

# United Hospitals Head Race

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<https://www.uhboatclub.co.uk/uh-head-race>

v2

Dr Jerry Mitchell UHBC President

# Access to ULBH for evil car drivers

- No restrictions on Sunday on driving from Chiswick Bridge/MAA to UL along Hartington Road ('northbound')
- Do not drive all the way along Strand on the Green from Kew Road Bridge to the Railway Bridge (or UL) in one go or the other way otherwise you will get fined. You can access that area (for example to attend the City Barge/Bull) but you need to stop for an 'adequate' period.
- Sutton Court Road (off the A4) is the safest means of access.
- The whole area is within ULEZ for those of you with dirty diesels.

# Safety – this slide is for everyone!

- Coxes buoyancy aids –
  - Concerns that some buoyancy aids old and not serviced
  - CO2 cylinder, mechanism, Velco, straps
- Coxes – navigational safety – Tideway Code
- Hatchcovers – black tape is not, in fact, a hatchcover (it doesn't keep the hull watertight in the event of immersion)
- Bow balls - adequate
- Heel restraints – robust, heel no higher than lowest fixed point of shoe
- **UMPIRES MAY CHECK** – or ask you if you have checked.

# Stream ...

## Richmond hydrographics (PLA)



Currently green flag

LW height 1.61 (4.3.3)

(threshold for green 1.7m)

Upriver (fluvial flow) reducing slowly

Current prediction – **green** (<1.7m) for the race day

Second division (novice entry) close to low water

Individual clubs need to perform their own assessment

Upriver (fluvial) flow reducing

# River Thames Flow At Kingston Bridge

Latest flow rate is 134 m<sup>3</sup>/sec measured at 5 Mar 2026, 19:15

26/02/2026 – 05/03/2026 [Show](#)





# Timings

| UH Head 2026 v2                    | Chiswick Bridge | Kew Rail Br | Kew Road Br | Richmond Lock |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| High water                         | 05:22           | 05:26       | 05:28       | 05:29         |
| Low water                          | 13:13           | 13:28       | 13:35       | 13:39         |
| High water                         | 17:38           | 17:42       | 17:44       | 17:58         |
| Officials briefing                 | 09:15           |             |             |               |
| Start of boating for division 1    | 09:40           |             |             |               |
| (time of CSL start – Richmond)     | 10:30           |             |             |               |
| Division 1 start                   | 10:50           |             |             |               |
| Return of last crew to ULBH        | 11:40           |             |             |               |
| Start of boating for division 2    | 11:40           |             |             |               |
| Division 2 start                   | 12:40           |             |             |               |
| Return of last crew to ULBH        | 13:30           |             |             |               |
| Expected first fixture race finish | 14:35           |             |             |               |
| Dusk                               | 17:52           |             |             |               |

Please monitor website/messages carefully over next 48 hours

We may bring division 1 start time forward by 10 minutes

IF Chiswick Sculling Ladder not occurring (due to yellow flag)

Please ensure prompt turnover between divisions – large novice entry in division 2

We need to start division 2 on time (first section = fours) even if other boats not in place to ensure ebb stream at the finish

# Numbers

- We will be using 'proper' boat numbers this year
- Please make sure your boat's 'Empacher' slot is present and firmly attached to the boat (otherwise cox needs to hold the number and show it at either end)
- Collect boat number from ULBH balcony **and return it after use**
- Paper number using 4 safety pins (!) on cox.
- Boats returning to Quintin, Putney Town, TSS (KCL) – please put number in obviously visible position on foreshore for our marshal to pick up
- Boats returning downriver (SoT, Furnivall) please allow finish marshal to retrieve number when you have crossed the finish line
- Boats returning to ULBH – please bring number back upstairs to race control on the balcony



# Boating timetable

- Please follow timetable if boating from UL or aim to pass UL by this time
- Division 1 boating starts at 09:50 (ON4+)
- Division 2 boating starts at 11:35 (WN8)

