

Notes for Start and Finish Marshals

Thank you for 'volunteering' to assist as a marshal. These notes are to give a basic guide to hopefully assist you with your role.

Principle

The start and finish marshals are there to help try to ensure that crews follow the circulation patterns laid out in the race rules. It mainly involves shouting at crews to get into the right positions! Whilst we want to avoid any kind of aggressive language you should not be afraid to be forceful. Remember that they should be doing what you say and that delays by them in getting into position will affect the timing of the event. Safety is also paramount and takes precedence over everything else.

The start

We normally have at least three marshals at the start, a lead marshal who is in communication with the start umpire, and two others. Marshals should be in position at least 30 minutes before race time and space themselves along the bank between the White House and the moored barges with the lead marshal nearest the white house. There are bank numbers spaced approximately 10 crew numbers apart to give a guide as to where crews should stop. The rules require boats to turn to face upstream (race direction) and take up station with even numbers on the towpath side and odd numbers on the far side. The first boat off in the division is positioned just downstream of the small bridge below the white house. When we get to two minutes before race time the start umpire will sound a hooter. Once the race starts the lead marshal should feed crews up to the starter with **at least a 10 second gap** between each and a larger gap if it is likely the crew will catch the preceding crew quite quickly. The start umpire may ask you to hold a crew back if he wants a larger gap. Once the division has started marshals should please change the bank numbers over so they are ready for the next division (take the front number off and place at the back).

The Finish

One marshal goes above the finish before the town bridge to keep crews moving after the finish as their natural inclination will be to stop. Crews must keep paddling on through the town bridges and then fours/quads will marshal one side and doubles/pairs on the other with bows facing upstream (in other words they do not turn round) and in finish order. One marshal should be standing on the far bank under the hotel between the bridges to keep crews moving up and another marshal in front of the Palace to control boats at that point. In addition there will be a marshal on the water (Tom) who will control the boats. An umpire will be standing just above the Town Bridges to prevent crews turning early or drifting down too far. When the first single scullers finish they should be directed to pass in between the marshalled fours/doubles so they return to the club last. As soon as the division is finished the crews will then be instructed to turn and head back for the club. Marshals need to ensure that this is as orderly as possible and feel free to shout at crews but again please be polite but firm. If a crew does not do as it is told make a note of the number and report them to race control. Marshals may not issue penalties, only umpires can do this.