

South Yorkshire Head 11th. February 2017

'Wash Up' Meeting findings and actions

Thank you to all those who have sent in feedback emails and comments on the recent South Yorkshire Head. We have completed our 'wash up' meeting and the areas that have been identified as problematic have been thoroughly discussed and will be actioned accordingly.

First and most importantly, we were able to complete the event safely and without any casualties. The 'cold cases' that were recorded were adequately dealt with by the Red Cross first aiders. No hospital treatment was required.

In our defence, we would stress that the weather was unkind to us, making it extremely wet, cold and miserable, which understandably resulted in some tempers flaring. Had we had kinder weather, then we imagine people would have been more relaxed and patient.

Getting boats on and off the water during head races at Doncaster has always been a challenge for us. After racing, we are unable to bring boats back to the jetties until all boats have completed racing due to the narrowness of the river, particularly under the railway and motorway bridges. This is a major safety issue and the reason why we enforce it. We are able to take up to 70 boats in each division and in the past, we have adequately managed these numbers.

Regrettably, on this occasion, someone announced in the boat rigging areas that we would be boating Division 1 some 30 minutes later than scheduled, which in fact was incorrect. This caused crews to delay their arrival at the landing stages and resulted in Div 1 starting some 35 minutes behind schedule. This had a "domino effect" and we were playing catch up from there on in. And for the first time ever we had to start boating crews for the next divisions before everyone was off the water, further slowing down the process. However, had we not done this, we would have had to cancel Division 3. We have no idea why the 30-minute delay announcement was made or by whom!

We can only apologise for that.

Further delays resulted from quite a number of boats turning up at the safety check without seats, bow balls not intact, heel restraints not correctly fitted or missing, or crews not having their oars ready to embark. It is the coaches' and crews' responsibility to ensure that they offer up their boats ready to go on the water. All this added to making the event fall back even later.

It is not in the interest of Doncaster Rowing Club to turn away crews, even if they have past their boating times - far from it - we try to accommodate everyone. However, in future we will be much stricter about enforcing boating times and will not allow crews to race if they arrive late and unprepared at the landing stages.

We are also looking at the logistics of building an additional jetty to alleviate the congestion of getting boats onto/off the water. This will make the whole process more efficient.

Our manning on the landing stages also needs more 'hands on' and stronger management - this will be a priority for future events.

The learning points we have taken from our 'wash up' meeting have been discussed with the organising committee and it is hoped that implementation of the changes will ensure in future events we will not have the delays we experienced on this occasion for the South Yorkshire Head.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to welcoming you back to future events'.

Kind Regards

Adam Manson

Club Captain

Doncaster Rowing Club

Chairman South Yorkshire Head