



BRITISHROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

May 2022

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Incidents in May

Be ready to use your Defibrillator

A club member encountered a person who had collapsed and was being assisted by others. The casualty was non-responsive and did not appear to be breathing. While others administered chest compressions the member cycled to the club to fetch the AED. He returned with it, had applied the pads as about to start the diagnostics when paramedics arrived and applied their own machine. The club member should be commended for his actions; this was a great example of public access defibrillation at its best.

Take Care when Towing your Trailer

When turning left at a junction, the stern of a boat that was overhanging the rear of the trailer was hit by a van. The stern of the boat penetrated the windscreen of the van and was broken away from the remainder of the boat. The cost of this damage was estimated to be £27,500.

Please take care to comply with the rules on overhangs as outlined in the Guidance for the Transport of Oar Propelled Racing Boats [here](#).



Check your boat before you go afloat

The crew of a 4x steered too close to the bank and a crew member caught their blade on a log. The 4x capsized. Bow, two and three managed to free their feet but stroke's heel restraint strap snapped. The other three members of the crew (with the help of the crew of a passing 4x) managed to get them free. Please see the Safety Alert on Heel Restraints [here](#).

In another incident, as a 4+ was leaving the landing stage the cox pulled on the rudder strings and the steering did not respond. This resulted in a low speed collision with a 1x. The 1x was damaged. The rudder string was adjusted after the outing.

Antisocial behaviour

Two boys aged around 14 or 15 dropped rocks or stones from a footbridge. They failed to hit a 4x and a 1x but there was a near miss on the 4x. This was the second time the boys appeared as, the week before, they had poured water on the person in the single. It was recommended that the club report all incidents like these to the Police. It is approaching the time of year when anti-social behaviour, like this, becomes more common; please take care.

Take care to concentrate, all the time

The crew of a 2x had finished its outing and was preparing to spin and head back in. They were having a chat with another sculler from the club and as a result of this lapse in concentration were not aware that the boat was drifting into a wooden pole. Around 5 seconds from collision, evasive action was taken but this was not sufficient. The stroke side oars collided with the pole at speed and as a result the boat became unbalanced. Attempts were made to correct the balance but the stream counteracted this by pushing them into the pole. The 2x capsized but the crew were able to recover their boat with the assistance of members of the public.

A junior crew hit the Dove Pier buoy and capsized. The crew was rescued by several coaching launches from at least two clubs. The dangers of being swept into Dove Pier were explained in the report on the Dove Pier Incident, [here](#). In this incident, an 8 was swept into the pier and broke into several pieces and the crew went into the water. A coaching launch was swamped when attempting a rescue.

In another incident a masters 2x encountered a Dove Pier buoy, they clipped the buoy with their blades, and capsized. The stream then carried them, and the boat, towards the moored houseboats at Dove Pier. The RNLI were called by someone nearby. The coach was able to rescue both rowers before freeing the 2x with help from the RNLI.

In another incident, the steersperson of a 4x was distracted looking at her steering shoe and veered to the wrong side of the river, resulting in a collision with a 1x and causing bruising to the backs of two rowers and some damage to the boats.

In yet another incident a 4- failed to look round frequently enough and collided with a tree branch sticking out of the water.

The cox of a 4+ was concentrating on the drill that the crew was doing and did not notice two 1xs racing towards his crew. This resulted in a collision and the sculler was hit on the head.

In another incident, the steersperson of a 4x did not keep a good lookout ahead and went into the bank hitting a dead tree branch. The boat has impact damage along the canvas and a section of the spray rail was broken.

In yet another incident a learn-to-row 8+ was moving off from a stationary position. A men's 8+ was doing a high-intensity, high-rate piece in the same direction and collided into the stern of the learn to row boat at high speed. The bow rigger made contact with the stern canvas and rudder tube causing the rudder bar to fracture and resulting in substantial damage to the stern canvas. The incident was said to have been caused by the poor lookout by the cox of the men's 8+ and their coach who was on the bank. There was adequate space to move out and overtake. This incident highlights the importance of maintaining a good lookout at all times,



Take care when being overtaken

An 8+ caught up to a fixed seat, sea-going 4+ (a giglet) and followed the giglet through a narrow part of the river. Once both boats were clear of this narrow section, and the cox of the 8+ and the bank rider / coach) could see the river was clear then it moved to overtake the giglet. The giglet moved towards the centre of the river as the 8+ was alongside and collided with the 8+ causing damage.



