

UNITED HOSPITALS HEAD 2026

Officials' instructions

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			

Launch Official	Designation	Radio callsign	Position at race start
1	Chief Umpire	CHIEF UMPIRE	Isleworth Ait
2	Marshal/CC at UL		Isleworth Ait/Syon Park Pavilion
3	Marshal & starter		Syon Park Pavillion
4	Race observer		Brentford crossing
5	Race observer (Kew RZ lead)		Western end of RZ Kew Road Bridge
6	Race observer/ Control Commission		Western end of RZ Kew Rail Br
7	Race observer		100 yards east of ULBH on Surrey side
8	Marshal		Finish line (Surrey side)
Safety (9)	Safety launch	SAFETY	Brentford Lock
Bank marshal			
BM1	Start timekeeper		Start timeline
BM2	Race observer		Opposite Brentford Lock (Bumps crossing point) to maintain line of sight (between L4 and L5)
CONTROL	Race control (BM3)	CONTROL	ULBH
BM4	Finish timekeeper		MAABC following assisting boating at ULBH
BM5	Spotter	SPOTTER	Barnes Railway Bridge

See appendix 9 for map of officials' positions.

- 1 **Officials' meeting** on the morning at ULBH.
- 2 **Please ensure all launches are correctly fitted with BR-compliant IDs and are put out prior to boating** on the day (including petrol, deadman's handles and safety equipment). Officials at

the start end must be in position on the water by the time crews arrive at their station. The list of required launch safety equipment is in the BR Row Safe guide.

- 3 **All officials must be familiar with the Tideway Code (TC)¹, the location of the starboard and port lateral mark buoys, and the event rules agreed with the PLA.**
- 4 **All officials must be aware of the specific variation to navigation agreed with the PLA²:**
The races will be held between Syon Park Pavillion 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:
 - o As and when it is safe to do so competitors may overtake in the restricted zones [at Kew];*
 - o As and when it is safe to do so competitors may follow the racing line.*
- 5 There may need to be changes to the race format or marshalling arrangements which will be discussed at the officials meeting. Please refer to the curtailment plan for possible changes to the course.
- 6 **First aid** available from individual Clubs at ULBH at their own boathouses. UHBC/ULBC kit is at ULBH. See below for further details.
- 7 In the event of an accident your **first duty is to the safety** of competitors and yourself – see appendices 4/a/b. Call the **safety** launch by radio if appropriate. **Any emergencies (medical/regatta)** to be reported ASAP by radio to the safety launch and control. See appendices 4, 4A and 4B. Safety first – do not put yourself into danger but if close to the scene please offer assistance. Do not neglect the other aspects of your duty. If the **safety** launch is in attendance then please return to your designated duty unless otherwise requested.
- 8 **Radio protocol:** please keep your messages clear and short. Remember that no-one else can transmit if you hold your transmit button down. In general please refer to the person you are trying to contact by position rather than name, particularly for:
 - *Control (Race control, ULBH)*
 - **Start** (Chief Umpire, launch 1)
 - **Spotter** (bank marshal 5)
 - **Safety** (launch)Please keep all radio traffic formal. The correct manner of starting a call is:
 - ‘Race control, race control, this is xxxx, over’ (best way of attracting attention)
 - ‘This is race control, go ahead’
 - ‘Message, over, (where response expected)
 - ‘Response, out’ (to end conversation)
- 9 **Radio transmission:** It is expected that the event will use a digital radio system which has been found to have better event-wide coverage than the conventional analogue radio system. If an analogue system is used the nature of the course is such that the radio transmission range may be insufficient to provide for direct radio transmission between race officials at either end of the course. The exact nature of the range will be dependent on a number of external conditions and the positioning of the booster station and will need to be assessed on the day. All radios will be turned to the same frequency (channel 1). Functionally there will be two groups of radio users if needed using the analogue system:
 - o **Start group** Officials 1,2,3,4, safety, Bank Marshalls 1 & 2 (lead CU)
 - o **Finish group** Officials 5,6,7,8, safety, Bank Marshalls 2,3,4,5 (lead Control)

