

**Cambridge University  
Combined Boat Clubs**

GUIDELINES FOR COXES

and

COLLEGE COACHES

2008 – 9

# 1 COXING GUIDELINES

A concise guide to coxing with particular reference to the river Cam. For a more detailed guide to coxing, refer to the CUCBC website.

## The role of the cox

Apart from the first outings of a novice cox, the cox (and not the coach or anyone else) is in charge of the crew and ultimately responsible for what it does. This includes:

- Keeping your crew safe at all times obeying the rules of the river.
- Maintaining complete control in the boat.
- Coaching the crew and improve the standard of rowing.
- Running the race: motivating, setting tactics and getting the best out of your crew.
- Steering a good course.

A good cox is one who discusses issues with their coach, however simple or complicated the question may be. The best way to cox is to be a coach in the boat and inspire confidence. The only way to do this is to listen, reinforce what the coaches say and question. Most coaches are oarsmen and don't think about spending time coaching coxes. If you make the effort you will learn, your coxing will improve and your crew will respect you.

## Safety

Safety is unfortunately now a prominent issue, highlighted by recent inept coxing putting people's lives in danger. It is very simple to avoid accidents - keep control and don't bow to pressure from over-aggressive rowers.

- Safety is the prime concern of the cox. This is true whatever the situation — a race, the bumps or an outing. If a situation is dangerous, **STOP**. If this is in a race, it will be re-run.
- It is your responsibility to know the rules of the river and you are legally bound if the crew is involved in an accident.

## Commands

Your commands are for all the crew to hear. They must be clear, concise and useful. The aim is to tell the crew what the situation is, what they are going to do about it and when they are going to do it. Make sure you and the crew understand what your commands mean. Discuss commands on land and ensure that there is no uncertainty. This is especially important before your first outing — you must know what to say to start rowing, stop and steer. Not only is this very important for safety, it stops you losing respect by not knowing what to say.

The way in which you give commands makes a huge difference:

- **Voice Quality:** This can be varied if you have a cox-box. For novices this is unlikely so you need to develop a way of shouting so you can be heard. Try to project your voice as opposed to shouting straight into your stroke's body.
- **Rhythm:** Helps the crew achieve their own rhythm. It is very important to emphasise the rhythm you want the crew to achieve by the timing of your commands (e.g. command same length as stroke in water).
- **Timing:** give your commands at a similar point in the stroke, and appropriate to how and when you want the crew to react. Tell them what they are going to do and ensure that they do it when you say 'Go'. This is often at the finish.

## Races

Know as much about the crew as possible — their strengths and weaknesses, where problems will arise and how to overcome them. This is crucial to your role in a race, and can make all the difference between winning and losing.

- Encourage the crew. You are trying to get them to go through a lot of pain and it makes a big difference if you are giving them goals to achieve and telling them that they're doing well.
- Tell your crew exactly what is happening the whole time. If you are going to hit the bank tell them. In a race, if you are two lengths up or down on the other boat tell them that — if you lie they'll hate you afterwards.

## Steering

The Cam is not a river that lends itself to convenient rowing due to its narrowness and sharp bends. Familiarise yourself with the map of the river. Especially dangerous corners are:

- The Road Bridge (Queen Elizabeth Way)
- Chesterton (Green Dragon)
- Ditton
- Grassy

You must keep close to your side of the river and be ready to ease and hold the boat up quickly. You may find it difficult to get round using the rudder alone if you are going slowly. Use '2 and 4', or 'Bow and 3' to take the boat round. Do not stray to the other side of the river — fast crews may be coming up.

- Pushing away from you on the right string makes you go right, pulling the right makes you go left. Remember that the boat pivots about a point roughly in the middle of the boat, so the stern will swing out as you turn.

- The rudder acts as a brake. The one sided braking turns the boat. It also makes the boat lean. This slows and unbalances the boat — try to use it only when the blades are in the water (though this is impossible on some corners).
- Feel for the delay between steering and it taking effect. Learn to anticipate. Anticipation is the mark of a good cox. Be aware of other crews around you, anticipating what they may do. The cox needs to observe a long distance ahead (cf. good driving).
- Watch for the wind: clever coxing can anticipate the wind pushing the boat off course. You may often find that you have to steer a compensating course(*i.e.* pointing away from the bank to keep moving parallel to it).
- Don't lean your own body weight from side to side when steering (or lean out to see where you're going). You must keep your body weight central and steady in the boat.

