# Head of The Don

## Sunday 1st November 2026

## Competitors' Instructions.

**Contents**

1. Arriving and Parking
2. Facilities
3. Boating
4. Starting Instructions
5. During the Race
6. Finishing Instructions
7. De-boating Instructions
8. Prize Giving & Departure

# 1. Arriving and Parking

The Head of The Don race is based at Doncaster Rowing Club in Hexthorpe Park, Greenfield Lane, Doncaster DN4 0HH.

Parking of both cars and trailers is to be accommodated within the park

It is expected that most competitors will approach via the A1(M) Junction 36 and along the A630.Turning left onto Greenfield Lane. Hexthorpe Park is on the left hand side, Immediately after the railway bridge,

At this point traffic heading for the Head Race will be intercepted by marshals who will give advice on entering the Park and parking.

TRAILERS CANNOT ENTER THE PARK BY TURNING LEFT AT THIS POINT. Whilst cars can turn in at this point, trailers cannot. They must ‘go around the block’ so as to approach the gates from face on (left on Old Hexthorpe Road, first right on Shady Side to T junction, and right onto Urban Road towards the gates).

Coaches will be directed to the Coach Park. This will require them to follow the above route for trailers, go past the gates but before the Railway Bridge they should take the track running alongside the road (park side) which will lead to the parking area

Generally, parking of cars and vehicles will be as shown on the attached diagram though precise instructions will be issued by the marshals.

All vehicles moving in the park, on both arrival and departure, shall do so at less than 5mph and have their flashing hazard warning lights illuminated.

Trailers should park with the towing vehicle wheels on tarmac so as to avoid being bogged down.

Boat build areas are shown on the attached maps.

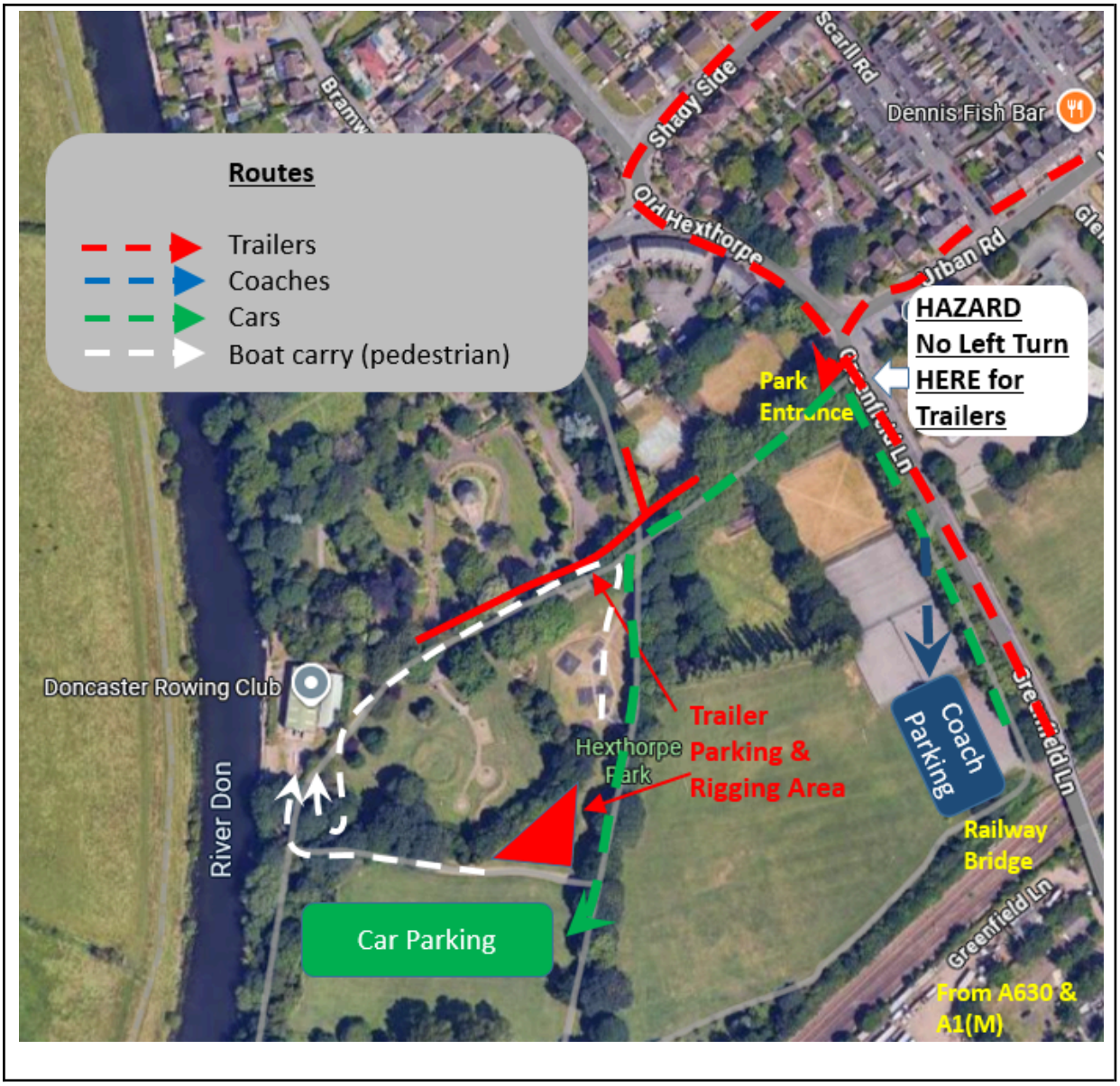
No boats or other equipment shall be placed so as to impede access of emergency vehicles to the Boathouse