Practise your Emergency Stops

There were two occasions when 4xs capsized when trying to avoid a collision. In one the steersperson managed to take evasive action and called for 'hold up', resulting in a near miss (blades clattered). The crew were holding up with squared blades, when it came to a halt and the boat capsized.

In another incident a rower was steering for the first time in a learn to scull 4x and failed to check over alternate shoulders. By the time the steersperson checked over the right shoulder it was too late to avoid another 4x that had drifted into their side of the waterway. They pulled their blades in to avoid damage, and capsized. The other 4x stayed to offer support and a launch helped the crew to get back into their 4x.

Please have a look at the emergency stop video [here](#).

Take care to look after crews when they are racing

During racing a masters 1x collided with a bridge causing damage to the boat. The boat took on water and the 1x and sculler were recovered by a safety launch. An umpire was stationed just upstream of the bridge. In this case there was an opportunity to warn the rower that there was an obstruction. The use of more buoys to mark the obstruction is being considered. Please take steps to ensure that a similar incident does not occur at your regatta.

Take Care around Swans

A swan attacked rowers whilst protecting its nest. It flew at the boat and put hole in the stern above the waterline. The swan appears to patrol the canal from bank to bank aggressively making it almost impossible for water users to pass. The county Wildlife Trust has advised that there is nothing to be done but when the swan is very aggressive prior to eggs hatching - food can be given to the swan as a distraction.

Rowers have been instructed to approach the area with caution. Avoid passing between the male swan and the nest where possible, avoid hitting a swan with blades and any sudden movements.

Incident at a Competition

There was an incident at a competition where a rower suffered a fracture to her tibia and fibula close to the ankle, this may have been a trimalleolar fracture. This required surgery to insert pins and plates.

It is understood that the rower walked into the water at the bottom of a slipway in order to retrieve oars from a pontoon and slipped and fell on the wet surface.

This incident may have been not “reasonably foreseeable” (as explained below).

What is “Reasonably Foreseeable”?

Reasonably Foreseeable is a term used in civil law. A organisation or person cannot normally be held responsible for an event that a reasonable person applying reasonable skill and diligence could not have foreseen. This is a fairly difficult test to pass. Just because an event was not actually foreseen does not mean that it could not have reasonably been foreseen.

If a hazardous event has occurred at a venue then it is reasonable to assume that it could happen at that, and similar venues, again. From then on it should be regarded as reasonably foreseeable.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides the following guidance [here](#):-

HSE will not expect duty holders to take account of hazards other than those which are a reasonably foreseeable cause of harm, taking account of reasonably foreseeable events and behaviour.

and

HSE would not normally impose duties on duty-holders which required them to consider risks other than those which:

- *arise out of reasonably foreseeable events and behaviour. For example, the risk of a well-designed, properly built and well maintained building collapsing would not be regarded as a reasonably foreseeable event (unless signs such as subsidence, cracked walls or falling roof tiles suggest otherwise).*

These principles also apply in civil law in relation to claims for compensation.

“Float to Live” or “Climb on top of the boat”

Someone asked whether, after falling into the water, it is better to Float to Live or Climb on top of the boat. The simple answer is to do both, in that order. Floating gives you a chance to calm down, and get your breathing under control. Please remember to hold on to some part of the boat when floating.

As soon as you have the situation, and yourself, under control then you should start to climb on top of the boat and either wait to be rescued, if rescue is imminent, or straddle and paddle to safety. This approach will help to protect you from cold water shock.

Cold water shock is serious and is at its most dangerous at this time of year when the air is warm but the water is still cold.

