

# Clonmel Rowing Club

## RULES OF THE RIVER



# Clonmel Rowing Club

## Document Approval

Reference – Rules of the River		
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## Introduction

These rules are for use by Clonmel Rowing club on the river Suir in Clonmel, boating from Moore's Island. These are the essential rules that will ensure river safety.

All members must make themselves familiar with the rules and the river. All river users need to know the marks, the various standard distances and main areas of danger as well as respect the effect of stream.

A map is appended and marked with the distances and hazards for ease of understanding.

## General Rules

### Rowers

No under 18, beginner or any rower that has been instructed so by the captain should ever be on the water on their own irrespective of age or experience, without direct recognized supervision.

Any adult rower or crew that wants to partake in water sessions on their own must get approval from their coach and the captain prior to their maiden outing. This will have to be in writing (can be email or alternative recordable method).

The approval of any person to partake in any session on the water on their own is based upon their age, ability, capability and experience.

Subject to the above paragraphs adult scullers are advised and encouraged to arrange with others to have a "buddy system" and not scull on their own. In the event of adult scullers sculling alone, they must at all times stay on the stretch from the Workman's to Old Sandy Banks.

Unaccompanied adult scullers/sweep rowers must leave their launch time and expected return time details on the whiteboard provided for this purpose in the clubhouse. Alternatively, they must post a message (Whatsapp or similar alternative to the same affect) to the coaching group.

Note: A rower is deemed to be an adult when they have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This does not mean they are a senior member.

### What side

All boats MUST keep to the RIGHT HAND side of the river. This perspective is from the oarsperson viewpoint. The stroke side of the boat is close to the bank. This means that boats going upstream keep to the Waterford side of the river when going up toward the Turn of Abbey. When travelling with the flow it is on the opposite side.

### Right of way

An overtaking boat MUST move to the center 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 river bank.

An overtaking boat rowing downstream has right of way over an overtaking crew rowing upstream.



All boats coming in must do so against the flow. That is, they would have turned at the Church or below and made their way back up towards the pontoon. They will then swerve in a safe manner at the last minute to approach the slip. Crews coming down river have the right of way at the pontoon area.

At the Sandy banks weir boats coming down with the flow have right of way over crews going upriver at that point.

At the Bird Hill house weir where crews are coming downstream and cross over to the Waterford side to avoid the shallows. The crews travelling upstream have the right of way.

## Stationary crews

Crews that are stationary because they are being coached or rested must do so on a part of the river where they pose no hazard. Crews should not be stationary on sections of the river that are used for timed pieces. Any stationary crew **MUST** stay as close to the bank as possible and proceed when traffic has passed and is safe to do so.

## Turning Points.

As far as possible boats should only be turned at the following points:

1. Old Sandy banks at the life buoy post.
2. Turn of Abbey (just below the apex of the bend).
3. Between Saint Mary's church and the Workmen's boat club. Inexperienced crews to turn at the Church.  
*Note: When conditions allow crews may continue to Knocklofty.*
4. Knocklofty (just below bridge).
5. Marfield house (when doing a session that includes coming back down from Knocklofty).

*Note:* Where it is necessary to turn a boat at any other point, coaches and crews must only do so if safe with great care and circumspection.

Crews should NOT turn at:

- The CRC slipway unless specifically requested by the coach.
- Convent Bridge.
- Sandy Banks weir.
- Top of island opposite "the Green".

## Leaving the pontoon

Crews leaving the slipway and crossing the river must do so as quickly as possible. Crews returning to the slipway must not crossover until almost opposite the landing.

## Darkness

**CREWS ARE NOT TO BOAT IN DARKNESS.**

## High water conditions

**CREWS ARE NOT TO BOAT IN HIGH FLOOD.**

For a crew to boat in flood conditions, depends upon the ability of the crew and the



judgment of the coach. Boats must not go afloat if the water is covering the two metal poles at the launch slipway.

When the river level is between the two poles at the launch way then It is at the coach or Captains discretion depending on the conditions and capability of the sculler or crew to be allowed to proceed.

Extreme care is to be taken 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. When conditions are deemed to be unsuitable a red flag will also be displayed outside the boat shed.

## Stormy conditions

**CREWS ARE NOT TO BOAT IN STORM CONDITIONS.**

A general notice will be issued by the club in the event of Met Eireann weather warning. Pending that the captain or coaches will take into account the weather conditions and the ability of the crew on the day before making a judgment. Where river practice is ruled out then an alternative session in the gym would be initiated. A ref flag will be hoisted when no activity is allowed to take place on the river.