All those attending the event are reminded that the park is a public place and that they should **take appropriate care of valuables at all times**.

During the day, little traffic activity is expected and the main Park Gate will be closed though not locked. If you have reason to depart during this time please close the gate behind you.

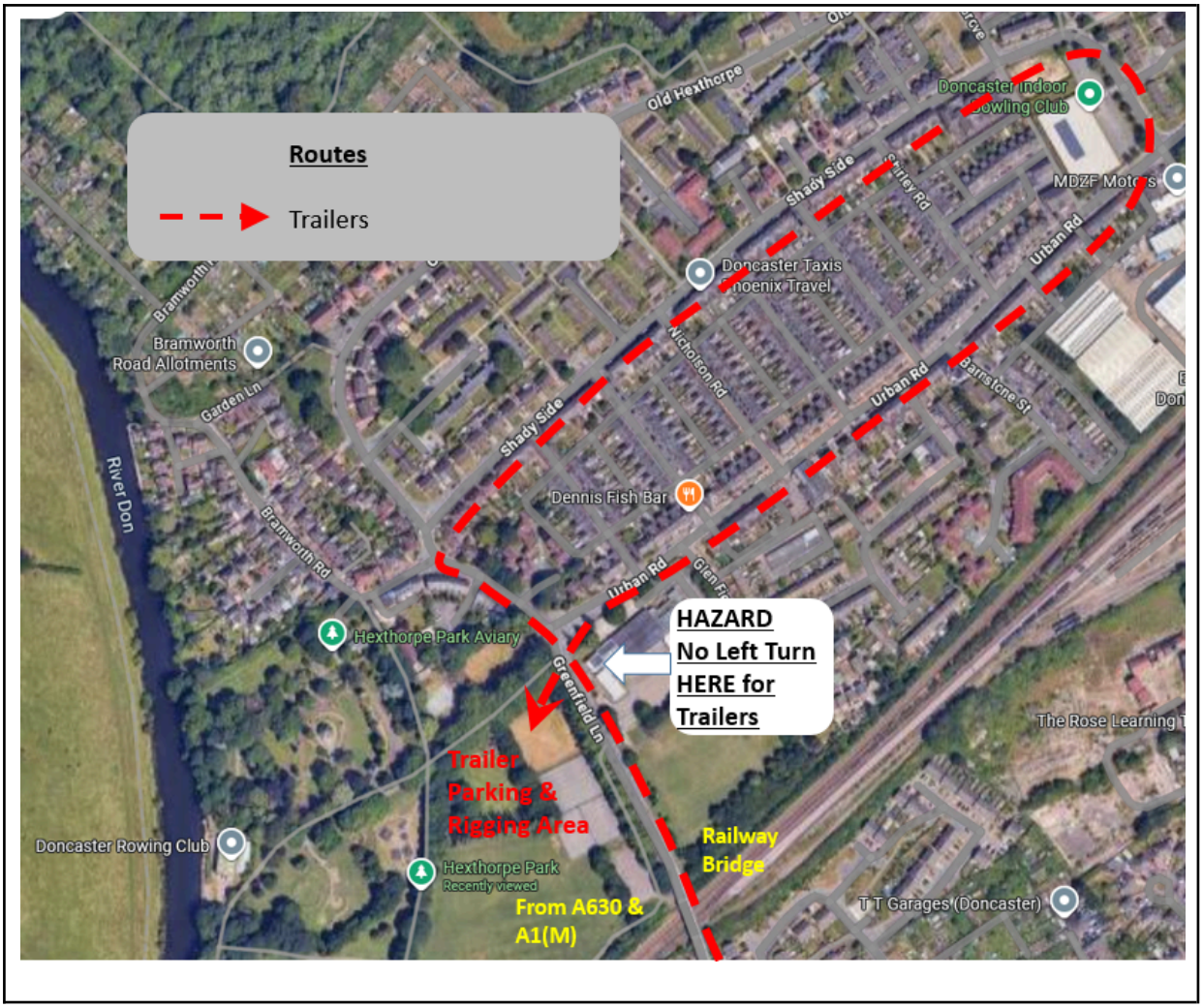
# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

## Approach, Parking Areas, Boat Building Areas and Routes to Landing Stages



# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

## Trailer Turning Loop



# 2. Facilities

Registration and Race Control will be upstairs in the Doncaster Rowing Club boathouse.