Flexibility

Coxes

Cox boxes

Boats

**Anti-faff techniques?**

Be prepared/organised

# Timekeeping - crews

## Change between division 1 and 2

- Particularly important to ensure turnover between divisions
- Finish division 1 – 4+ may be asked to spin promptly at finish – follow instructions
- Non ULBH-based crews please aim to pass ULBH at this time

## **Time penalties will be applied**

- **4 sec for every minute of lateness** past the start line going upstream for crews in section 1 unless control at ULBH notified in advance
- Start timekeepers will monitor

# UHBC website

<https://www.uhboatclub.co.uk/uhead-race>

## UH Head Race Sunday 8th March 2026 10:50 & 12:40

Syon Park Pavilion - MAA (approximately 4400m)



Ebb Tide Flag



CAUTION - STRONG  
Ebb Tide

## Start order v1 2026

[2025 Results by time](#) [2025 Results by category](#)

**Coxes' briefing meeting Thursday 5.3.26 20:00**

Penalty for lateness 5 seconds for each minute late passing the start sign going upriver

2026

Division 1 10:50 start

Division 2 12:40 start

Please note boating times from ULBH - please boat in good time

### Categories:

Championship (open)

Senior (less than average PRI 10)

*It is expected most UH first boats will enter this category*

Intermediate (less than average PRI 1)

Novice (beginner, two terms or less experience)

### Boat classes:

Open and womens 8, 4+/-/-

*Smaller boats at discretion of UH*

First division - senior eights; second division - fours and novice eights (some flexibility)

# United Hospitals Head Race

## COURSE

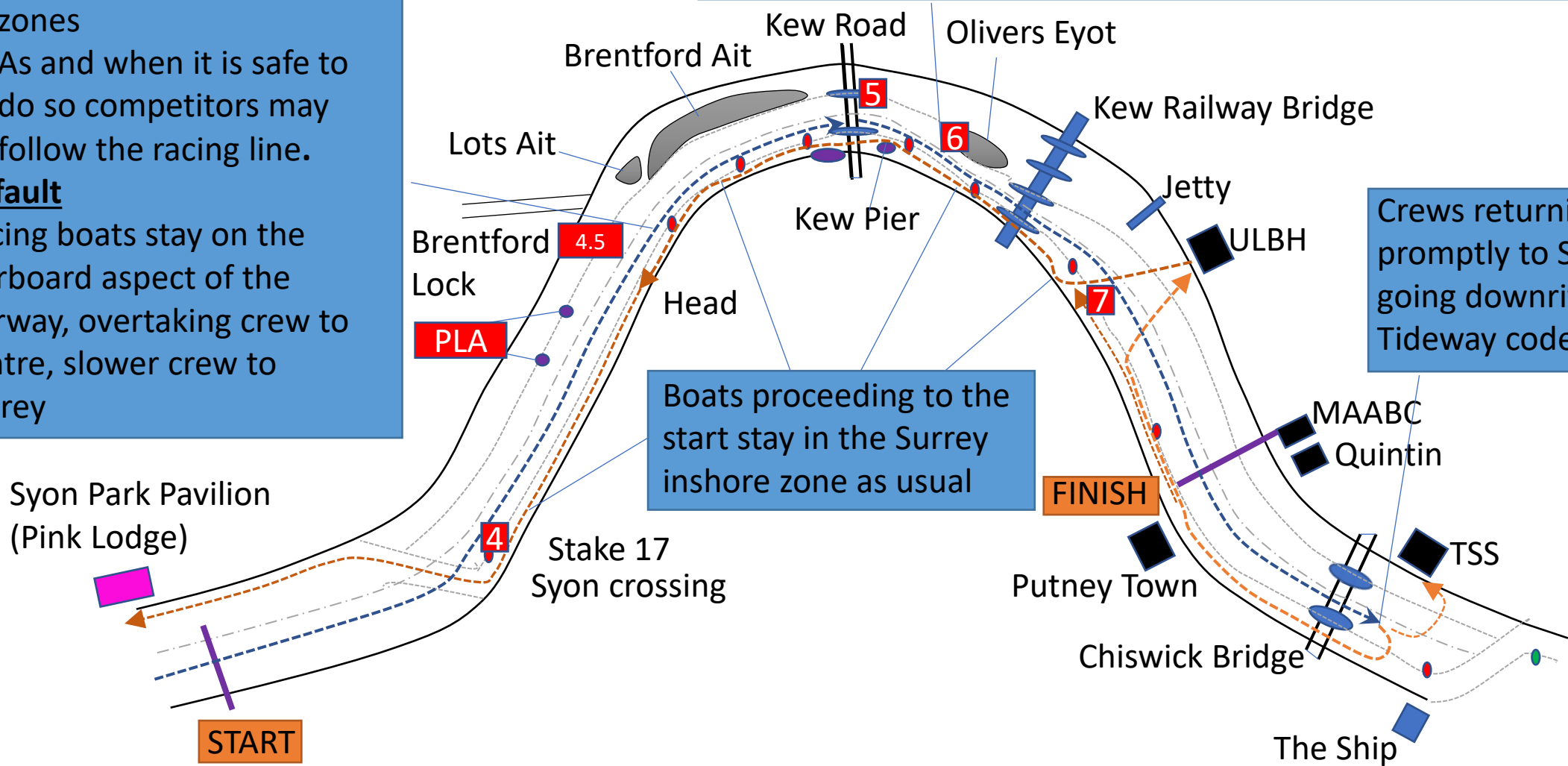
Care through Kew- crews may need to race line astern if required