Look after your volunteers and helpers

Many Competitions and Clubs rely on the support provided to them by volunteers; without them some competitions would not be viable. There are many ways in which volunteers, including club members, provide support and it is important to recognise their contribution and to ensure that they enjoy the experience. In that way they will probably want to do it again.

Volunteers perform many functions from helping with the car park to marshalling the crews, and from making the tea to umpiring the races. Many of these tasks are safety critical. Do not let people become tired because that is when mistakes happen and people can be hurt.

Take particular care with Safety Boat crews. Do not expect them to stay out on the water for hour after hour. It is vital that they do not become fatigued as then they may lose concentration and this could delay them in rescuing people in trouble

Please take time to ensure that your volunteers are fully briefed, well supported and not overloaded. Give them a break from time to time so that they do not become tired. Try to have extra people who can relieve the volunteers so that they can have a break. Make sure that you provide them with refreshments, and opportunities to use the toilet.

Take care to ensure that volunteering at your competitions is an enjoyable experience. That way the volunteers will want to repeat the experience and perhaps introduce their friends to volunteering.

Changes to the British Rowing Home page

There have been some changes to the home page and both RowSafe and the Incident Reporting system can no longer be accessed directly from the home page. Please note that RowSafe can be found [here](#). Please bookmark this page.

The Incident Reporting system can be found by clicking on “Reporting a Concern” and then selecting “Safety Incident Reporting”. Alternatively the Incident Reporting system can be found [here](#). Please bookmark this page too.

British Rowing Posters

There was a request for British Rowing posters on several subjects. Posters printed on paper are seldom used now as the alternative of information that can be displayed on laptops and mobile devices is preferred.

The following are available:

- Boat checking - There is a video [here](#)
- Staying with a capsized boat - There is a video [here](#)
- Heel restraints - This is included in the boat inspection video.
- The effect of cold. There is an online module on Row How [here](#)
- The effect of heat. This is covered in section 8.2 of [RowSafe](#)
- Collision prevention. There is a video [here](#)
- There are other checklists etc., [here](#)
- There are posters on Keeping a Good Lookout on the PLA website [here](#).

RNLI Summer Celebration 24th June with James Cracknell

This event will happen on the 24th June 2022 at the Hogarth Club in Chiswick. There will be cocktails and canapés, and presentations from the RNLI Chiswick Lifeboat crew and rower James Cracknell about working together on the river at The University Boat Race and every day the RNLI save lives on the Thames.

For your chance to be part of this special evening, you can purchase your ticket [here](#).

Who is notified of about Incident Reports

There was a request for notification about the notifications issued to clubs in relation to Incident Reports. I was informed that, at the club level ClubHub is linked to Incident Reporting for club based roles:

1. Club Rowing Safety Advisor;
2. Treasurer;
3. Secretary;
4. Incident Reporting Admin

Anyone with those roles should receive incidents related to the club, via the email address registered against their individual account in ClubHub. **Please ensure that the contact details of these club officers are maintained up to date in Club Hub.**

Work with British Canoeing

There have been several incidents involving collisions of rowers with canoeists and in some cases canoeists have been hurt. In most cases these have resulted from the canoeists being on the wrong side of the waterway. Some collisions could have been avoided if the rowers had kept a better lookout. Information on these incidents has been shared with my colleague at British Rowing.

Can Buoyancy Aids be used by coxes in front loaded boats?

The simple answer is no, they must use manual inflation lifejackets.

RowSafe does not say that buoyancy aids should not be used by coxes in bow-loaders but it does specify what should be used. The actual statement is:-

Everyone is expected to:

- *Wear a lifejacket when coxing, in a launch or as required by the club or a coach. Coxes in bow-loader boats must wear a manual inflation lifejacket.*

I think that this is very clear. It is enough to say what must be worn without having to list everything that must not. The concern here is about what happens if the boat capsizes (and this is not unknown). We do not want buoyant coxes to be pushed upwards back into their seats in an inverted boat.

Work with the CPGA

There was an Incident Report involving a boat from a CPGA Club. This was shared with the CPGA Rowing Safety Adviser.