## Low water conditions

- Launches are more susceptible to low water than the rowing boats.
- Between the turn of Abbey and the Sandys weir is a boulder just after the apex of the bend that outboard motors will hit in low water conditions. Launches should stay in the middle of the river towards the Marlfield side. Small crew boats are generally okay to pass over this obstacle.
- Just above the Sandy banks weir during the summer period in recent years a problem with buildup of gravel dunes at Sandy banks has arisen affecting the flow and water level in that area. Only experienced launch drivers should proceed beyond that weir. Once past the weir the river depth is adequate. Inexperienced crews should turn at that weir. Scullers and small boats can proceed but should do so in a manner to acclimatize to the flow.
- Going to Knocklofty is a restricted activity and only permitted when the river level is relatively high. The indicator of adequate level is that the rocks at the Sandy Banks weir are covered.
- Rowing on the Knocklofty stretch in the summer period is not allowed.

## Docking and undocking boating craft

### General

A lot of damage can be caused to boats by a careless and haphazard approach to boat launching. It is important for all boat types but especially for fours and eights that each person knows which side they will go to after the up and under lift so as to avoid any imbalance.

### Putting the boat on the water

The boats being launched should have the bow facing upriver.

Stepping the boat in the water is to be managed as follows. One hand is placed on the gunwale and the other hand is placed on the hull of the boat. The boat is stepped out to



the edge of the slip together and then gently lowered into the water keeping the hand under the hull until the boat touches the water. During this process the knees are to be bent while lowering to avoid stress on the lower back.

## Getting in

Getting into the boat is a fairly simple procedure. Ensure the boat is being held or in the case of a scull hold the outrigger to the slip. Place your blade or sculls across the deck. Ensure the seat is at back stops. Place one foot on the right hand side of the deck avoiding standing on the slide rail. Place your hands on the gunwale bringing your other foot onto the deck and gently lower your backside onto the seat. Open the gate and place the oar or scull in the gate. Work over the oar (tucked into your stomach) and place your feet into the shoes and fasten.

## Getting into a scull

Getting into a scull unattended is a bit more difficult. Placement of the sculls into the gates is preferred before sitting into the boat as the blades will offer the stability required when sitting into the boat. Instead of holding the gunwale when entering, the outside hand grips the two sculls together, one foot is placed then the second foot while at the same time the sculls are still gripped and then gently lower yourself onto the seat. Work over the sculls (tucked into your stomach) and place your feet into the shoes and fasten. Always keep control of the sculling blades.

Getting out is generally the reverse of getting in. Practice is essential for single scullers to be able to do this drill properly.

## Moving off from the pontoon

Check for oncoming traffic. You are now ready to push off.

## Coming in and right of way

All boats coming in must do so against the flow. That is, they would have turned at the Church or below and made their way back up towards the pontoon. They will then swerve in a safe manner at the last minute to approach the slip. Crews coming down river have the right of way at the pontoon area.

## Taking the boat off the water

In a coxed boat the cox should be the first person to disembark. They can then safely hold the rigger so that the crew members can get out. Rowers should unfasten their shoes first in case the boat topples. Remove the oars on the river side first, hands across the gunwale and step on the deck, stand up and step out. Remove the slip side oars and proceed to store the oars safely.

To take the boat off the water, one hand is placed on the gunwale and the other hand is placed on the hull of the boat. The boat is lifted out to hip level. The rowers move so that there are equal numbers on both sides evenly spaced. The boat is turned and then carried towards the boat shed.

The boat is put on tresses, cleaned down and then put on the designated boat rack.

To facilitate boats being launched facing upriver, boats should be stored in the boat-



house with the bow facing the back of the boat shed.

## Coaching

### General

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

### Launches

There is always a requirement to have a launch available for rescue when crews are on the water. The launch should be the first piece of equipment docked before any crew takes to the water. The launch should comply with the requirements outlined in the safety manual and kitted with the required safety apparatuses. Launches should be run and warmed before crews are launched. The capability of crews on the water will determine the number of launches required on the water. Too many launches on the river will cause a hazard in itself. A general rule of thumb is 1 launch for every 10 scullers of equal ability or a crew of 15.

Certain beginner or inexperienced crews will require 1 on 1 launch/coach attendance.

Winter/summer conditions will also affect the ratio.

As a guide rule where there is a launch already out coaching, another should be docked ready to go especially if additional crews are to be put out subsequent to the first launch having departed.

### Lifejackets

Coaches and coaching launch drivers shall wear life jackets when on the water.

### Crew and boat safety

- Particular attention is to be paid to the following crew boat related items: Heel restraints and "quick-release" mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order. Every boat must at all times have a bow ball firmly attached. Buoyancy compartments to be in good order. Check oars and sculls to ensure that "buttons" are secure and properly set.
- Make sure that your crew is on the correct side of the river.
- If you want to stop the crew in order 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 as a result of your action, such as a coaching stop along the "concrete"
- Avoid giving a rowing exercise when it will impede the progress of other crews, this is especially important when approaching the convent bridge, turn of abbey and the club slipway.
- Keep slow moving boats as near to the bank as possible.