### If safe

- As and when it is safe to do so competitors may overtake in the restricted zones
- As and when it is safe to do so competitors may follow the racing line.

### Default

Racing boats stay on the starboard aspect of the Fairway, overtaking crew to centre, slower crew to Surrey



Crews returning to UL turn promptly to Surrey, crews going downriver follow Tideway code

Boats proceeding to the start stay in the Surrey inshore zone as usual

START

FINISH

# Hazards

## Going upriver

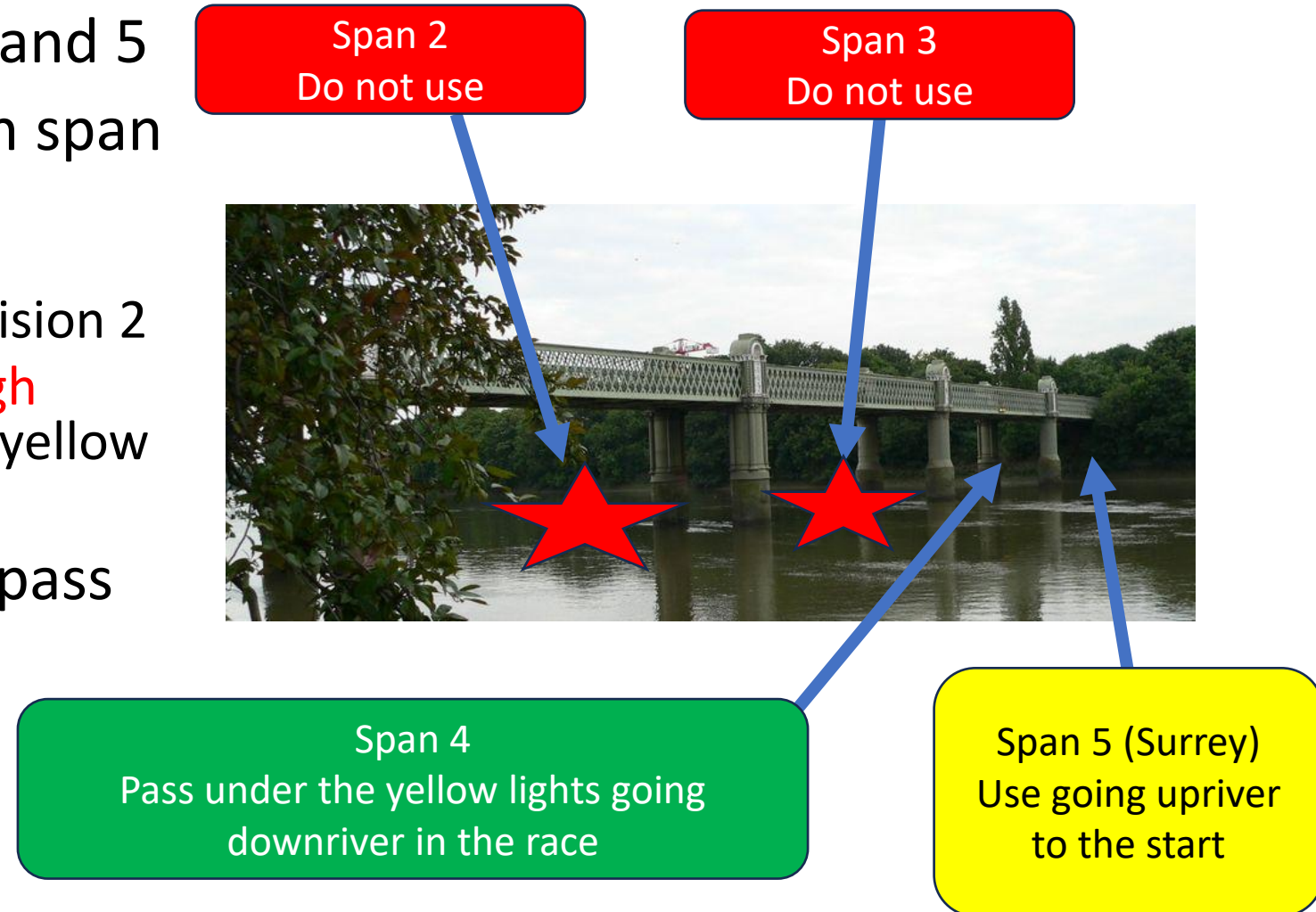
- Crossing the stream
  - Out of UL to Surrey ISZ
  - Syon Crossing
- [Surrey inshore zone may become impassable
  - Kew Rail Bridge span #5
  - Kew Road Bridge arch #5
  - **With care move out, avoid being caught by stream]**

