



Safety Statement

Appendix to the prospectus · Saturday 24th of October 2026 · O'Briensbridge to Castleconnell

Approved 19 October 2026. It follows the club's Boathouse & Water Safety Rules, and is built from the club's Head of the River safety plans and course map, the 2026 Regatta Safety Plan and safety briefing, and it rests on the event's risk assessment.

EMERGENCY — 112 / 999 — then tell Race Control

ADDRESS	Castleconnell Boat Club, Lacka, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick, V94 662A · GPS 52.7262, -8.5056 · Plus Code PFGV+FQ
THE START	O'Briensbridge, Co. Clare · GPS 52.7520, -8.5017, the Clare bank end of the start line
AMBULANCE ROUTE	Through the main gate and down the club road. An official meets every emergency vehicle at the gate. The road is kept clear all day.
RACE CONTROL	At the finish line, beside the clubhouse. In radio contact with every official, safety launch and the first-aid post.
FIRST AID	Irish Red Cross (Limerick Area): a crew and an ambulance on site 08:30 to 15:30, at the first-aid post outside the main gate, near the slips.
DEFIBRILLATOR	At Race Control on race day. At all other times it is in the Erg Room (GPS 52.7265, -8.5044).
HOSPITAL	Emergency Department, University Hospital Limerick, Dooradoyle · 061 301 111. Minor injuries: St John's Hospital Injury Unit, Limerick · 061 462 303
IN CHARGE	Head Secretary, Rory Corbett · 085 226 4155 · racing@castleconnellbc.ie
SAFETY OFFICER	Vincent Carroll · 085 271 4866
CLUB CAPTAIN	Brian O'Connor, through Race Control
CHILD PROTECTION	The club's Child Protection Officer, through Race Control on the day or castleconnellbc.ie/safeguarding

This statement sets out how Castleconnell Boat Club runs the Head of the River safely, and what every club, competitor, coach, coxswain and official must do. **Each entering club must make sure its coaches, crews and coxswains have read it before they boat.** It is circulated to every entering club before the event with the risk assessment and the filming and photography notice, and it is lodged with Rowing Ireland and with the Irish Red Cross. The club's own Boathouse & Water Safety Rules apply on the day. It replaces the 2025 plan.

1 · Before you come

- **Safety briefing, 07:30 Saturday at Race Control**, for each club's representative and coxswains. Attendance is mandatory: after the briefing the representative signs the attendance sheet and signs for the club's bow numbers, which are released only then. The representative passes the briefing on to the club's crews.
- Every competitor must be in good health, fit to race, and **able to swim at least 50 metres in light clothing**. The entering club is responsible for this. Tell the Head Secretary before the day about any competitor with a medical condition that could need emergency attention.
- Clubs decide whether their crews are competent for the water on the day, and coaches put an **experienced coxswain in charge of an inexperienced crew**.
- Every junior crew has a **named responsible adult** on site for the whole day, who knows where the crew is. Each club gives the Head Secretary that person's name and mobile number before racing.

- Clubs entering **para rowers** send the Head Secretary, before the event, the athlete's risk assessment and any specific recovery needs. A rower with a lower-leg prosthesis must be able to release from it, or it from the boat, in an emergency.
- **Check, Clean, Dry.** Boats and kit arrive clean and dry.
- **Dress for a cold river:** several warm, close-fitting layers, no cotton, a hat and gloves while waiting, and a waterproof. No hoodies, denim or long changing robes in a boat. Carry a dry bag with spare kit.

2 · Equipment

Every crew is responsible for its own equipment. Under Rowing Ireland rule 2.39, no boat goes on the water without the items below. Marshals check them at the slips, and **any boat or coxswain that fails the check stays ashore.**

- **Bow ball:** white, 4 cm, soft rubber, fixed securely and undamaged, unless the bow is built to give the same protection.
- **Heel restraints** on every shoe, each restrained independently with **no more than 50 mm of play.**
- **Hatch covers** in place and every buoyancy compartment watertight.
- Riggers and nuts tight, and the **steering working.**
- **Coxswains wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid at all times afloat,** correctly fitted, never under other clothing, and know how it works. In a **bow-loader** it must be a manually inflated gas lifejacket. Automatic, self-inflating lifejackets are not allowed.
- **Bow numbers** fitted by the crew before it reaches the start.