## Giving way

Give way to crews that are "Rowing a Course" and coming past.

## Turning

- Turn crews at the most suitable places on the river as outlined earlier in this document.
- Be aware of other river users including kayakers, swimmers, divers and pleasure boats and try to anticipate their movements, especially boats that do not have coxes like scullers and pairs. Shout warnings if necessary.
- Be aware of the possibility of crews approaching the slipway on the wrong side of the river.
- Always warn crews, you're own as well as others, of approaching danger.
- Make sure that your crew is capable of stopping the boat in the case of an emergency.
- Try to avoid pleasure boats by getting your crew out of their way. They can do more damage to the crew than the crew to them. Assume that they do not know the rules of the river.
- Do not take inexperienced crews out in bad conditions. It is better to be safe than sorry.
- Novice crews with novice cox should only be on the water with very experienced coaches.
- All crews and cox should be 50m swimmers, with a lifejacket for cox.
- Show tolerance to novice crews and coxes as we all had to learn from scratch.
- Be aware of the "weirs" at the old bridge, Bird Hill house and Sandy banks. There are also shallow spots near Marlfield house
- Have safe and enjoyable rowing.

## Coxing

### General

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 should be directed be explained the importance of the obstacles and requirements and be shown the river map explaining each point. Below are some notes on important safe coxing practice. The cox is to wear a regulation life jacket suitable for their size.

### Launching the boat

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. After leaving, crews can turn if they are rowing down to the "Workmen's boat club" first.

### Turning the boat

- Make sure that you are in a safe position to turn. There are places that other users expect boats to be turning.
- 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.
- Turn as quickly as possible, trying to leave room for any passing crews.



- If possible, use the stream to help the boat round. This is done by; if turning to downstream, then bow side taking a few strokes so that the fast water in the middle of the river pushes the bow. If turning to upstream, then part crossing the stream by bow side 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.
- When completing a turn move off right into the bank. DO NOT JUST SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER.

## Turning points

You are not to turn close to the Convent bridge or the old bridge weir or any other weirs or perturbing objects. If turning above the convent bridge, 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 go through and turn when you have a safe distance. The current will push the boat towards the bridge. Be decisive, if you hesitate the stream will take charge. Use the listed turning points only, these are the known and safe points to turn.

## Cox is in charge

- 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:
- Do your check to make sure that you do not impede others.
- Move to the stroke side bank and easy.
- Don't hesitate to interrupt if the boat is drifting out into the river. Quietly give instructions to keep the boat in.
- Be on the lookout for other boats. Warn coxless boats. Be ready to ask your crew to pull in the oars.
- Do not assume that the coach is watching everything while giving you orders, be aware of what's happening.
- A certain amount of chat is sometimes agreeable but if the coxswain feels it is inappropriate or that the rowing is suffering "Eyes in the boat" will mean stop talking or looking around and concentrate.

## Drifting

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.

## Overtaking

Overtaking is a maneuver that needs consideration.

- Is it clear ahead and check over your shoulder for following boats.
- Is the boat that you want to pass close to the bank? If not shout that you want to pass.
- Move out when about 1 length from overlapping.
- As soon as you have clear water move back to your side.



## Rudder

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 break 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.

## Time lag

Remember that there is always a response lag both before and after applying the rudder. Once the boat has changed direction it will continue to do so even after the rudder has been put to center. Permanent zigzags can be avoided by squeezing a little opposite rudder as the boat comes back onto course.

## References

- OPW water levels. <https://waterlevel.ie/0000016148/0001/week/>
- CRC Safety Manual

## MAP OF SUIR TO SANDY BANK'S



### HAZARDS

1 OLD BRIDGE WEIR.

2 CONVENT BRIDGE.

3 GREEN (SHALLOW).

4 BIRDHILL HOUSE (WEIR)

5 TURN OF ABBEY (BEND) .

6 BOULDER (UNDER WATER).

7 WEIR (SHALLOW).



TURNING POINTS



## MAP OF SUIR FROM SANDY BANK'S TO KNOCKLOFTY



### HAZARDS

8 STRONG FLOW ON BEND AND TO HOUSE.

9 SHALLOW IN CENTRE OF RIVER NEAR HOUSE.

10 PROTRUDING BRANCHES

11 STRONG FLOW IN SPOTS

12 90 DEGREE BEND, WITH STRONG FLOW.

13 STOP WHEN AT THE OVERHEAD POWER LINES.



TURNING POINTS

### GOLDEN RULES:

- ROWING ON THIS PART OF THE RIVER IS RESTRICTED.
- WATER LEVEL NEEDS TO BE ABOVE THE WEIR AT SANDY BANKS TO PROCEED.
- ROWING IN THE SUMMER ON THIS SECTION IS NOT PERMITTED.
- NO INEXPERIENCED CREWS TO PROCEED WITHOUT A COACH IN ATTENDANCE.