudder has been put to centre. Permanent zigzags can be avoided by squeezing a little opposite rudder as the boat comes back onto course.

Drafted by Phil Allam – Doncaster Rowing Club Safety Adviser

Approved by the Doncaster Rowing Club Committee on 03/03/2023

Appendix 1 – Circulation Plan



Boating Circulation patterns.

Sprotborough lock. Hazard zone.

Watch out for people fishing on the inside of bend. No rowing upstream on the river next to the lock gates (heading towards the wier). Avoid crews congregating on the bend before lock. Waiting crews to be positioned close to bank to allow other crews easy passage. Be mindful of narrow boats leaving the lock and the landing stage.

The Two Bridges. Hazard zone.

When heading towards the bridges, overhanging trees and vegetation leads crews towards the centre of the river. No overtaking leading up to, through and shortly after both bridges. No stationary boats in this area. If stopping is necessary, make sure boats are tucked in. Priority given to crews coming downstream from Sprotborough. Check for on coming crews regularly through this area. If in doubt, SLOW DOWN

Boathouse Straight bend (by the last house). Hazard zone.

No overtaking on the bend. Wait to overtake on the farm house straight.

The Cut.

No stopping in this area

Take caution if stopping or turning in this area (especially new, inexperienced crews) after heavy rain and the river is in high flow. Crews run the risk of getting drawn into the debris where the river separates.

Bend upstream of the prison straight. Hazard zone.

No overtaking.

No stationary crews.

Lock at the prison. Hazard zone.

Beware of turning boats. Keep clear of metal piling to prevent boat damage. .