Coxing Fairbairns for Newcomers

The Fairbairn Cup course is tricky to steer, even with the size of rudder generally found on the River Cam. Several of the corners are rarely taken at race pace, especially in the downstream direction, so careful coxing is required. Coxing can have a substantial impact on the race time, especially over the Senior VIIIs course, so make sure you get it right!

Make sure you have a race plan; although there are many landmarks to push off, the course is still very long and will take most crews over 15 minutes to complete (for Seniors) and upto 15 minutes for novices on the shorter course. There can be quite a strong stream on the Cam depending on rainfall; though wind may be more of a factor.

Coxes are highly recommended to cycle the course beforehand if new to Cambridge since the River

Cam has some substantial bends. Viewing Google Earth satellite photography is also a good idea.

Note that the river is narrow in many parts and thus overtaking can be difficult.

The following corners will be the main challenges. (Those racing the novice event need only take attention

**Elizabeth Way** (under the flyover marked "The Road Bridge" on the map)

This isn't a particularly difficult corner but some boats still crash here most years! It is very near the start (making a crash all the more embarrassing) so line up your boat correctly on the way in to take the tightest line under the bridge. You will probably not have reached race rhythm so make sure your strokeside rowers are ready.

**Chesterton corner** (under Chesterton Footbridge)

This is a tight corner but with careful steering is fine. Make sure you turn in early to get round (it will require maximum rudder) and do use your rowers to help you round.

# Ditton Corner

Approach on the right‐hand side and turn in fairly late. This is a long and fairly tight corner, and can prove difficult if entered incorrectly.

# Grassy Corner

This is probably the tightest corner on the course, and is rarely attempted in this direction at speed. Approach close to the left hand bank and do not turn in too early, since you will then have to take the rudder back off and this will send you straight towards the outside bank! Be prepared for the double apex and plan accordingly…

# First Post Corner

Very similar to Ditton Corner.

Do have a look for some photographs of the river and corners as preparation – a list of Cambridge boat club websites can be found on [www.cucbc.org](http://www.cucbc.org/) – but there is no substitute for viewing (or coxing!) the corners in person before racing.