Depending on the conditions on the day, Bank marshal 2 or official 5 are likely to be responsible for ensuring that messages are relayed between the start and finish if needed. The safety launch needs to position itself in an area where there is good line of sight of the Brentford stretch, and also good radio contact with both the start and finish groups. **Control and spotter** will remain in close mobile

¹ https://www.pla.co.uk/assets/THE_ROWING_CODE.pdf

² Shown in PLA events calendar for event at <https://pla.co.uk/river-events>

telephone contact with the **start** (Chief Umpire). **In case of radio failure use mobile phone telephone numbers listed in officials' information (Check your number is listed and is correct!).**

- 10 It is the personal responsibility of each crew to ensure each club boat conforms to the BR requirements. Bow-balls, heel release mechanism, **BR – compliant IDs**, rudder lines and fin, the integrity of the buoyancy chambers, and the proper fitting of coxes' buoyancy aids must be checked by each club; some random checks may be done by rostered licenced umpires and crews may be excluded if boats do not comply.
 - 11 Please anticipate high stream flow rates due to excess land water. It only takes a few seconds for a boat to get into danger.
 - 12 All launches are responsible for policing adherence to the PLA rules of navigation in whichever location they are in.
 - 13 All launches will follow the last oared boat up the course without causing excess wash.
 - 14 **Launches 4,5,6,7 and safety** must be on the water at the time crews start to boat.
 - 15 **The following notes apply to running the race in the conventional manner over the full course (downriver direction). It may be necessary to curtail the course due to unrowable conditions or, exceptionally, to run the race on the flood stream. Please see the contingency plan. If there are significant changes to the race format then there will be a specific coxes' meeting in addition to the officials' meeting. Additional positions may be added as needed, but the basic details remain as set out below.**
 - 16 **Chief umpire** responsibilities:
 - Chief marshal/chief umpire
 - Overall control of conduct of event
 - Overall control of marshalling in start area
 - Lead for radio communication in start group (see 9 above)
 - Communication with **control** and **spotter** prior to commencement of start
 - 17 **Marshal/official 1:**
 - Before boating gets underway at ULBH will initially help with control commission duties at ULBH.
 - Ensure that crews keep into the Middlesex side in the marshalling area, and kept paddling up to maintain their appropriate positions as shown in appendix 6
 - Turning of crews onto the stream and presentation to the starter.
 - Setting up a minimum 15 second gap between crews going to the starter
 - 18 **Marshal/official 2:**
 - Ensure that crews keep into the Middlesex side during marshalling, and keep paddling up to maintain their appropriate position as shown in appendix 6
 - Ensure that crews along Isleworth Ait are correctly positioned prior to start
 - Send up the second section of the division into the space vacated by the first section during the start.
- Starter 3**
- Once the crews are turned by Official 1, the starter will maintain a constant position by the Syon Park Pavilion and ensure that crews are adequately separated and hold back crews if necessary to achieve a minimum of 15 seconds between each crew
 - Start each crew in turn by saying 'crew x, go'.
- 19 **Official 4:**
 - Responsible for ensuring adherence to the PLA navigation rules by UH boats paddling to the start and during the race, and in particular ensuring safety at the Syon Crossing at Isleworth Ferry Gate.
 - Notification of any external oared boats travelling upriver through the Syon crossing to officials 1,2,3 via the start radio group; notification of any powered vessels.

- The launch should be positioned at the crossing (i.e. at about Bumps start 16-18) in a suitable position which allows good visibility of the river downstream towards Brentford Lock.