The most important rules relevant to coxing are:

- Keep to the right: except in the Gut and Plough Reach where you keep to the left. Boats going downstream give way to those coming upstream, especially when crossing over.
- Spinning: Look before you give the command, never just because the coach says so. Never spin where it is dangerous, e.g. corners, when a crew is close behind and never in The Gut
- Overtaking: As with spinning, look and decide whether it is safe. Always ask to 'come by' before overtaking.
- Easying: Always give way to faster crews; draw into the bank if necessary. The river is very narrow and you will often need to draw your blades right in. This is possible, you won't capsize but you will need to do it very quickly. Make sure your crew is aware of this in advance.
- Anglers: treat with courtesy — avoid their lines and don't easy next to them.

## **2 CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COLLEGE COACHES**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to maximise the capacity on the river and to ensure that every crew has the best opportunity to train.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Traffic on the river remains safe for all users at all times.
2. It is more important for a crew to row than a coach to talk.
3. Do not hold up other crews.
4. Take care and be aware of single scullers, Town crews and other river users.

### **Above Chesterton (Downstream or Upstream, before 0900hrs and at any time when the river is busy - common sense defines this):**

1. Unless required for safety, no rowing with fewer than 4 rowers at a time in an eight, roll the changes rather than stop/start, and at a minimum of half slide (See Appendix 4).
2. Increase boat speed (via increasing number of rowers, or pressure up to half pressure) as needed in front of other crews.

### **Chesterton to Penny Ferry (Pike and Eel) (Downstream or Upstream):**

1. Keep moving through this stretch of water, but expect to merge with upstream crews spinning at the pub.

### **Penny Ferry (Pike and Eel) to Ditton, Ditton to Bovis (Motorway) Bridge (Downstream or Upstream):**

1. Treat this as the main 'course' for crews.
2. No rowing other than continuously with full crew, unless not safe to do so, or if doing standing starts.
3. Standing starts, and their practise, may be done provided that others are not impeded.
4. No stopping other than at Ditton to spin, to fit in with traffic or to maintain safety; if spinning, do so near the post at the bottom of the Reach, and do not join a line of crews spinning all the way up the Reach - wait your turn at the bottom!
5. Expect other crews to be rowing at speed, especially upstream, and do your utmost not to obstruct them.
6. Respect other crews that simply cannot go any faster but do their best to maintain the flow.

7. Obey relevant rules re overtaking, pulling in to the bank to give way etc. (See Rules 20 – 31).
8. If coaches wish to talk to crews at Ditton, which is often unnecessary, pull into the bank to do so and do not create an obstruction to moving crews; do not stop and talk elsewhere on the river other than below the Little Bridge.

**Ditton Corner:**

1. Expect crews to be spinning just upstream of the corner.
2. Once spun, pull into the bank to talk/rest, or move off promptly. Don't just sit stationary in the river!

**Bovis (Motorway) Bridge to Baitsbite Lock:**

1. (Downstream) Expect to find crews spinning below the slight corner so reduce speed to suit.
2. (Upstream) Expect to find crews assembling near the Little Bridge for upstream pieces. Such crews to move off as soon as possible without long instructions from the bank. A reasonable delay to allow a slower crew to get ahead is acceptable.

### 3 TEN GOLDEN RULES FOR SAFETY

The following ten statements summarise the CUCBC Rules of the River. These must be followed by all University and College Crews rowing on the Cam between Jesus and Baitsbite Locks. Failure to obey these rules will result in clubs being fined and/or banned from using the river.

1. No College crew may be on the water during the 'Hours of Darkness' and no boat may be on the water without lights in the 15 minutes before lighting up or the fifteen minutes after lighting down.
2. No boat is allowed on the water when the CUCBC flag is red, and only University Crews, first boats and boats in the first two divisions of the May Bumps (Men), or first boats and boats in the first division of the May Bumps (Women), or first fours and tub pairs, are allowed on the water when the flag is yellow.
3. Only University Crews, first boats, and any other boats in the top two divisions of the May Bumps may row below Baitsbite Lock.
4. No novice crew may be on the water before 7.30am or within fifteen minutes of lighting down, which ever is later, and all novice crews must be accompanied. In addition, the first outing of a novice eight must be with an experienced cox.
5. Loud hailers must not be used anywhere on the towpath, and coaching from the bank, and the use of cox boxes, should be kept to a minimum everywhere on the river before 7.30am. Coaching from the bank is not permitted at all above the railway bridge before this time.
6. No College crew may be on the water on a Sunday, save when participating in a CRA, ARA or CUCBC race, unless the Executive Committee has made an announcement to the contrary.
7. All coxless boats must have a steerer on the bank except for single sculls at any time and experienced pairs and doubles outside the hours of 9am and 4pm in Full Term.
8. Boats going downstream must keep to the non-towpath side of the river until after Ditton Corner when they cross over to the towpath side. At the sign after Grassy Corner, they must cross back to the non-towpath side, and stay on that side until Baitsbite Lock.  
  
