



BRITISH ROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

April 2019

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT



Incident Reports in April

Head on collisions

There have been several reported head on collisions between rowing boats. These were due to failure to keep a good lookout and in many cases rowing in the centre of the river.

Nobody was injured but in one collision a comment in the report says, “*it could have been a lot worse if our boat didn’t have backstays*” In this incident, a 4- broke in two and the crew was rescued by launches.

This simply reinforces the need for rowers to keep a good lookout and adhere to the circulation plan.

Not all capsizes are harmless

In one incident a sculler (1x) capsized near an outflow then self-rescued and rowed back to the boathouse. He later became ill; the report contains the following:-

Were there any consequences?: *Acute viral gastroenteritis, most likely caused by swallowing water from the outlet. Resulted in three days in hospital, with several bags of fluid, anti-sickness medication, painkillers, blood thinners etc. to try and normalise body temperature (around 40 degrees) and blood pressure (70/31). Had severe symptoms including vomiting, delirium, abdominal pain, dehydration, uncontrolled shaking, and was in and out of consciousness for around a day. Struggled to walk for about 2 days, and couldn't eat or drink for over a day. Have been off work for a week and still recovering. Onset of symptoms was 24-28 hours after incident, with no other events possibly contributing to the condition.”*

In another incident a sculler (1x) from the same club capsized due to the top nut coming loose and gate falling out. A sinus infection developed throughout the following days; this was treated with antibiotics.

There was a note in the March 2019 report about prophylactic treatment following capsizes. This request was referred to the HMA, Dr David Zideman; his response contains the following:-

“There are no prophylactic measures that can be taken following the ingestion of river/lake water.”

The full response is in the March 2019 report.

In another incident a junior capsized, had a panic attack, and was rescued by the safety launch.

A sculler capsized doing roll-ups with square blades. It should be remembered that boats are unstable at front stops when blades are squared.

Most capsizes are relatively harmless particularly if the rowers are trained to deal with sudden cold water immersion. However, capsizes are not all harmless and are best avoided.



WinTech Wing Riggers

In one incident a WinTech Wing Rigger was destabilised and became detached following a low speed clash of blades. Information on the approved method of fitting these riggers was provided to the reporter and is included with this report.

Antisocial behaviour

There were two incidents of serious antisocial behaviour against rowers in April. In one a sculler was hit by a missile thought to have been fired from a catapult. The club provided the following advice to its members:

1. Scullers should not go out alone.
2. When going out please try to stick together
3. Ensure that someone in the group has a mobile phone
4. If you see any suspicious behaviour or kids throwing things into the river please do not hesitate to call the police on 999.
5. If for any reason you feel it is unsafe to continue the outing please come straight in. Alternatively restrict your outing to areas known to be safe.

In another incident, rowers in a 4+ were threatened, on several occasions during one outing, were deliberately impeded, threatened and racially abused by two intoxicated kayakers. Rowers were advised by the RRSA, in the event of further trouble, to use a mobile phone to call the police on 999.

At this time of year, the incidence of antisocial behaviour against rowers tends to increase as the weather improves and there are more people on or near waterways. The advice to carry a mobile phone, preferably in a waterproof pouch, and notify the police immediately is appropriate. If the pouch is connected to a rower then the phone will not be lost in the event of a capsize.



Safety Alerts

The following Safety Alerts have recently been issued: -

- Backstays,
- How to stay safe when rowing in the sun, and
- Check your trailer.

These are included with this report and can be found on the website [here](#).

The need for a mobile phone in a boat

Someone asked if it was necessary to carry a mobile phone as they operate within 750 metres of their landing stage.

The response was that it is appropriate to carry one. If someone collapses then an ambulance is needed urgently, it is best to call for one as soon as possible.

It will take some time for part of the crew to row to the landing stage and that time could make a big difference to the probability and quality of recovery. Delay in starting treatment can have serious consequences.

Do not worry too much about signal strength and which the network being used. 999 and 112 calls will use whatever network is available and will work even if the phone is “locked”.

The use of Macon or Cleaver blades by very young rowers.

There was an enquiry about which type of blade should be used by very young (J13 and younger) scullers. A similar question was asked some time ago and the views of the Technical Panel were sought. Their response was included in the September 2017 Monthly Report where it said: -

"There is no evidence that the use of cleavers is damaging.

It is important to ensure that people:-

- *are taught good technique and row with good technique,*
- *make correct use of their core, and*
- *do not over-train, the length of sessions should be controlled.*

In addition, spoon size, blade length and handle size must be appropriate for the young rower.”