## Going downriver

- Kew Road Bridge Restricted Zone
  - **Must pass through centre arch**
- Olivers Ait
  - Narrowest part of the Tideway
  - Keep out of Surrey ISZ
- Kew Rail Bridge
  - **Must pass through span 4 (yellow lights above)**
  - **Give any crews coming upriver room to pass through the Surrey aspect of #4**

# Kew Rail Bridge (viewed from the Middlesex bank going downriver)

- Picture shows spans 2,3,4 and 5
- Going upriver pass through span 5 (Surrey)
  - Span 5 (Surrey) *may* be impassable possibly for Division 2
  - **Care if going upriver through Surrey side of span 4** (with yellow lights)
- All crews in the race **must** pass through span 4 (under the yellow lights)



# Oliver's Ait



**Very narrow**

Going upriver – keep in the inshore zone (ISZ) tight on Surrey

In the race

Must pass on starboard side of fairway if meet powered vessel coming upriver

- **Line astern if called by umpire**

# Kew Road Bridge (seen from Middlesex)

Arch 3 (Surrey) – may have sunken objects if stream goes low (unlikely!)

Please try to use arch 3 at all times going upriver

**Risk if going through Surrey side of centre arch against the stream**

- Bows get taken out into stream +++

All crews **must** pass through centre of centre arch in race



**Span 3**  
Only going upriver

**Arch 2**  
Use in the race

**Arch 1**  
Do not use

# Hazards – Kew RZ area

In race might meet a powered vessel coming upstream between Kew Road and Kew Rail

- Must pass on starboard side of the powered vessel (coxes right)
- Must stay out of Surrey inshore zone
- If necessary MUST go line astern
  - Umpire instruction