Boats going upstream must keep to the towpath side until the middle of the Gut when they must cross to the non-towpath side, taking the inside of the corner. At the top of the Plough Reach, they must cross back to the towpath side, and stay on that side until they reach the boathouses.
9. Boats going downstream must give way to boats going upstream, and slower boats must give way to allow faster boats to pass. In addition, whenever a boat eases it must draw in close to the bank to allow other boats to pass unimpeded. Boats must not easy on corners.
10. Unless required for safety reasons, or acting on the instructions of an umpire during a race, boats may only spin at the Penny Ferry, between the two posts at the bottom of Long Reach and above the boathouses in Baitsbite Reach. When necessary, boats must queue to spin, and should only spin when it is clear that no boat is approaching that is likely to be impeded. Once spun, boats must move off immediately or, if pulling in on the Long Reach or Baitsbite, may only do so above the spinning area.

## 4 EARLY MORNING TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

In recent years, there have been an increasing number of complaints from the residents living near and on the river regarding the amount of noise made by crews in the early-morning period. The City Council and the University authorities have both threatened to take action — both against any club or individual that can be identified as causing the noise, and against the rowing community as a whole. Early morning traffic restrictions have been put in place in an attempt to minimise further complaints and ensure that crews boating in the period before 8.30am can have safe and productive outings, despite the high levels of river traffic. These restrictions were debated at length at Captains' Meetings during 2007/8 and changes to them can only be made after the proposed changes have been agreed at a Captains' Meeting, in accordance with the Constitution of CUCBC.

The following restrictions will be brought into operation the Michaelmas and Lent Terms as necessary and will be enforced by the Early Morning Marshals. Notice will be given well in advance of the date on which the restrictions will be introduced.

### Rules

1. That the CUCBC Executive Committee shall introduce restrictions on the number of boats that may be on the water between Lighting Down and 0830hrs on Mondays to Fridays in Full Michaelmas and Lent Terms as necessary.
2. That on the date from which restrictions are introduced until further notice, each College Club will only be permitted to have two boats on the river at any one time in the restricted period.
3. That this rule will apply to IVs and VIIIs but not to singles, pairs or tubs and will only apply during the hours stated above.
4. That fines for a breach of this rule will accrue to the Club, rather than the crew concerned and that any Club in breach of this rule will be fined 50 for a first offence, 100 for a second offence, a training ban of one week for the whole Club for a third offence and disqualification from all events organised or insured by CUCBC (including the Lent Bumping Races) in that Term for any subsequent offence.
5. That the normal appeal procedures will apply to penalties incurred as a result of breaching these rules.



## 5 ACTION TO TAKE IN CASE OF COLLISION WITH MOORED CRAFT

### Narrow Boats

Should a sculling or rowing boat come into contact with a moored narrow boat, the following procedure should be used to ensure the minimum risk of damage to either craft:

1. Immediately ease and back water with the free blade(s).
2. Back down with the stern most oars/sculls on the opposite side from the side of contact with the narrow boat.
3. When clear, paddle on with the bowmost oars/sculls, drawing in the sternmost oars/sculls on the side closest to the moored boat.
4. Should it be necessary to push off from the hull of the moored boat, use oar/scull blade tips against the **BLACK** painted side of the moored crafts lower hull **ABOVE** the waterline.

### GRP Cruisers

Should a sculling or rowing boat come into contact with a moored GRP Cruiser, use the same procedure as above but, should it be necessary to push off from the hull of the moored boat:

1. Push off from the cruisers fenders or rubbing strakes or, if this is not possible
2. Push off **ABOVE** the waterline so as not to remove antifouling paint below the waterline. [NB: This is a change to previous practice and is to enable the crafts owner to see any slight scratches and deal with them as part of normal maintenance. Scratches and breaks in a boats anti-foul coating **BELOW** the waterline may remain unnoticed and can lead to much greater problems over time.]

