

# United Hospitals Bumps 2026 - Coxswains' Notes

Saturday 23.5.26	Sunday 24.5.26	
08:25	09:28	HW Chiswick Bridge
08:29	09:32	HW Kew Railway Bridge
08:45	09:52	HW Richmond
10:30	11:15	Officials' meeting
11:00	11:45	Start boating division 1
12:00	12:45	Start division 1
12:45	13:30	All boats returned from division 1
12:50	13:35	Start boating division 2
13:45	14:30	Start division 2
14:30	15:15	All boats returned from division 2
14:35	15:20	Start boating division 3
15:30	16:15	Start division 3
16:15	17:00	All boats returned from division 3
16:02	17:11	LW Chiswick Bridge
16:17	17:26	LW Kew Railway Bridge
16:15	17:00	LW Richmond
20:58	21:00	Dusk

**Saturday divisions at 12:00; 13:45; 15:30**

**Sunday divisions at 12:45; 14:30; 16:15**

\* Coxes' meeting will be held in advance, date and time TBC

Racing in accordance with British Rowing rules (where practicable)

1. **Safety paramount;** Each club and cox are responsible to ensuring the overall buoyancy of their boats. All boats must be checked by the cox before boating. Coxes' buoyancy aids must be in accordance with British Rowing rules.
2. **All coxes MUST** have more than 30 hours coxing experience on the Tideway in order to cox a boat of novice status.
3. First aid: available at ULBC, your club should have a kit.
4. Captains must ensure that all coxes are aware of the UH marshalling and navigation system. All coxes must be fully conversant with the principles set out in *the Tideway Code* published by the PLA at <https://boatingonthethames.co.uk/the-tideway-code-boating-on-the-thames/><sup>1</sup>. *The navigation of boats is ultimately the joint responsibility of the individual club captain (s) and coxes- not that of UHBC.*
5. All coxes must have attended the UHBC coxes meeting prior to the event or provide an adequate reason for exemption from this requirement. **All coxes must be able to demonstrate their understanding of the local rules advertised by the PLA at <http://www.pla.co.uk/Events/Annual-Events-Calendar>**

*The races will be held between the Syon Pavilion and Chiswick Bridge, with the tide in the navigational channel. The river will remain open at all times during the event. Competitors will break from the rowing code in the following manner:*

*The rowing crossing point at Syon will be moved to a temporary position off Brentford Lock*

<sup>1</sup> See also the PLA publication <https://boatingonthethames.co.uk/basic-principles-upper-tideway/>

*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*

## Going to the start

6. **Boat in good time** as shown in table (60 minutes for slower ladies' crews).
7. **Crews must keep close to the Surrey side against the stream up to Brentford Lock** in the usual manner. At Brentford Lock (white and red UH flags) **all UH crews will stay in the Surrey in-shore zone and proceed up to their stake.**
8. **Landing at the start** – all crews will land **bows pointing upriver** with the bows under their number and keep their bows in to the shore. Please allow other crews to proceed around stationary crews. Please note external crews will continue to use the Surrey in-shore zone during this period.
9. **Shore parties** – the membership of shore parties will be restricted to authorised people, only these should access the shingle at the start. All others must stay on the towpath.
10. **Access to start from towpath (2026) – see appendix 12.** There has been a collapse of the towpath wall at stakes 4 and 6. All shore party members must keep clear of the immediate vicinity of the collapsed wall to avoid the risk of falling debris.

## The start

11. **Start sequence – PLEASE NOTE 2025;** First - 1 - 0 minute klaxons with white flag displayed by marshalling launches 20 seconds prior to blasts. Start of countdown sequence dictated by pleasure cruiser activity as judged by the chief umpire.
12. **Once the first klaxon is sounded, the upriver navigation will change so that any external crews will cross at Brentford Lock and proceed on the Middlesex side.**
13. Following the first klaxon all boats will start to **turn at their stake**. The shore party must hold the stern of the bow and then push the bows out into the stream. The staker holding the stern should keep the stern close to the bank and gently walk the stern upriver so that at the end of the turn the stern is under the number.
14. Once the starter sees that all the boats have completed the turn, the one-minute warning will be sounded, followed by the start klaxon. Please note that the time interval between first klaxon and the one-minute warning will not be precise, whereas the interval between the one-minute warning and the start klaxon will be one minute.
15. If start sequence needs to be aborted (right up to the last few seconds) then the start controller will notify boats from Head downwards. The restart will probably be from the (two-minute countdown) one minute warning (or as notified by the chief umpire).
16. **The cox *must* keep hold of the string until the start has been sounded.** If you have a bow - rigged boat you must notify UH in advance so that you have an adequate length of string. The knot tying the string to the stake must be directly under the centre of the painted number.
17. **No rolling starts allowed.** Oarsmen from both sides of the boat must not paddle on together (in whatever combination) prior to the start.
18. **Stakers**. Coxes are asked to ensure that all stakers do not enter the water deeper than waist height, and ensure that stakers are aware of the potential for injury if they fail to keep an adequate look-out. ***Stakers MUST step back immediately after the start klaxon. For boats 1 to 4 in each division, please ensure that the stake holder is swapped with another club.***

## The race

19. **In the race you must adhere to the normal rules of navigation and avoid potential conflict.** You **MUST** conform to the Code of Practice for Rowing on the Tideway. You may proceed on the 'racing line' in the stream **BUT** only if it is safe to do so. All coxes must keep a sharp lookout for oncoming vessels. You must pass on the correct (drive on the right) side of motor vessels as normal. You **must not** pass through the Surrey side arch of Kew Road Bridge or the Surrey side span of the Railway Bridge with the stream on pain of disqualification.