3 · The course, and the one hazard that matters most

The course is **3 km downstream**, from the start at O'Briensbridge to the finish in front of the clubhouse. **Crews race on the Clare bank side and row up to the start on the Limerick bank.** Marker buoys sit mid-river roughly every 500 m. Officials use these names for places on the course, from the top: **O'Brien's Bridge / Start · Limerick Slip · The Wires · The Coopers · The Canal · Last Bend · Race Control** (the finish). The Wires is the 38 kV overhead line about 1,557 m from the start. The course, the start and finish lines, the slips, Race Control and the hazards are on the **maps on the last page.**

Below the finish there is a weir and trees. A line with red and yellow buoys hangs across the river below the finish. **No boat crosses that line, for any reason.** After the finish, ease off, keep steerage, **turn early**, and if you need to, reverse into the In Slip. Never sit stationary past the finish. A safety launch is stationed at the finish all day and slip marshals watch the line from the bank.

- **Wind.** The course runs south-west for its first 580 m, then south to the finish. South and south-west winds blow straight along it and give the roughest water.
- **Flow.** River levels are monitored as part of the risk assessment.
- **Cold water** can take your breath away. In a capsize, stay with your boat.
- Watch for shallows, anything submerged, and other river users.
- River water can carry infection. Cover cuts and blisters, and wash your hands before eating or drinking.

4 · Launching and landing

- Queue **in single file at the out-slip queue point** and wait for the slip marshal. **Fours and eights launch from Out Slip 2, singles and doubles from Out Slip 1, all facing upstream.**
- Land at the **In Slip**, which is the last slip before the weir, with the buoy line just below it: **turn before you come in to dock**, and do what the slip marshal says.
- Have the boat ready, and every adjustment made, before you reach the slip. Wear footwear on the slipway, use the oar racks, and keep the banks and the emergency lane clear.
- **No training on the course** before or during racing.

5 · Going to the start, and racing

- Allow **at least 20 minutes** to row from the club to the start. Boat in your start order, in good time but not long before you need to.
- On the way up, **keep to the Limerick bank:** the bank on the rowers' left, the marker buoys on the rowers' right. Keep a constant lookout for crews racing towards you, and **stop and let a racing crew pass** rather than row alongside it. Never pace a racing crew. Marshals' launches guide you up.
- Row up **Lane Zero** to the **holding area**, about 250 m below the start, and **wait there until you are released.**

- When released, row up the Limerick side of the four large buoys, turn above the last one, and come down the Clare side through the **start funnel**. Go through the start when the starter calls you forward. A crew that jumps the queue or skips the funnel gets no time.
- **Overtaking:** the overtaking crew is responsible for passing safely, and the slower crew gives way in good time. No crew races across another's line.
- **Three short, sharp blasts** of a whistle or siren mean an emergency on the water. **Every crew stops rowing at once**, keeps a lookout, and waits for instructions from the nearest umpire, marshal or launch. Any official who tells a crew to stop is obeyed at once.
- After the finish: ease, turn early, come in to the In Slip. See section 3.

6 · The Bulls and Bears

At 13:00 two composite eights, drawn from the fastest pairs through the start before 11:00 and each with an experienced coxswain, race **side by side over 500 m down to the clubhouse**. Crews ease after the finish as usual, well above the hazard line.

- Crews assemble at Race Control at **12:30** and are briefed before they boat.
- **The course is cleared for the sprint.** Once both eights are ready, the start at O'Briensbridge stops sending head crews off, and there is a **10-minute gap in racing**. The sprint does not start until Race Control confirms the last head crew has finished and the finish stretch is clear. Head racing starts again once both eights are off the finish stretch.
- An umpire follows the race.