### Courtesy

Remember that courtesy costs nothing and, should the boat owner be aboard if and when a collision occurs, an apology should be offered at once. Your priority will be to disengage safely and without causing damage, but an apology will diffuse tension and go along way to creating good relationships between all sectors of the river-using community.

## 6 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ANGLERS & ROWERS USING THE RIVER CAM

This code is endorsed by the Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs (CUCBC), the Cambridgeshire Rowing Association (CRA) and the Cambridge Fish Preservation & Angling Society Ltd (CFPAS).

It is essential that every Association, Club and Society Member should abide by the spirit of this Code, which is intended to promote the greater safe enjoyment of the river amenity so as not to unduly disrupt or disturb others appreciating the facility.

1. Courtesy is required between all the parties. Should any dispute arise and it becomes necessary for the parent clubs to intervene, anglers and rowers should exchange names and club membership and refer the dispute details to their respective parent body.
2. The Angling Society will publish dates of the main rowing events and will endeavour to ensure that no fishing will take place between the Pike & Eel and Baits Bite Lock on the published dates. Pleasure fishing on those dates should be reduced.
3. The Rowing Association / CUCBC will publish dates of the main fishing matches and will endeavour to ensure that no rowing takes place during the times of the fishing matches which will normally be between 10.30am to 3.30pm unless otherwise stated and 9.00am until 1.00pm for the Junior Angling Tournaments. The Angling Society should advise when major or national matches are taking place and in these cases rowers will be advised of the particular importance to avoid these times.
4. Rowers are asked to keep outings below Baits Bite Lock to a minimum. They should be especially aware of anglers and should check for any fishing matches. See special note below.
5. Rowing coaches are asked to ensure that they do not halt crews for instruction purposes immediately adjacent to anglers. Anglers in turn should avoid swims adjacent to recognised starting and finishing posts.
6. Subject to the river conditions and being clear of obstructions, crews are asked not to turn boats immediately opposite anglers.
7. All parties to be mindful of the peace and quiet enjoyed by residents on or close to the river.
8. All parties to show consideration to other water users and to the public using the hailing way.
9. The hailing way must not be blocked by fishing tackle or rowing equipment. Parking of trailers or vehicles adjacent to the hailing way should be carried out with respect to other river users.
10. It is important for all river users to understand how narrow the river is in places. At some points it is barely possible for two eights to pass each other safely particularly near moorings. Rowers are asked to make every effort to avoid fishing lines but anglers must be aware of their difficulty and be prepared to move their tackle to avoid damage. Roach poles are of particular concern and anglers should lift these in good time when rowers approach.

**BELOW BAITS BITE LOCK:**

1. For CUBC permission to row below the lock is restricted to first boats and boats in the top two divisions only. For CUWBC the restriction is first boats and boats in the top division only.
2. In the Michaelmas term no CUCBC boat will go down below the lock from 8.30am to 1.00pm or after 4.30pm on any weekday. In the Lent term the restriction would be up to 1.00pm and after 4.30pm on any weekday.



## 8 ALPHANUMERIC REGISTRATION CODES

The CUCBC defines the alphanumeric registration codes as being comprised of two or three letters, identifying the club to which the boat belongs, followed by a number such as to form a unique sequence for each boat. The following is a list of the letter codes to be used by each boat club.

AD	Addenbrooke's	LMB	LMBC
CCA	Anglia Ruskin	MGD	Magdalene
CAI	Caius	NEH	New Hall
CCO	Christ's	NNM	Newnham
CLA	Clare	PEM	Pembroke
CLH	Clare Hall	PBC	Peterhouse
COR	Corpus Christi	QCC	Queens'
CHU	Churchill	ROC	Robinson
DAW	Darwin	SCC	St. Catharine's
DOW	Downing	SEL	Selwyn
ED	St. Edmund's	SID	Sidney Sussex
EMM	Emmanuel	TC	Theological Colleges
FIT	Fitzwilliam	TRH	Trinity Hall
GIR	Girton	FTT	1st & 3rd Trinity
HOM	Homerton	VS	Vet School
HU	Hughes Hall	WOC	Wolfson
JEC	Jesus	CUB	CUBC
KCB	King's	CUW	CUWBC
LC	Lucy Cavendish	CLR	CULRC