

Proposal for Agenda item, CUCBC Captains' meeting
October 6th, 5 pm
Captains' Room, Goldie boat house

Dear CUCBC committee, dear Captains,

First and Third and Lady Margaret Boat Clubs are proposing an early morning traffic restriction system which presents an alternative to the one currently to be put into place if required during Michaelmas term. The current system of allocating a fixed number of early morning slots to any boat club, regardless of size, we feel would have a negative effect on the standard of Cambridge College rowing as a whole and in particular on students wishing to row from larger boat clubs.

The arguments brought forward to support a system with two fixed early morning slots per boat club were as follows:

1. The river is getting overly congested during the early morning hours, so water time is ineffective and traffic needs to be restricted. This would have the effect of making early morning outings more productive and may also force clubs to make more use of daytime outings. This would supposedly improve the standard of college rowing.
2. Residents are disturbed due to noise made by rowing crews, coxes and coaches.

The points made by the supporters of such a system can be refuted as follows.

1. It is true that the river is too congested during early morning hours and restricting the number of the crews on the water may well improve the quality of outings for those crews which can go out under the currently proposed system. This might well improve the standard of college rowing in the short term.
However, consider now the fact that novices would, more often than not, lose out to senior crews. Many of them would be discouraged from rowing altogether while those that do continue will inevitably be of a lower standard as they move on into the senior boats resulting in a decline in the standard of college rowing in the longer term.
The proposal that we should make more time for daytime outings is, as we all know, almost impossible. When the example of First and Third last year is cited; we must remember that this is the exception rather than the rule. The chances of getting 9 people with similar enough timetables is minimal and down largely to luck. Most significantly though, this once again disadvantages the novice who will, of course, be less willing to miss lectures, practicals, supervisions etc.
Finally, restricting early morning slots to two per boat club regardless of size does not present a fair alternative. Not only does this give smaller boat clubs an advantage in racing (although they may feel it merely levels the playing field!) but more significantly those attending colleges with large boat clubs will be unfairly disadvantaged. Surely everyone should have the same opportunity to use the river, whichever college they attend.
CUCBC acknowledges that larger college boat clubs use the river more and thus they, quite fairly, have to provide a greater number of CUCBC marshals. Yet CUCBC still intends to allot the same number of early morning slots for all boat clubs.
The argument that larger boat clubs can be more flexible is negligible. Once crews

have been selected they are no more flexible with regards to outing times, unless of course crews are to be selected purely on the basis of timetabling.

2. It may be true that residents are disturbed by noise from the river. As such it is the responsibility of all of us, especially captains, to make sure that we are considerate. Perhaps a review of the 'No megaphones' early morning rule and more strict enforcement by marshals would be appropriate. Draconian measures such as the currently proposed early morning slots system, which would seriously impair the standard of college rowing are surely not the answer.

So, acknowledging the desire of CUCBC to improve the quality of early morning outings but taking into account the points made above we propose the following modifications to the currently proposed system:

- Initially, boat clubs should be given a number of slots proportional to the number of crews which they had racing in Michaelmas term last year. However, we also need to allow for boat clubs to change size and in particular to allow smaller boat clubs to grow.
- To this effect, we propose that if boat clubs use all their initial early morning slots they may apply for more in the future and if they do not use them all they may have less the next week. This could easily be monitored by the current system of CUCBC marshals. e.g. if boat club XY were to have 10 early morning slots and only used 8 in a given week then the following week XY would only be given 9. A lower and upper limit would have to be put into place to conserve the total number of slots on the river.
- We also feel that other measures such as downstream marshalling should be discussed further.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Florian Gruessing, Liz Hill, Will Gray, Neil Houlsby, Ches Yates
(Captains of Boats, First and Third Trinity & Lady Margaret Boat Clubs)