7 · Weather, and stopping or cancelling racing

The club's Boathouse & Water Safety Rules set the limits. **The Head Secretary and the Safety Officer decide** whether racing starts, is restricted, is suspended or is cancelled. Any umpire or safety launch can stop racing on the spot if it becomes unsafe.

- **Weather:** assessed on the day for suitability to race. Wind speed, direction and gust levels all play a part in the decision.
- **River flow:** monitored. The Head Secretary and the Safety Officer decide if flow is an issue.
- **Visibility:** no racing with less than **500 m of visibility** (to the first bend).
- **Thunder and lightning:** no racing while lightning is forecast. If a storm arrives, the 30-30 rule applies: when 30 seconds or less pass between the lightning and the thunder, racing stops and every crew comes off the water at the nearest safe landing and shelters in the clubhouse or a closed vehicle, never under trees, tents or trailers, and away from boats and blades. Racing is not considered again until **at least 30 minutes after the last thunder**.
- The Safety Officer and the Head Secretary **inspect the course about an hour before racing**, against a written checklist: obstructions, the hazard line, the temporary slipway, the weather, the flow and the water temperature.
- Every suspension, change or cancellation is announced on the public address and posted at Race Control, and entered clubs are emailed.

8 · Safety cover

- **Seven safety boats** on station: **Launch 1** at the start, **Launch 2** on the upper course, the **search-and-rescue RIB** mid-course, **Launch 3** at the Canal, **Launch 4** at the Last Bend, **Launch 5** at the finish, and **Launch 6** at the In Slip, which keeps the water **between the finish and the hazard line** covered all day. Launch 6 is crewed by marshals. Safety launches do safety and nothing else.
- Each has a competent driver and a second person aboard, and carries a radio, a fully charged mobile phone, throw lines, a life ring, a knife, thermal blankets or survival bags, a first-aid kit and a bailer. **The driver uses the kill cord at all times**, and everyone in a launch wears a lifejacket. Para races are covered by a launch low enough at the side to lift a rower aboard.
- **Umpires** carry loudhailers, whistles, throw bags and emergency blankets.
- **No other boat goes on the course**, including any camera boat, without the chief umpire's permission. No drones fly without the Head Secretary's permission.
- Officials, marshals and launch crews are given this statement and their own instructions before the day, and are briefed before racing.

9 · Radio

- Race Control, rescue and umpires on one channel, marshals on another. **The channel numbers are posted at the Race Control tent on the day.** Only event business on the radio, and every station is checked before racing.

- **CODE RED** means an urgent medical emergency. **CODE BLUE** means medical help is needed but it is not urgent. **RESCUE, RESCUE, RESCUE** means a capsized or someone in the water. When any of them is called, **everyone else goes quiet**, the start stops sending crews off, and the channel belongs to Race Control and the people responding until the all-clear.
- Report: **what** is needed (first aid, launch or ambulance) · **where**, using the course names in section 3 and the nearest point a vehicle or launch can reach · **what happened** · **how many** people · **how serious** · whether racing must stop.
- If radios fail, use mobile phones and loudhailers, and Race Control stops racing until contact is restored. If a safety launch breaks down, Race Control decides whether racing continues without it.

10 · If something goes wrong

Capsized

Stay with the boat. Get as much of yourself out of the water and onto the hull as you can, count your crew, and wait for the launch. Do not swim for the bank.

A rescued rower is **taken straight off the river** at the nearest bank, warmed, and checked by first aid. **Anyone who has been in the water does not race again that day.**

Someone else in trouble

If a rower falls in, or a crew near you is in difficulty, **stop racing and help**, and shout for a launch. Following crews steer clear and alert the nearest official. A crew whose steering fails stops racing and moves off the racing line.

Collision or damage

Get any boat that cannot carry on to the side, either bank, out of the racing line. If the course is blocked, the start is told and no more crews are sent off. While a launch is attending any incident, the start may hold crews back for a few minutes without the race being stopped.

