**Competitor Instructions**

**Lowestoft RC**

**Last Light Regatta October 2024**

Many of you entering will have had very little (if any) experience in Coastal boats, and in the Beach Sprint format.

**Basic format.**

* Run down the beach to your assigned boat which is held in the water by 2 boathandlers
* Get in the boat.
* Slalom around 2 buoys, & then 180 turn at the buoy at the top of the course & row straight back. Get out of your boat when the water is shallow enough, run up the sand & touch a flag on the finish line.
* The total water course is 500m. The run is between 10-50m (depending on the tide).

**Hardwear**

The boats are provided by Swift Racing. The solo’s (1x) will have been raced at Worlds & at the Home Internationals.

There is a standard rig that you are not allowed to alter- this is a span of 158cm & the gates are set as high as they will go. (Changing either of these results in a disqualification).

So, if you usually use a seat pad, you will definitely need one now- along with a speedy way of fixing it in a temporary way to the seat. (A velcro strap seems the most sensible option)

You will need to provide your own blades, which should be short. (Around 281-2cm). If they adjust by sliding the handle in, having undone the retaining screws, you may want to protect the join (cling film & tape works well) as sand in the join makes it challenging to reset them back.)

Some blades will be available to rent if required. Please email helen.lwscoastal@gmail.com

You get a short period of time to adjust the position of the foot stretcher & the size of the adjustable shoes.(Which are size 10-14) This is typically 2 minutes (Timed).

**Kit**

You will be running into the sea- it is sensible to wear a thin foot covering to protect against cuts from shells & gravel & from weever fish & jelly fish stings. People commonly wear neoprene swimming socks, or waterproof socks, so that your feet will slide easily into the shoes. If you have very small feet, you might manage with water shoes. They need to be close fitting as you have to sprint back up the beach. If you run barefoot you do so at your own risk.

***You will get wet!*-** you need many changes of kit. Everyone will have at least 3 races- so you may want 3 separate race outfits. Club colours are less important than starting off warm & dry. Few people wear leggings- as they will get wet.

Wearing an item of **hi-viz** is strongly recommended- to allow the safety launches & the umpires to keep an eye on you. This could be a cap, your AIO, under your AIO, endless options!

If you have a big changing robe-it will get lots of use!

**Organisation of racing**

The region has very few people with much experience of this format, so there are also very few people with experience of boat handling.

These are the 2 (sometimes 3- in rough conditions, as decided by the umpires) people holding the boat in the water for entry, offering steering signals, especially on the outward leg, counting down the rower to get out at the end and securing the boat when it is vacated by the rower.

Boat handlers get wet, definitely to knee level, sometimes to waist depth if waves break awkwardly (and may not go beyond shoulder depth).

Every major championship requires athletes to bring their own boat handlers (& the England & GB team reserves are expected to do this in competition), so we would like to train everyone up in this skill.

**All competitors will boathandle for other competitors.**

**Essential kit for boat handling-** a **hi-viz long sleeved** top so who-ever you are steering can see your signals. (Lowestoft Coastal Sculling Academy shirts are available from Stitch Rowing £18 +p&p)

If you have someone in your club who would like to do more of this, neoprene shorts or leggings will offer some protection from the cold & the side of the boat. Foot coverings are also important, people that do a lot of this mostly wear wet shoe booties or old trainers or crocs with waterproof socks.

We will teach 1 standard entry before racing starts- this will be approaching the boat on bow-side (your right). Plant one foot in the footwell (I know, sacrilege), pivot round on that foot, sit down. Slide your feet in as well as you can, take the blade handles from the boat handlers & row.

The course for side by side beach sprint racing is always organised in the same way. S1 is to port/strokeside, S2 is to starboard/bowside, Turning buoy is to port/strokeside.

*See diagram below.*

The boat hull must pass on the correct side of the buoy, the blades &/or riggers need not.

There is a 30s penalty for going on the wrong side of a slalom buoy and a 60s penalty for going the wrong side of the turning buoy.

Things to watch out for- make sure you are facing straight back after rounding the turning buoy, a correcting stroke there is much quicker than going off course (& much less likely to lead to interference with a competitor & a dq)

Once the boat is in the water, there will be no delay to the start, even in the event of equipment failure. Check your seat & gates & feet before you are called to the start line. (1 minute to go, when the boat is taken to the water)

**Above all- enjoy!**

