



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COMBINED BOAT CLUBS

First Captains' Meeting of Lent Term

Goldie Boathouse, Monday 12th January 2009, 5pm

MINUTES

Present: Ian Thompson (**IT**), Karla Borland (**KB**), Thomas Walton (**TW**), Chris Kerr (**CK**), Mark Stringer, Dan Wilkins (**DW**), Will Richards (**WR**), College Captains

1. Apologies for absence had been received from King's women, LMBC men and women, First and Third men, Pembroke men, St Edmund's women and Pete Convey.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were available online. One amendment to the list of apologies was received.
3. **IT** said that he had given out bills to clubs that were present and payment was due by 2nd February.
4. **TW** reminded all clubs that all boats must be labelled with a six-character code. Clubs should have received information that this is becoming an ARA rule from the 1st April, and is already a CUCBC and Cam Conservancy rule. Unlabelled boats could be disqualified from Lent Bumps.
5. **KB** said that CUBC were using Science in Sport energy drinks etc and were keen to supply other clubs. There would be a meeting with them at the Hawks' Club on 23rd January (*now changed to 30 January*) where there would probably be some free stuff. Tom James and Josh West, two Olympians from Cambridge, would also be coming that evening to give talks. The Hawks' Club had agreed to open this up to all college clubs so **KB** urged people to come along.

KB also said that Rob Baker would email soon about CUBC Dev Squad, because CUBC relies on a decent number of college rowers and would prefer 15 to trial rather than 5! Captains should watch their inboxes for more information.

6. **Lent Bumps**

IT said that Lent Bumps would run from 24th to 28th February, with entry deadline 30th January, and Getting-on Race 20th January, time TBA. Crew details were also needed by George Gilbert for the Bumps programme by 30th January. Payment for entries would be due by 2nd February, the same date as bills - £33 per boat. 100% refunds would be given 48 hours before the getting-on race, 50% 24 hours before and nothing after that. Details of exceptional rowers were requested within 10 days of the meeting (i.e. by 22nd January).

7. **Amendment to Safety Regulation 1**

IT said that this amendment should have been proposed last term, replacing the requirement for each club to have three copies of the handbook with a requirement to be familiar with all

rules and guidelines. **TW** said it made a lot of sense. The amendment was approved unanimously.

8. ***Amendment to rules on award of University Medals***

TW said that this was to clarify whether the winners of the second divisions of University Fours should receive medals, as this had been unclear in recent years. **DW** said that the justification for first divisions only came from Bumps where only Head crews receive medals.

One captain felt that they were separate events and thought they should both therefore receive medals. **TW** said that he would be happy for the wording to be “both divisions” if that is what Captains prefer.

A vote on “First divisions” (only) clearly failed (approximately 5-30).

A vote on “both divisions” clearly passed (approximately 30-5).

9. ***Amendments to yellow flag rules***

Peterhouse said that they had been in contact with captains and had made several proposals as a result. (a) was a proposal to change which crews could row on a yellow flag because they felt the current system was inappropriate, needing a better definition of competent crews; (b) was because it would reduce the number of times people would go to the boathouse; and (c) was because the online flag had proved very unpopular (particularly in practical terms), and most captains had said they wanted either a physical flag or the flag changed early enough for them to know. They thought that guidelines would help in this matter.

Downing women said that their first Lent VIII last year would have been ineligible under (a) and therefore they didn’t think it was a particularly good plan.

TW said that a fair number of crews with a year’s experience wouldn’t be good enough to go out under a yellow flag.

Someone agreed that a year’s experience isn’t necessarily a good place to draw the line.

Trinity Hall men said that they were a big fan of the physical flag and offered the use of the Trinity Hall flagpole if the problem was access to Goldie for committee members changing the flag.

IT said that it was not as simple as just getting access to a flagpole, since a physical flag would increase the number of times where the flag was changed later than it should be (because a committee member needs to physically come to Goldie); the flag had also blown away twice in the recent past!

Someone said that the weather forecast should be sufficiently good and therefore changing the flag the night before should suffice.

TW said that, in his experience, the weather forecast could not be relied upon to predict wind correctly, as often it gave completely the wrong predictions when compared to what actually happened. While it was useful as a guide, it was unfortunately no substitute for physically checking the conditions in the morning.

Someone said that they understood the need for a last-minute flag and suggested making a comment rather than fixing the flag the night before might be better.

IT said that for guidelines he would like to get Tom Davies (CUCBC Safety Advisor) to come up with some possible criteria.

Clare women asked whether it wouldn't be possible to have some lights in the window of Goldie to show the flag status.

IT and **DW** said that this was discussed last year and there were problems with feasibility, complaints from houseboats, location, etc. It wasn't totally impossible but was complicated and didn't really solve the problem of when the flag would be changed.

Murray Edwards women said that it was a good idea to set the night before, since they often did pre-outing training so needed the flag changed by 6am. They were in favour of a physical flag since they would see it if they rowed past and then could spin and go home safely. Regarding (a) they thought there was a need to get a policeable system of defining a competent crew.