Medical emergency

The nearest official with a radio takes charge, starts first aid and calls **CODE RED** or **CODE BLUE**. Anyone can call 112 or 999 directly; then tell Race Control, which has the ambulance met at the gate. A casualty on the water is taken straight off the river at the nearest bank, where first aid takes over. **If someone collapses and is not breathing normally:** call 112, start chest compressions, and send for the defibrillator at once.

A blow to the head (from a handle, a rigger, a collision or a fall on the slip): **if in doubt, sit them out.** Anyone with a suspected concussion stops for the day, is checked by first aid, is not left alone, and does not drive.

In a serious incident one official coordinates with the emergency services and keeps a log, and nothing is said about any casualty over the public address.

Clearing the water

For a serious incident or dangerous weather, Race Control calls a **water evacuation** on the radio and the public address, and officials sound three short blasts. All racing stops, no more crews go afloat, and the umpires and launches bring every crew on the water to the nearest safe landing.

Every crew accounted for

Marshals keep every part of the course in view. Bow numbers are collected off every boat at the In Slip, and are not counted during the day. **The safety launches do not stand down until every crew is off the water**, and a crew that cannot be found is treated as a **CODE RED**. A crew that lands anywhere other than the club tells Race Control at once.

Something in the water

Report floating debris or any obstruction to Race Control at once. Racing is suspended while a launch clears it.

Fire, disorder or a threat

Raise the alarm and tackle a fire only if you are confident to. Fire extinguishers are at the tea station, in the gym and in the club room. Report serious disorder or any threat to life to Race Control and to the Gardaí. Officials organise any evacuation of the site.

11 · Keeping the road open

The road from the main gate down to the clubhouse is kept clear for emergency vehicles from two hours before racing until well after it. Park where the car-park and traffic marshals tell you. A vehicle blocking the road is announced once on the public address and then removed at the owner's cost. In the car park and trailer park, walk, and keep children clear of moving vehicles and trailers. The Gardaí and the ambulance service are told about the event in advance.

12 · Children and welfare

- Each club stays responsible for its own juniors on the day and must bring enough adults to supervise them.
- **A lost child** is taken to Race Control, which is the meeting point, and a parent who cannot find their child goes there too. Race Control alerts every official on the radio and the club's Child Protection Officer, and the slips and the riverbank are searched first. A child who might be in the water is a **CODE RED** straight away. If the child is not found quickly, the Gardaí are called.
- Any welfare or safeguarding concern goes to the club's Child Protection Officer, through Race Control.
- Filming and photography are covered by the separate notice that comes with this statement.

13 · Reporting

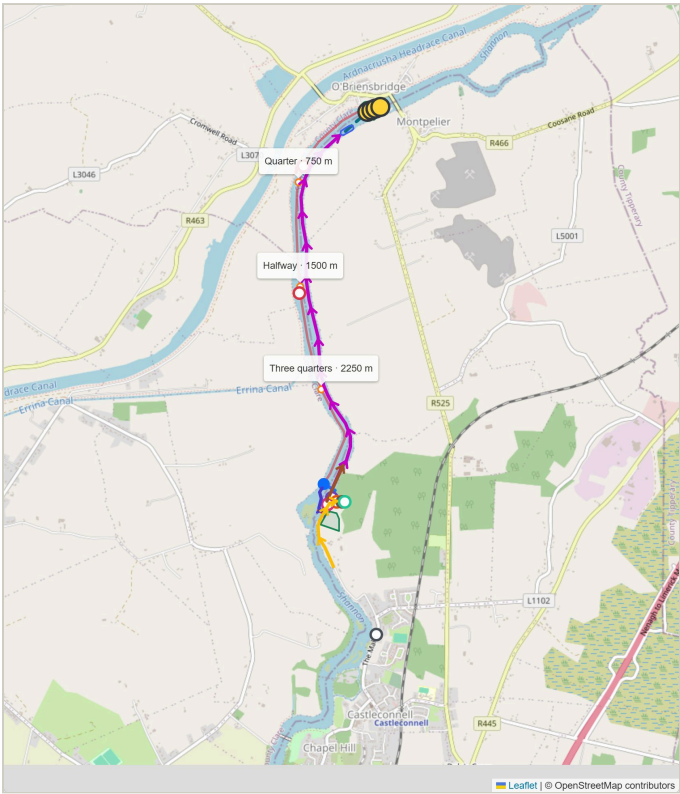
Every incident, accident, injury or near miss, however minor it seemed, is reported to Race Control and recorded in the club's incident log on the day. The Safety Officer is told at once of anything serious, makes the formal report to Rowing Ireland under its incident reporting policy, and the event's incident report goes to Rowing Ireland with the results within ten days (rule 2.13). Comments on this statement go to the Head Secretary.