20. **Overtaking will be allowed in the restricted zones at Kew Road and Kew Rail bridges under the local rules advertised by the PLA at <http://www.pla.co.uk/Events/Annual-Events-Calendar>. However there will be launch based officials in the area, who may require for safety reasons that all crews follow each other (proceed 'line astern'), and prohibit overtaking in these areas. Failure to comply with the officials' instructions, particularly by attempting to overtake in the Kew Bridge restricted zones when this has been expressly prohibited by the officials, will be dealt with severely. The offending cox can expect that the boat will be disqualified and that the issue will be reported to the PLA and TRRC.**
21. If the launch-based officials at Kew require crews to proceed 'line astern' in one or both restricted zones then they will give the following instructions to crews at the beginning of the relevant restricted zone: **'Caution ahead - No overtaking allowed - Proceed line astern'. If this call is made there will be a change to the definition of a bump in the Kew restricted zones - see below.**
22. You **MUST** pass through the starboard aspect of the **centre span** of Kew Road Bridge and the starboard aspect of the main span of the Railway Bridge (marked by the orange lights) – see appendix 10. Any crew not doing so will be disqualified.
23. **The finish** is when the whole boat has passed the finish line (nearside of MAA [UH flag]).
24. **The Chiswick Bridge Restricted Zone is in force throughout this event.** Crews must comply with the Code of Practice when entering the Chiswick Bridge Restricted Zone. There must be no stopping or turning this zone.
25. **After the finish:** If you have been bumped out you may turn to land at ULBH. Turn into the Middlesex bank. Do not obstruct the Surrey side. Keep well clear of other river users. If rowing on to the finish you must pass through the Chiswick Bridge Restricted Zone in accordance with the Code of Practice but turn promptly so as not to cause conflict with external oared boats crossing against the stream at the Ship. Crews returning to ULBH must turn to Surrey in accordance with the map provided. Take care when proceeding back to ULBH to ensure that you stay in the Surrey in-shore zone in accordance with the Code of Practice until you reach the water outfall 100yards east of UL, marked by an official's launch. Ensure that the river is safe before crossing back to the Middlesex side. Keep the navigation lanes clear at all times.

## Bumps

26. A **bump** is where the boat or blade of the chasing crew makes contact with the boat, blade or person of the crew ahead (provided that that crew has not already been involved in a bump). **It is essential that coxes of crews being bumped concede, or acknowledge, the bump as early as possible by raising their hand clearly to avoid the possibility of injury.** Once the crew has been involved in a bump, the crew drops out of the race. A bump is inevitable if the 'two canvas' rule is met - if there is overlap of more than a canvas through the stroke cycle and there is less than a canvas width between the two boats. Any bump resulting in contact between a member of one crew and a member of another crew will result in the bump being disallowed.
27. **It is essential that the leading crew<sup>2</sup> in the bump pulls away from the bump as soon as possible** in order to avoid the crews becoming entangled and thus causing obstruction to crews behind. This is particularly important in the restricted zones at Kew.
28. **If crews wish to stop following a bump then they may do so** just on the Middlesex side of the line set by the Port Hand Buoys **in two positions only:** (1) between Brentford Ait and the Port Hand Buoy 30m upstream of the eastern end of the Lower Brentford Ait (near Kew Road Bridge) and (2) between the University of London Boathouse and MAABC; to allow the crews still in the race to pass on the centre side of the navigation channel (in accordance with the Code of Practice); before proceeding back to their boathouse. **Bumped-out crews must not go too close to the Surrey side** and obstruct the proper navigation of other oared boats proceeding against the stream in accordance with the Code of Practice. **Bumped-out crews must not stop in the Kew Restricted zones, but must proceed to the UL buoy before stopping.**
29. An **overbump** occurs in the situation where a crew makes a legal bump (or technical bump) on the boat three places ahead of them. This can only occur if the two intervening crews have already bumped out. It is not possible for a boat to legally bump a crew two places ahead<sup>3</sup>. A double overbump occurs where a

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<sup>2</sup> i.e. the crew that has been bumped.

<sup>3</sup> Or any even multiple of 2 above.

crew makes a legal bump (or technical bump) on the boat five places ahead, provided that the four intervening crews have already bumped out.<sup>4</sup>

30. A **technical bump** occurs where the bows of the boat pass the bows of the boat ahead, provided that that crew has not already been involved in a bump.

31. **Special rules for bumping in the Kew restricted zones if the officials call 'line astern':**

*If an official instructs crews to proceed 'line astern' through either or both of the Kew Bridge Restricted Zones, a bump will be awarded if the bows of the chasing boat pass the stern post of the leading boat, irrespective of whether or not physical contact has been made between the two boats. Once the bump has occurred, the chasing crew must hold back to allow the leading crew to proceed (without delay) through the restricted zone. Crews who deliberately overtake when line astern has been ordered will be disqualified (three position drop) and the matter may be reported to the TRRC via the standard incident reporting system. In this situation the concept of a technical bump (bows past bows) does not exist. Crews behind must be prepared to stop if needs be in the interests of safety.*

32. **Report Bumps ASAP to UH control (ULBH).** In the event of dispute the affected coxes and captains (only) will be required to discuss the matter with the race committee.

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<sup>4</sup> Higher multiples of overbump are possible, although unlikely, on crews 7,9,11 etc ahead.