20 Official 5 (KEW):

- Official 5 will be the **lead official for the Kew RZ group** (L5/6/7) and will be positioned at the western end of the RZ at Kew Road Bridge (see appendix 8)
- The launch should be positioned to have radio communication with both the start and finish radio groups but this cannot be guaranteed and will need to be assessed once in position.
- Pass on information to upriver officials about oncoming rowing boats and powered vessels proceeding upriver.
- Supervision of Kew Road Bridge restricted zone, both before and during the race.
- Official 5 must monitor the arrival of crews during the race and determine whether there are likely to be any crews overtaking through the Kew Road Bridge RZ. Good contact with upriver officials will facilitate the early detection of any problems as crews come up to official 5. If it appears that there is a possibility of significant bunching of crews in the area, the official must advise the rear-most crew(s) to slow down and ensure that they do not cause a situation where more than two crews are attempting to overtake at any one time. Important information about likely problems should be passed on to downriver officials by radio. **IF IN DOUBT** tell crews to proceed line astern through the RZ.
- **Crews must be told to proceed line astern if there is any doubt about the available width of the fairway through the restricted zone (the affected area may be a part or all of the restricted zone area).**
- Note that all boats on the fairway count in this assessment - whether or not they belong to crews competing in the race.
- The standard instruction will be: **'Caution ahead - No overtaking allowed - Proceed line astern'**.
- The launch must warn all crews approaching during the race if there is a possibility of meeting a powered vessel proceeding against the stream in either the Kew Road or Rail Bridge RZs. This information should be provided by the downriver marshals on the finish radio group.
- Coxes who appear to disregard the instructions to proceed line astern for safety reasons should be made aware that their actions will be reported to the TRRC and the boat may be disqualified if it appears that safety has been compromised by the coxes' actions.

21 Official 6

- Assist with control commission duties at UL as appropriate
- Will be positioned at the western end of the Kew Railway Bridge RZ (see appendix 8).
- Pass on information to official 5 about oncoming rowing boats and powered vessels proceeding upriver from Chiswick Bridge.
- Supervision of Kew Rail Bridge restricted zone, both before and during the race.
- Monitor the arrival of crews during the race and determine whether there are likely to be any crews overtaking through the Kew Rail Bridge RZ. If it appears that there is a possibility of more than two crews attempting to overtake in the area, the official must advise the rear-most crew(s) to slow down and ensure that they do not cause a situation where more than two crews are attempting to overtake at any one time.
- **Crews must be told to proceed line astern if there is any doubt about the available width of the fairway through the restricted zone (the affected area may be a part or all of the restricted zone area). This is particularly important at Oliver's Ait which is the narrowest part of the whole course.**
- Note that all boats on the fairway count in this assessment - whether or not they belong to crews competing in the race.
- The standard instruction will be: **'Caution ahead - No overtaking allowed - Proceed line astern'**.

- The official must warn all crews approaching during the race if there is a possibility of meeting a powered vessel proceeding against the stream in the Kew Rail Bridge RZ. This information should be provided to official 6 by the downriver marshals on the finish radio group.
- Coxes who appear to disregard the instructions to proceed line astern for safety reasons should be made aware that their actions will be reported to the TRRC and the boat may be disqualified if it appears that safety has been compromised by the coxes' actions.

22 Official 7

- Will be positioned opposite UL in a position to be able to monitor traffic in the Surrey in-shore zone and the navigation of boats crossing the fairway proceeding to ULBH following the race (see appendix 11)
- Pass on information to official 6/ bank marshal 6 about oncoming rowing boats and powered vessels proceeding upriver from Chiswick Bridge.
- Provide a warning to all rowing boats not involved in the event that there is a head race in progress. Please attempt to determine the intentions of all such boats and provide advice to them as required. Request that such boats do not attempt to turn in front of the oncoming race (particularly with reference to the area between the Kew Bridge RZs).
- Ensure that crews retuning to ULBH from the finish give way when crossing the fairway from the Surrey in-shore zone to the Middlesex side, particularly if other boats are still in the race.
- Ensure that crews returning to ULBH cross only in the designated crossing area at the water outfall on the Surrey side, and not before (see appendix 11).

23 Official/finish marshal 8:

- Pass on information to officials 5,6,7 about oncoming rowing boats and powered vessels proceeding upriver using the finish radio group.
- Monitor the finish.
- Ensure that crews pass into the Chiswick Bridge RZ line astern, and take action to slow down relevant crews in order to avoid any boat overlap as crews enter the RZ.
- Ensuring that crews turn promptly and safely, and ensure that there is no conflict with external crews, particularly those crossing at the Ship Inn Crossing. Please ensure men's crews returning to ULBH turn promptly after the Chiswick Bridge RZ.
- Please monitor boats returning to ULBH to ensure that they stay in the Surrey in-shore zone.