Eastern Region Coastal Sharing Good Practice Day

Presentations on: -

- Safety Management
- Cold water immersion and man overboard recovery
- Knot tying and
- Radio Operating Procedure, including casualty working

were delivered to over 40 rowers and coaches at this event.

The following short videos were used to demonstrate the dangers of falling into cold water: -

- What happens when you fall in [Respect the water breathe video from the RNLI](#)
- Cold Water Shock [Video from the Cumbria Police](#)
- How to survive cold water shock [A video from the RNLI](#)

RowSafe 2019 updates

The 2019 updates have been issued and can be found on the website [here](#).

Work with British Canoeing

It has become standard practice to notify colleagues in British Canoeing of any reported incidents that mention canoeists.

There was recently an incident in which a group of sprinting kayakers who appeared not to be complying with the navigation rules (navigation on the wrong side of the waterway) came into contact with a quad. The rowing club and canoe club were both identified.

There were some requests from British Canoeing for further information. These were referred to the Club Rowing Safety Adviser of the rowing club and a dialog ensued.



Rowing in Strong Winds

The conversation on the need for rowing to adapt so that fewer winter competitions will be cancelled continues. This argument can be summarised as follows: -

- It is increasingly common for winter events to be cancelled due to strong winds and rough water.
- Historically, even a few decades ago, the cancellation of winter events was relatively rare.
- This may be due to long term climate change as it is thought that strong wind events are becoming increasingly common.
- It is not known whether this trend will continue but there is no reason to conclude that it will not.
- If rowing does not evolve to cope with this trend then the winter competitions will increasingly be threatened and may cease to exist.
- Other forms of the sport have developed techniques and equipment to cope with rowing in much rougher water on the sea (e.g. coastal and off shore sliding seat rowing).
- The equipment needed to reduce the risks of rowing in rough water (e.g. pumps, wash boards, etc.) is readily available although seldom used. Its efficacy was demonstrated by CUWBC in the Boat Race a few years ago.
- Winter competitions could require the use of this equipment if the conditions or forecasts indicate that it is needed.
- In time, if the use of pumps and other equipment becomes more common then more people will be persuaded to use it.
- Many rowers train for and look forward to the big winter events (on the Tideway and elsewhere) and are intensely disappointed if they are cancelled.

There are other safety issues that should also be considered. For example: -

- There are risks associated with transporting boats by road (trailer) in strong winds; this may become a limitation that cannot be managed.
- There are risks associated with handling boats on land (e.g. loading and unloading trailers); with care these may be able to be managed.
- People who row and train on sheltered waters may not feel comfortable rowing on rough water and should not be pressured to do so.

This is a debate that is based on the safety of rowers and people involved with rowing. However, it is a strategic issue for the future of winter rowing competitions and one that should include the organisers of the competitions concerned and others. Building more resilience into the sport will take time and is a project that can only be successful if it has widespread support.



Drone Guidance

The British Rowing Drone Guidance has recently been updated to incorporate requirements that have recently come into effect and further requirements that come into effect in November 2019. It is being reviewed by someone with specialist expertise. It is expected to be issued soon.

There is a recommendation in both the original and revised guidance that if a member of the rowing community is seen using a drone in a way that contravenes the drone code then please make them aware of the existence of this guidance document. If they still fail to follow the guidance, then please complete report it using the incident reporting system. One such report was made in April.

It is not permitted to fly drones (small unmanned aircraft) within the “flight restriction zones” around protected aerodromes. The exact specifications of “flight restriction zones’ are quite complex but they can be identified by zooming into the map [here](#).

The requirements that come into effect in November include: -

Registration of Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) Operators

The registration requirements only apply to SUA operators

- SUA operators are only required to be registered if they are operating small unmanned aircraft that have a mass of 250 grams or more
- An SUA operator must have a valid registration when his/her small unmanned aircraft is flown and the registration number must be displayed on the aircraft
- A remote pilot must not fly a small unmanned aircraft unless he/she is happy that the SUA operator has a valid registration and the registration number is displayed on the aircraft.

Requirement for acknowledgement of competency of pilots

Requirements will be in place for remote pilot competency testing which are essentially:

- Remote pilots are only required to undertake a competency test if they are flying a small unmanned aircraft that has a mass of 250 grams or more
- A remote pilot must not fly a small unmanned aircraft unless he/she can demonstrate that he/she is competent