DW warned that going too far down the direction of defining competent crews led in the direction of a coxing licence system as in Oxford, which was a big (and unpopular) can of worms to open.

Girton men said that colleges should check the weather forecast anyway so they know if an outing is likely to be cancelled.

IT said the definition of competent opens a big can of worms. The Oxford system is very restrictive, with all coxes having to pass a test and all rowers take a capsize test before they can go on the water at all. This was something that had so far been restricted here.

DW felt that putting guidelines on the website was a good idea and that the current system was not ideal on safety.

Clare women said that the yellow flag was particularly unfair on second eights in novice term, particularly when erratic timing of flag changes didn't help.

TW agreed that it would make sense to have "seniors only" in Michaelmas term.

TW felt that the mood in the room indicated that captains would like more information on likely flag changes, and this would solve many of the problems mentioned. He proposed a system whereby comments on the flag status could be put on the website by a committee member in the evening so that crews could know what to expect and plan their training accordingly.

KB said that she didn't think getting committee keys for Goldie would be a problem if a physical flag was felt to be the best solution (with which she agreed) but said a major problem was that it took 30 minutes to cycle down the river to check the river and then back to Goldie in order to change the flag there.

Magdalene men said that they agreed with the comments suggestion.

St Edmunds men said they would appreciate thoughts on "be aware it might change".

Selwyn men requested a time at which the status would be reassessed.

IT summarised that two things were needed: a message the night before and a time to reassess in the morning.

Downing women thought that the flag should be changed at least 20 minutes before lighting down.

Girton men thought that setting the flag at a fixed time was not necessarily helpful due to changes in the weather and thought that people needed to relax a bit!

St Edmunds men didn't think it made sense to change the flag too early.

Peterhouse pointed out that the chance of bad weather decreases as lighting down gets earlier.

Murray Edwards returned to (a) and thought that the cox needed to be competent.

Peterhouse agreed and said that captains should be able to judge competence of crews but the flag is needed to restrict the number of crews.

IT proposed that we establish a set of criteria for flag statuses, with a predictive flag status and comment posted by 22:00 every night, and an aim to change the flag at least 30 mins before lighting down, although this might not be based on a trip to the Reach. The flag status would stay online-only for the time being.

This was approved all but unanimously.

Point (a) was deferred for further consideration.

10. **IT** explained the background to the current situation. There is a gentlemen's agreement between the CRA and CUCBC restricting when college crews can row on weekends. College rowers are now often just as restricted for time as people who are working and so it makes sense to loosen these restrictions, as has been done in the vacation period recently. Some of the people who would be most upset about any change would be certain college boatmen. **IT** mentioned that CUCBC had asked the CRA to put the first Winter League before the start of term; this was not forthcoming and therefore college rowing was being allowed on the full Saturday before the first two legs of the Winter League.

Peterhouse said that they had proposed this motion because it was unclear what CUCBC get from the agreement and he wanted to simplify the rules, so that they are the same all year round. They didn't think that Saturday morning access would cause a particular problem.

TW said that town crews agree not to disrupt Bumps in return for this, which could be quite a problem if they didn't take kindly to any change.

IT asked to take a straw poll on the principle of allowing rowing all day every Saturday.
In favour: about 40; against: 3.

Someone said that they didn't think Saturday mornings in Michaelmas and Lent could be used much because many people had Saturday lectures.

Trinity Hall men said that they would prefer weekend afternoons all year since they prefer to get two outings in at the weekend rather than just one.

IT said that captains need to talk to each other about this issue.

Peterhouse said that the Senior Committee should go to the CRA with this proposal.

Murray Edwards thought it was not a clear-cut issue since town rowers such as juniors (at school) could only row at the weekends and giving them some clear water was courteous.

IT said that the Senior Committee would discuss with the CRA and bring back to Captains.

11. **IT** expressed a view that it was a poor idea to make sweeping changes to a system on which we had so little data. He thought restrictions were unlikely to be brought in during Lent Term. **TW** outlined the committee's report on the facts from the previous term, saying that almost all the "slots" in the morning were used after restrictions were brought in. However, he said that many clubs incorrectly thought the restriction was in force from the very start of term. **IT** said that he thought that sensible coxing and coaching could allow the river to cope with

much more traffic. He said that restrictions had been introduced from a Health and Safety perspective to reduce the numbers of boats to help avoid a serious accident, to reduce noise, and to give more chance of decent water in the mornings.

Downing women said that organising outings with the restrictions was really a logistical nightmare.

IT proposed to come back in April with more data.

Someone said that the problem is the uncertainty about when the restrictions will come in, and asked if this was the right way to cope with the problem.

IT said that the alternative proposal was very restrictive. The current rule had partly been proposed to push back pressure from the City Council regarding banning early morning rowing altogether. He proposed to talk about it at a later date.

In response to a suggestion that the rule should simply be in force all term, **TW** said that it gave some clubs the flexibility to boat more than two crews in the morning.

12. **IT** reminded clubs to keep early morning noise to a minimum.