



Welcome  
to  
Head of the Occoquan

TWO FULL DAYS OF RACING IN LIVING COLOR

# Content

- Introduction
- Launching
- Going to the Start
- Start
- Race course
- Landing
  
- Note – Race Day briefing will be a much abbreviated version of this briefing
  - News of the day
  - Safety items, highlights of other areas.
  - Q&A afterwards

# Introduction

- Key facilities
  - Athletic trainer, First Aid – tent in front of lower boathouse
  - Registration and awards – in erg room, follow walkway on left side of upper boathouse
  - Regatta HQ – regatta directors, announcer
  - Lost and found – Regatta HQ during race day, Park office after hours
- Shuttle
  - Last shuttle 4:44 – don't get stranded
  - Make sure you have your car keys before the end of the day
- Water conditions (subject to race day updates)
  - Moderately low water – marked with flags along shore

# Introduction

- Land Safety
  - Be aware of your surroundings – Lots of boat traffic on land and lots of not so aware pedestrians
- Rower safety
  - Make sure your rowers have any special provisions with them (inhalers, etc)
- Rower safety - flips / rower in water (may update for race day conditions)
  - You may make 1 or 2 attempts to re-enter then we will pull you out and return you to Sandy Run
  - Rowers – make sure you have dry clothes to change into
  - Coaches – know your rowers, be available to assist your rower on land

# Introduction

- Schedule
  - We make every effort to run on time
  - With the shorter days we do not have the option to run late and still get crews out of the park safely
  - Your part
    - Prepare your crew – bow number, oars, working cox box, etc
    - Launch on time and quickly
    - Get in bow number order in the marshaling area
    - Be ready to go when your event starts, move with the starting flow
    - Have a great race

# Launching

- Three docks in use. From right to left coming down the hill
  - Dock 1 (aka short dock) – generally launch only. Entrance on hill across from upper boat house. Fits two 8+ each side
  - Dock 2 (aka main dock) - launch and recovery depending on flow
  - Dock 3 (aka temp dock) – generally recovery
- You do not know where you will launch or recover
  - Do not stage oars below the short dock entrance
  - Regatta staff will direct you to the open dock



# Launching

- Key to smooth launch
  - Correct bow number on your boat (use some tape if your bow number clip fits loosely)
  - Bow number on the bow seat's back
  - You must have your oars with you when you come down the hill
  - Make sure you have all your key gear – seats, tested cox box, etc
  - Two minute launch drill –
    - Oars in and go – finish setup on the water
    - Minimum support crew on the dock
- Launch timing – determine what your crew needs
  - Distance to the start = launch dock time + 4K to start + 1K turn around into the starting chute + upstream traffic
  - **Average 45 minutes before race time**



# Head of the Occoquan Race Course

Sandy Run Regional Park  
Fairfax Station, Va.

- Warm Up
- Race Pattern
- To Return Dock
- Course buoys



Finish Line

Warm down area

2000m Grand Stand

Prince William side of river

Fairfax side of river

Starting Line

Marshalling Area

Boathouses

Registration

YOU ARE HERE

To Parking Lots and Park Entrance

Turn 4

Turn 3

Cross over traffic

Turn 2

Turn 1

Jacob's Rock

Oxford Boathouse

Painted Rocks

Marshalling Turn Around buoy

North



# Heading to the Start



- Occoquan River layout
  - Fairfax side – starboard side going to start
  - Prince William side - port side going to start
  - Start tower – 4000 m up river along the Prince William shore line. Has white banner, red letters Start
  - Finish line – approximately 1500 m down river from Sandy Run
- Traffic pattern
  - Shore line will always be to your starboard
  - Orange pumpkin buoys mark race course – stay well away from the course markers
- Two sharp turns before Start area
  - First turn – watch for low water debris area along shore, stay away middle of the course (on coming traffic)
  - Second turn – weather buoy low in the water. Go to starboard of buoy or at least stay close to it. Do not cut the turn (into coming traffic)

# Heading to the Start

- Marshalling area
  - Proceed past the start, around the next turn to the turn around buoy
  - Get in bow order number
  - Follow marshall instructions
- Starting Chute setup
  - Traffic cones
    - Closest to Start Tower) – hold point for next event  
Approximately 10 strokes to Start
    - Furthest from Start Tower) – enter in bow number order
- If you are late to the Start
  - Raise hand, inform 1st Marshal of your event
  - Follow Marshal instructions – we may insert you immediately or hold you to the back of your event or another event

# Start

- Starter announces event, calls first boat of an event to Start
- You should be at full speed across Start, assume the boat behind you will be
- Successive boats in the event
  - Be prepared to move promptly
  - Move up as boat in front of you moves
  - Maintain starting spacing (3-4 lengths typical)
  - Starter/Marshals will adjust spacing based on conditions and event

# Race Course – part 1

- **First turn** – it's a long, turn sharp but not too sharp
  - Stay a bit out away from the grassy areas along shore ... low water
  - Low water marked by flags
  - ***Safety warning*** – do not go too wide into on coming traffic. There is a course buoy on turn exit
  - Hint – don't turn too far to shore on exiting turn, look for next buoy
- **Straight away** – head to next buoy

# Race Course – part 2

- **Second turn (aka 3 buoy turn)** – Entry, apex, exit buoys
  - Apex buoy - Area of most penalties
  - **No one benefits from collisions in time or damage**
  - Boats take different turn approaches
    - **Do not try to take inside of boat that is turning. Do not assume how sharply or fast they will turn**
    - You hit someone from behind its your fault ...period
  - If you are getting passed you must yield before the apex buoy
  - Exit buoy – don't miss it
- **Straight away** – head to next buoy, stay to starboard of course buoys



# Race Course – part 3

- **Third turn**
  - Buoy in the corner past Oxford Boathouse cove. Don't miss it!
  - Less sharp turn, same turning rules as apex buoy above
- **Fourth turn** – long turn across from Sandy Run
  - Watch for low water debris along shore
  - If you are getting passed, you must yield the shore side line. Do not pinch a crew into the shore debris
  - If you do not have the speed to clearly overtake a crew, do not attempt to take the shoreside line
  - Exit the turn
    - Follow the race course buoys in the middle of the river
    - Hint - There is no buoy around the corner like the Occoquan Challenge or Chase
- **Finish line** – by the beach area just downstream past the grandstands
  - Horn sounds
  - Don't stop rowing - get out of the way of other crews finishing
  - Keep paddling up to the turn around and celebrate there.

# Landing

- Follow dockmaster instructions on which dock to land
- Let dockmasters know if you are hot docking
- Follow dockmaster instructions
  - Avoid excess speed coming in
  - Ask for help landing if you need it, that's what we are here for
- Two minute dock drill – oars out, shoes on, exit dock
  
- Protests
  - File any protests at Regatta HQ immediately after your race
  
- Celebrate your race!