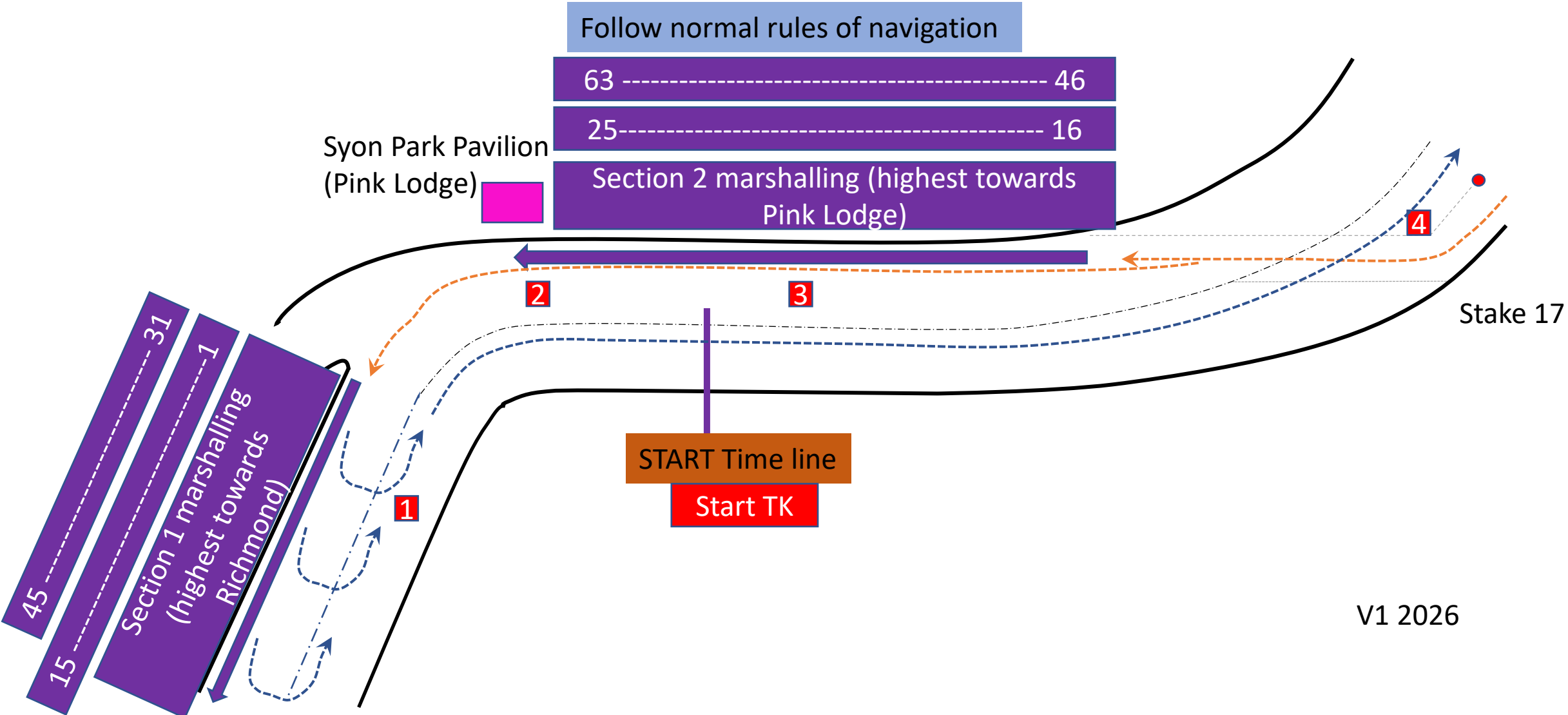
# Starboard lateral markers (red buoys)

- Define the margin of the Surrey inshore zone
- Must stay in inshore zone going against the stream upriver
- Must stay in fairway going with stream
  - Starboard hand rule (pass on coxes right) – powered vessels coming upriver
- Surrey inshore zone ends at stake 17 (Syon Crossing)
  - Above this crossing the normal navigation rules apply as per upriver (drive on the RIGHT)

# Start area



# United Hospitals Head Race START MARSHALLING



# Start marshalling areas prior to race start

- Section 1 (looking upriver)



Section 1 marshalling  
(highest towards Richmond)

- Section 2 (looking downriver)