24 SAFETY

- Will act as the event safety launch.
- Stationed at a suitable point near the PLA moorings, such that it has a good line of sight of the Brentford stretch and good radio contact with both the start and the finish.
- No other primary responsibility. However, may pass on information to upriver officials about oncoming rowing boats and powered vessels proceeding upriver.
- Will respond to any report about an accident or capsize on the course by making way towards the reported accident site as quickly and safely as possible.
- Will act as the primary rescue vessel in any case of capsize or inadvertent ejection of a competitor out of a boat, and will assume this role from any other launch in attendance once the safety launch has arrived.
- The safety launch will need to inform **control** and **start** (launch 1) if the action and emergency action plan (appendix 4, 4a & 4b) needs to be put into action.
- The safety launch will need to discuss with the senior medical officer the most appropriate route of evacuation of casualties and inform UL control accordingly. It will be the primary responsibility of UL control to call an ambulance, although others may take on this responsibility if necessary³.

³ A land-based marshal (at control) will be in a better place to receive calls from the LAS and provide updates as the launch-based officials may not be able to hear or deal with incoming mobile calls.

- The Safety launch will be afloat 45 minutes prior to each division and will stay afloat until all competitors have returned to ULBH or TSS.
- 25 **Bank Marshal 1**
- Will be placed at the start line as the start time keeper.
 - The crews will be set off at no less than 15 second intervals, spaced by the starter in L3.
 - During marshalling, before the race commences, BM 1 will assist in ensuring that crews stay close to the Middlesex bank whilst marshalling against the stream, and keep paddling up to maintain their position.
 - If there is an emergency requiring evacuation in the start area, BM1 should act as the primary land-based official and act in accordance with appendix 4a.
- 26 **Bank Marshal 2**
- BM2 needs to position him/her self on the Surrey bank opposite Brentford Lock (at the Bumps crossing point) so as to have a good vision of the river in both directions and ensure that there is complete line-of-sight coverage of the course towards the Brentford Ait in conjunction with other officials.
 - The marshal needs to ensure that where at all possible, that radio contact is maintained with both the start and finish groups.
 - The marshal, provided that radio contact is possible with both start and finish groups, may need to act as a relay between the start and finish groups. If it is not possible to effect radio contact between the two groups, BM 2 will assist in establishing an alternative communication channel between the start and the finish groups (in discussion with L1).
 - BM2 must ensure good communication with launch 5 during the race, and in particular advise launch 5 ('Kew') of any groupings of crews which may lead to bunching of crews or overtaking in the Kew Road Bridge RZ. **If in doubt, warn launch 5.**
- 27 **CONTROL**
- Act as co-ordinator of the finish radio group.
 - Maintain close direct contact (probably by mobile telephone) with the chief umpire
 - Overall supervision of the boating of crews (assisted by BM 4 and launch 2) at ULBH
 - Liaison with contact at TSSC to ensure timely boating of GKT crews.
 - Co-ordinator of the accident and emergency action plan - designated to make primary contact with the LAS if an ambulance is required (note that this role will be taken on by BM1 in the event of implementation of the A&E plan in the start area).
 - Ensure appropriate deployment of launches & officials in the finish area
- 28 **Bank marshal 4**
- Assist Control in boating of crews at ULBH
 - Finish time keeper (MAABC)
 - Ensure clear audible signal to all crews once crossed finish line (note time first then sound klaxon).
- 29 **SPOTTER (Bank marshal 5)**
- Will be placed on Barnes Bridge.
 - Ensure effective radio communication with the finish radio network (especially **control** and launch 8) to warn of any power vessels or significant oared boat activity proceeding upriver towards the race finish.
 - Specific direct mobile telephone contact with **start** to advise of class V (pleasure cruiser) or similar sized powered vessels coming towards the race course.
 - Specific direct mobile telephone contact with **start** immediately prior to commencement of starting the race.