

DONCASTER ROWING CLUB
INCORPORATING DONCASTER SCHOOLS ROWING ASSOCIATION

AGM Wednesday 25th. November 2015

SAFETY ADVISORS REPORT

SUMMARY:

I am pleased to report is that we have yet again completed a safe year with no major injury to personnel. People matter more than equipment and we do an excellent job on Safety in general at Doncaster Rowing Club.

As the Club's Safety Advisor it is impossible to be present at every outing and I am extremely encouraged by the help I get from other Club Members in making decisions on safety related matters suffice to say that we have it adequately covered at all times. Let me remind you that it is very easy to come down and cancel rowing due to adverse weather, poor visibility or bad river conditions but quite a different matter to make a sensible judgement on whether rowing is safe to be carried out or not. We take no risks in this decision making process.

We may be able to pat ourselves on the back regarding to Safety of Personnel throughout the year but we again failed when it came down to damage of equipment. Please get the message out to all and be more careful.

The Safety Rib and outboard motor has been involved in a number of rescues over the year and is a huge improvement in ensuring our safety is adequately covered during our water activities. With the increase in numbers on the water we must ensure that we have immediate cover to respond to capsizing or rowers getting into difficulty during these outings. We have purchased n additional rib and outboard motor which is much smaller and lighter to get on/off the water and this will make it easier to cover the beginners around the landing stages.

Good to see that we keep our capsizing record ticking along and as I have indicated before I consider this as part of the quick learning process in becoming a competent sculler. We do not issue incident reports for these capsizes.

Continuous tree trimming on the river bank is necessary to remove hazards overhanging the river and we will continue to take action where necessary to keep the river safer for transiting. Crews must continue to slow down as they come past the landing stages due to the increase of new beginners that are using the water in this area.

We have been fortunate this year with the lack of flooding of the river and believe we only had to cancel rowing on one or two occasions. High winds do cause us some cancellations and we must continue to police this with a high level of safety priority.

The rule of thumb in determining whether the river is safe to row remains as follows:

- Actual height of the river – if both landing stages are covered with water then it is considered not safe to go on the river in any boat. This will be determined by inspection and a final decision made whether safe to row or not off the centre concrete landing stage.
- Rate of rise of the river level – heavy rainfall can dictate if the river is too high and running too fast and therefore not safe to go on the river.
- Current flow of the river – again usually coupled with the heavy rainfall and not safe to go on the river.
- Amount of debris flowing past the landing stages – this debris can easily damage the hulls of the boats and not safe to go on the river.

We will continue to display on the board as you enter the boathouse giving the river condition and whether rowing is allowed or not.

I again identify some safety items worthy of note and summarized as follows:

- Damage to oars – Please continue to turn your blades over as you come alongside to avoid any further scuffing damage to the back of the blades.
- Having the Safety Launch on the water at all outings - this is essential for Safety and must be adhered at all times.
- Throw bags with safety lines to be on hand at every outing on the water. Please ensure we have at least two in the vicinity of the landing stages especially when we have novices on the water.
- Damage and faults on the boats - Members are required to bring to the attention of our Boatman any faults or damages found with the boats. If we don't know what is wrong we can't fix it. Please write on the board outside the safety strong room any defects or faults that you come across such that we can fix them.
- General cleanliness of the boathouse - we are very poor in this area. Clean up after you, wash up your cups and dinner plates, clean out the toilets, sweep out the boathouse, leave buckets empty and sponges rinsed out etc. – all these domestic chores need to be done and don't expect others to clean up after you.
- Hygiene and wiping down of the ergos and weights machines, mats etc. – again the same applies to do it yourself and not expect others to do it for you.
- Changing rooms and toilets - keep them clean and use them, do not leave bags lying around the workout areas.
- Flip Flops are banned for use when carrying boats into and out of the boathouse.
- This type of footwear is extremely dangerous and easy to trip. Not only can you damage your feet but it may cause damage to the boats. Bare feet are not allowed either as you can easily cut your feet and be infected from the river water which can carry many diseases. Flip Flops are also banned in the gym.
- Do not leave shoes on the landing areas or steps. Do not step into boats with your shoes on either and make sure when you step into the boats that you place your foot on the supported frame - do not step on the hull skin, you will severely damage the boat. Make sure you get into/out of boats in the correct manner.

Can I emphasize the need to shout out if you see a boat on the wrong side of the river. Numerous times it has been noticed that people will not shout out and as such end up colliding with the other boat. You need to make others aware if they are not transiting on the correct side of the river - it does not matter if the crew are competent or not, make sure you shout out and avoid any collision.

I repeat the same message as I give each and every year with my approach to Safety in Doncaster Rowing Club, not to wield a heavy hand, but in emphasizing that we must pay close attention to each and everyone's safety overall. If you see something being done unsafely then report it and action will be taken. Let us eliminate any unsafe condition. All members are required to adhere to good safe working practice at Doncaster Rowing club no matter what the situation. We aim for everyone to get full enjoyment from his/her rowing but in a totally safe environment.

Finally my thanks go to the Ladies, Men and Junior Captain's, the coaches and numerous parents for the help they have given on safety related matters throughout the year to ensure that Safety at Doncaster Rowing Club is not compromised in any way.

Adam Manson
Safety Advisor
Doncaster Rowing Club

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