Section 2 marshalling  
(highest towards Pink Lodge)

# Start marshalling once section 1 starts to turn

- Section 2 (looking upriver)



- Section 2 (looking downriver)



Section 2 moves up on Middlesex side to take section 1's place  
As soon as first crew of section 1 starts  
No faffing please  
Highest number crew goes up to Richmond

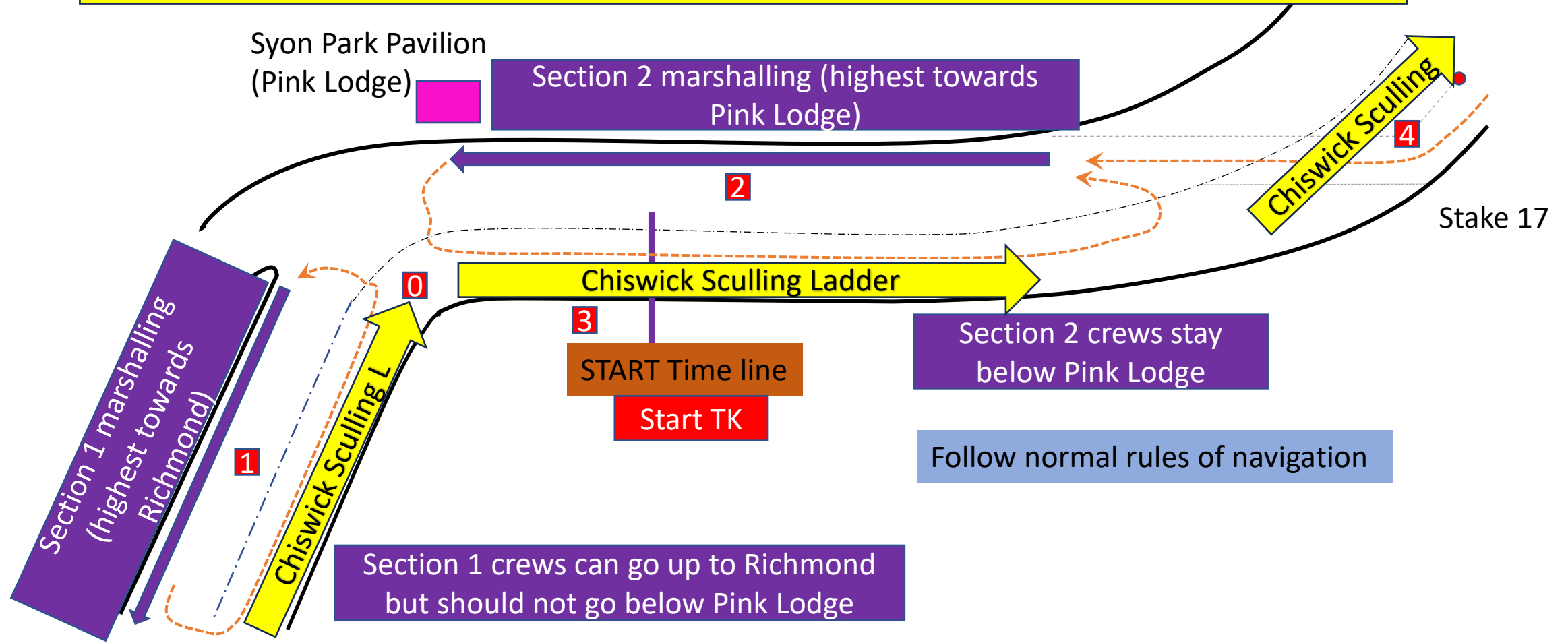
# Start timeline



# United Hospitals Head Race

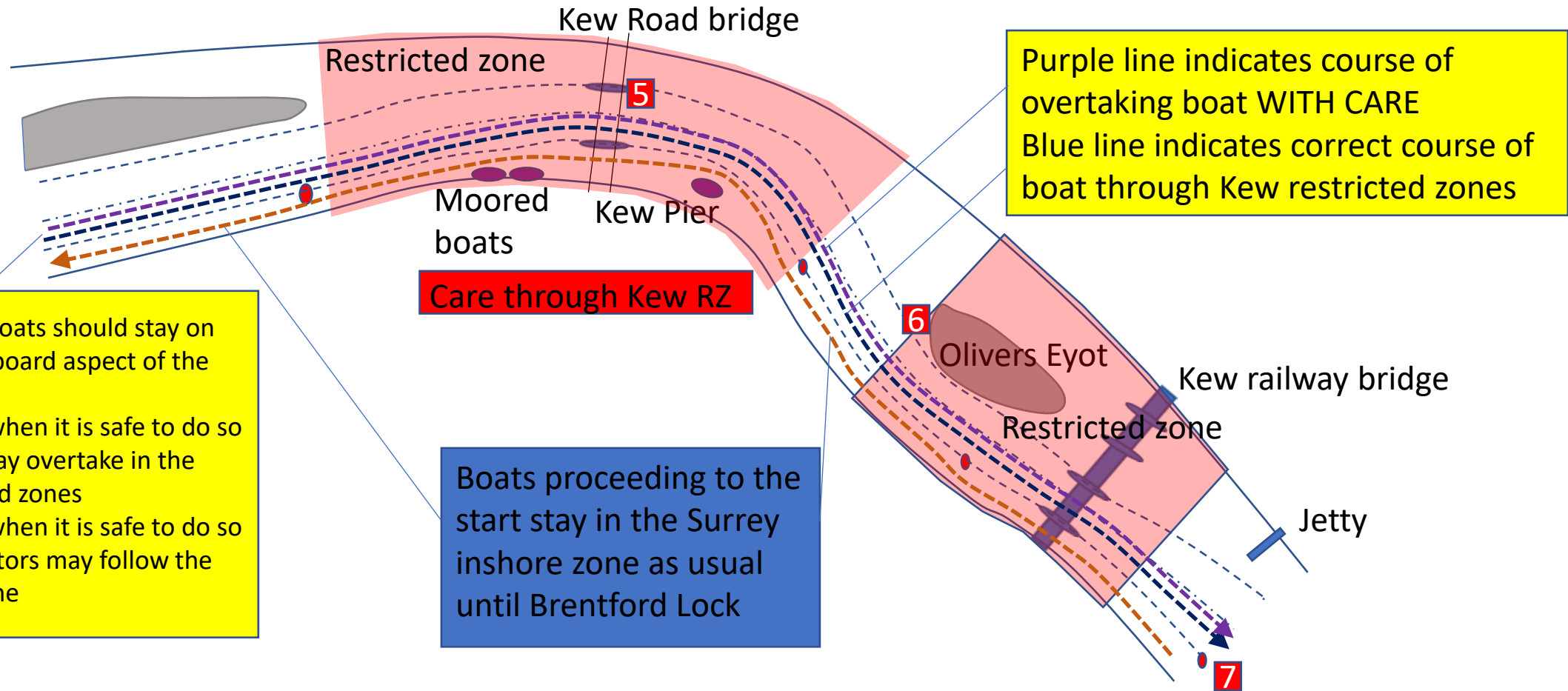
## RECIRCULATION BEFORE START

Division 1 – all boats must stay in position during Chiswick Sculling Ladder –  
allow singles to go downriver unimpeded.  
Recirculation only AFTER Chiswick Sculling Ladder has passed the marshalling area