14 · Related documents

The event's **risk assessment**, which rates every hazard this statement controls and is published with it · the Rowing Ireland Rules of Racing 2026.2 · Rowing Ireland's safety guidance · the club's Boathouse & Water Safety Rules · the club's River Safety System · the club's Child Safeguarding Statement · the filming and photography notice for this event. Rowing Ireland's rules take precedence over anything in this statement.

The event maps

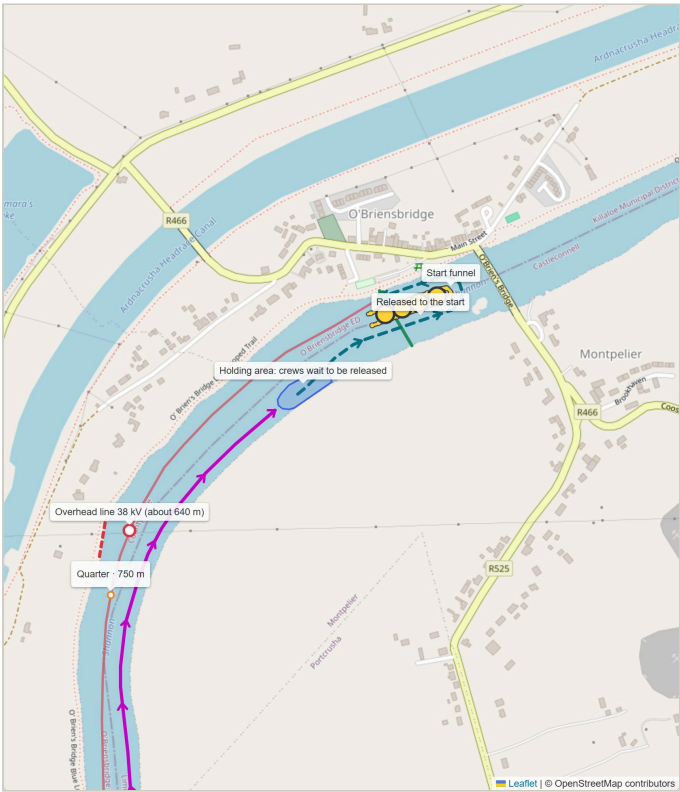
Live version: ccbc.race.rowops.ie/live/castleconnell-head-of-the-river/course



Course



Finish area



Start area

Key

- Course
- Start line
- Finish line
- **race_control**: Race Control
- **shop**: Shop
- **boathouse**: Boathouse
- **slip**: Out Slip 1, Out Slip 2 (Hot), In Slip
- **entrance**: Boat park entrance, Boat park entrance (continued)
- **boat_park**: Boat park
- **hazard**: Overhead line 38 kV (about 640 m), Limerick Slip: cross directly, turn away from racing crews, Overhead line 38 kV (about 1,557 m), Buoy line above the weir: no boat crosses (TBC)
- **first_aid**: First aid: Irish Red Cross
- **toilets**: Toilets
- **parking**: Car parking in the village.
- **traffic_route**: Lane zero: to the start, Released to the start, Finishing route, Out route
- **holding_area**: Holding area: crews wait to be released
- **emergency_access**: Club road
- **buoy**: Start funnel, Large buoy 1: the middle of the start funnel, Large buoy 2: the middle of the start funnel, Large buoy 3: the middle of the start funnel, Large buoy 4: the middle of the start funnel

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. The live maps may have changed since this was printed.