



## AVON SPRING HEAD 2026

### SAFETY AND RACING INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL CREWS ARE AWARE OF AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS

1	<p><b>COMPETITORS – All entrants in the Avon Spring Head should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be aware that they enter the Head at their own risk.</li><li>• ensure that they are fully insured against that risk.</li><li>• be competent rowers and competent swimmers and aware that the advice of British Rowing is that capsize drills should have been done.</li><li>• be satisfied that they are sufficiently fit and competent to participate safely in the Head in the conditions as they find them on the day.</li></ul>
2	<p><b>BOATS:</b> It is the responsibility of the competitors and their clubs to ensure that their boats are safe and are prepared to the standards required by the RowSafe and are suitable for the crew and conditions in which they are to be used. Crews should check their boats prior to going to the launching rafts. Control Commission may undertake spot check inspections of the boats and may ask the competitors to perform the checks themselves under supervision.</p>
3	<p><b>COXES AND STEERSPEOPLE:</b> They must be competent at steering the boat they are in charge of in racing conditions. They must understand orders from race officials. Specifically, they must be able to manoeuvre the boat during marshalling, turn the boat for racing, know which is port and starboard, know how to hold the boat quickly and be able to take charge of the crew during an incident or emergency. All coxes and steerspeople must familiarise themselves with the overtaking rules in force for the race. They must be able to read a car number plate from distance of 20 metres. Ideally the eyesight of the bow pair should also be at this standard. See Point 8 – Information for Coxes and Steerspeople.</p> <p><b>Please watch the steering video on the Avon County Rowing Club website before you come to the race.</b></p>
4	<p><b>COXES</b> are reminded that they should comply with the minimum weight requirements for each crew they cox. These exclude the cox box which is part of the boat and are:</p> <p><b>45kg for all J15 and younger crews</b> <b>55kg for all other crews</b></p> <p>To make up this weight a lighter cox shall carry dead weight and coxes should bring their own dead weights. Coxes will be weighed at the event and given a green wristband if they have made weight and a red one if they should be carrying dead weight.</p>

5	<b>RIVER CONDITIONS:</b> We will monitor the state of river and the forecasts throughout the week prior to the race and will report them on our web site.
6	<b>PERMANENT HAZARDS:</b> There are two bridges with concrete supports in the middle of the river - one HALFWAY along the course (BOTTOM BRIDGE) and the other (TOP BRIDGE) just above the start. There are boats moored at various places along the bank. There are some low-hanging trees. See navigation instructions below.
7	<b>POSSIBLE HAZARDS:</b> There are overhanging trees all along the course – some reach down to river level. There may also be branches and tree stumps in the water.
8	<b>INFORMATION FOR COXES AND STEERSPEOPLE:</b> The course is inspected before the race; any hazards additional to those listed above will be posted on notice boards in Registration. Clubs launching from Minerva must send a representative to the ACRC clubhouse to register. The race committee may decide to prevent some or all crews launching if river conditions are difficult. Please respect their decision.
9	<b>CREWS BASED AT MINERVA</b> may launch from their slipway but may have their boats checked before launching and must remain upstream of the bottom bridge.
10	<b>CREWS</b> must wear uniform racing kit above the waist and must be appropriately dressed for the conditions. All crews must wear paper numbers on the racing kit of both bow and cox and carry Empacher numbers on the bow of the boats.
11	<b>BOATS ON TRESTLES:</b> All boats and blades when not being used for racing should be kept on trestles in the Boat Field on the river side of the railway just upstream of the boathouse. All blades must be removed from or near rafts and may be stored on the A-frames provided. Avon County Rowing Club and its members are not liable for any injury or damage resulting from use of these frames.
12	<b>LAUNCHING</b> is at the time stated on the timetable. Please ensure that your trailer arrives in time for you to assemble your boats and launch at the times stated. Some clubs will launch from “Minerva” and need to be in position at the appropriate time. If your launch raft is “Avon” please use the rafts in front of the Avon County and Bristol University boathouses. Higher numbered crews should launch first and should marshal right up by the sluice beyond the top bridge. Bring your boats down stern first and observe the land circulation pattern which forms part of these instructions. All boats should approach the river from between the boathouses. <b>Quads and fours will launch from the downstream rafts and singles and doubles will launch from the upstream rafts unless directed otherwise by the marshals.</b> You are strongly advised not to wear wellingtons on the rafts. Shoes etc may be stored in the numbered bags provided which will be returned to the rafts when crews return.  NB Keep the tunnel under the railway clear at all times for emergency access. Be careful carrying boats through the tunnel.
13	Please <b>launch</b> as quickly as possible to help the race proceed to time. Late launching

	will not be allowed if it is likely to delay the start of a division. Where appropriate, crews prevented from launching late in one division may be allowed to race in the next division. The organising committee reserves the right to apply time penalties for late boating.
14	<b>SAFETY BOATS:</b> Four safety boats will be on the water whilst crews are proceeding to the start and during racing. Safety Boat 1 will be based at the top lock where long course crews are marshalled prior to racing. Safety Boat 2 will be positioned by Minerva Rowing Club, downstream of Newbridge. Safety Boat 3 will be positioned downstream of the Bottom bridge at the start of the final straight. Safety Boat 4 will be positioned 500m upstream of the finish. The safety boats will follow the last racing crews down the river back to the finish at the end of the race. There will also be separate marshalling boats to marshal crews at the long course, and short course, starts. Please be aware that a safety boat might pass you at very high speed if it is attending an incident or carrying a casualty
15	Details of these <b>SAFETY</b> arrangements are on our web site and in the programme. The race monitors can see the whole course and each division is followed by safety launches. <b>If you fall in it is usually the safest option to stay with your boat and follow the instructions you have learnt in your capsized drills. Help will be on its way very quickly.</b>
16	<b>STOPPING THE RACE:</b> If monitors have to stop the race, they will blow a whistle and wave a red flag and/or instruct crews to STOP. All crews must stop rowing and remain where they are until given further instructions by the race monitors.
17	<b>COACHING FROM THE BANK</b> is allowed but only by means of an unaided voice. It is possible to cycle along the tow path although it is likely to be very muddy and there are a couple of gates, but it should be possible to cycle to the short course marshalling area and follow a short course boat. Please respect members of the public who may be using the towpath.
18	<b>THE RACE COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DISQUALIFY OR IMPOSE A TIME PENALTY ON ANY CREW DISOBEYING INSTRUCTIONS OR CAUSING INTERFERENCE TO OR FOULING ANY RACING CREW.</b>
19	<b>THE RACE COMMITTEE</b> will adjudicate all penalties. It may, after consultation, determine the finishing order of crews.
20	<b>PRIZES:</b> There will be no official prize giving after the race. Crews who have won may come to Registration to collect their prizes as soon as it is clear that they have won their event. All prizewinners must be prepared to show their racing licences or prizes may be withheld.
21	Be aware of the possibility of <b>Weil's disease</b> . Wash your hands and if you get flu-like symptoms see a doctor. See the club website for further advice.