# United Hospitals Head Race

## Navigation thorough Kew Restricted Zones



# United Hospitals Head Race FINISH area

Kew Railway Bridge

Jetty

ULBH

FINISH

MAABC  
Quintin

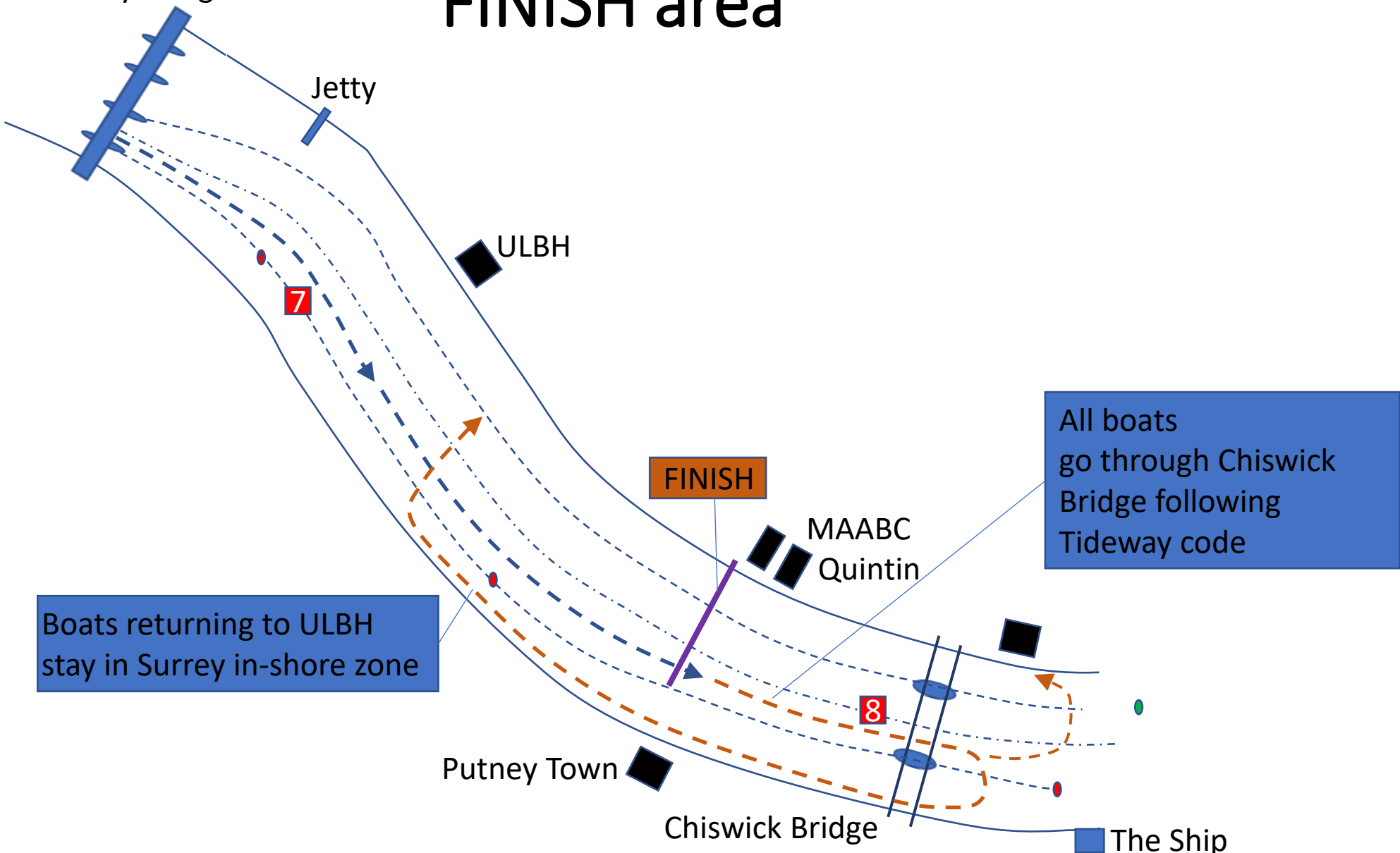
All boats  
go through Chiswick  
Bridge following  
Tideway code

Boats returning to ULBH  
stay in Surrey in-shore zone

Putney Town

Chiswick Bridge

The Ship



# Finish – at MAABC

- Go through Chiswick Bridge arch #2 (centre) downriver
- **Prompt turn to Surrey after the bridge** (unless going to TSS or downriver), do not go down to Ship crossing
- Surrey ISZ on way back to UL



Arch 2 Go through  
the centre arch  
following the end  
of the race  
downriver

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Thank you...