Race Number issue and any entry queries will be dealt with at the registration desk.

Results and other pertinent information will be shown on the screen next to Race Control

First Aid is located on the First Floor in the boathouse.

Toilets are available in the Doncaster Rowing Club boathouse (both upstairs in changing rooms and an easy access facility, downstairs). Further toilets are also available at the rear of the old Boathouse.

A shower is available but its use is reserved for emergencies only.

Refreshments are available in the new boathouse.

A livestream video of the start and finishes will be shown on the screen next to Race Control, during racing.

# 3. Boating

All competitors must

- Be properly clothed
- Ensure their equipment is in a safe condition.
- Read the Safety Plan for event safety information.
- Follow the marshals' instructions.
- Obey British Rowing Rules of Racing. (Coxes will not be weighed although they must still meet the minimum weight requirements in rule 7-2-7d of the Rules of Racing.)
- Ensure that their boat number is securely fixed to the cox's back and the bow of the boat with an appropriate slot. (Boat numbers will be collected as crews de-boat and any crews losing their number will be charged £5 for the replacement.)

Crews will be issued with race numbers on Registration.

- Short Course crews will have a yellow background to their number.
- Long Course crews will have a white background to their number.

Whilst DRC will endeavour to reduce the time competitors are exposed to the elements, it is inevitable that they will be on the water for some time, much of it simply waiting. It is the responsibility of all competitors to ensure that they are appropriately dressed for this and the cold wet weather associated with November days.

Boating is in the following sequence

- Long Course competitors before Short Course competitors
- Then, reverse race sequence (i.e. largest Race number first)

All crews must be ready to proceed to the landing stages at least 20 minutes before the boating time stated on the Start Order Schedule.

Before launching and after landing, blades may be left on the grassed areas close to the landing stages, but these should be positioned so as not to cause a trip or other hazard.

Boats may be brought from the build areas to the landing stages along the paths shown on the above diagram.

Crews should select the most appropriate route bearing in mind the following

- They should enter the Boathouse compound by the upstream gate only.
- Although it is usual to boat facing upstream, in the instance of this Head Race, it is deemed less dangerous to boat facing downstream. Crews shall therefore ensure that the boat passes through the entrance gate of the Boathouse compound, bow first i.e. facing downstream.

- Large boats approaching the entrance gate of the Boathouse compound, from along the main park road will not have enough room to turn their boat. Therefore they will be obliged to 'reverse' into the compound. This will change the direction of the boat i.e. they should approach the gate with the boat's stern facing upstream
- Large boats will need to take care when turning at the park crossroads
- Beware late arriving cars on park road by Playground area

It is inevitable that a queue will form on the approach to the Boathouse and crews will have to wait with their boats. Many crews prefer to bring trestles with them to make the waiting more comfortable.

On arrival in the Boathouse compound, crews should present their boat to a Control Commission for vetting.

When the Control Commission is satisfied, the Chief Boating Marshal shall advise crew from where to boat.

When safe to do so, crews should proceed downstream, towards the start as shown on the attached map

## Additional Instructions For Boating With High River Levels

In the event of high water levels it may be that boating takes place with upto 150mm of water over the lower landing stages.

In this instance crews need to be

- Suitably equipped with sandals or Wellington boots. Bare feet are not acceptable on the landing stages.
- Especially vigilant and attentive to instructions from the marshals as to where they should stand and place the boats.
- Attentive to the added risk of slips and trips.

If high river levels are expected, the organising committee will endeavour to communicate this to visiting clubs immediately prior to the event.

## Additional Instructions For Division 2

To expedite events, Division 2 will boat before Division 1 has deboated. This requires Division 2 crews to be vigilant and attentive to the following.

After the crews for Division 1 have departed the landing stages, crews for Division 2 will proceed through the boat vetting described above and their boats will be held in and around boathouse (See Diagram)

Tranche 1, consisting of the first approx. 10 crews (in reverse race order), will be invited to place their boats on the water, facing downstream, with blades in gate (river side loom pulled across boat) but without the crew onboard.

Tranche 2, consisting the second approx. 10 crews will be invited to rest their boats on trestles (provided by DRC) on the lower sections of landing stage, facing downstream, adjacent to the river, with blades under the boats

Safety Note. The stored boats can use as much river frontage as they wish (including concrete stages) however a path must be maintained for emergency use ie a launch must be able to come alongside the concrete stage lengthwise, unload a casualty who can then be taken on a stretcher to an ambulance waiting at the downstream compound gate.

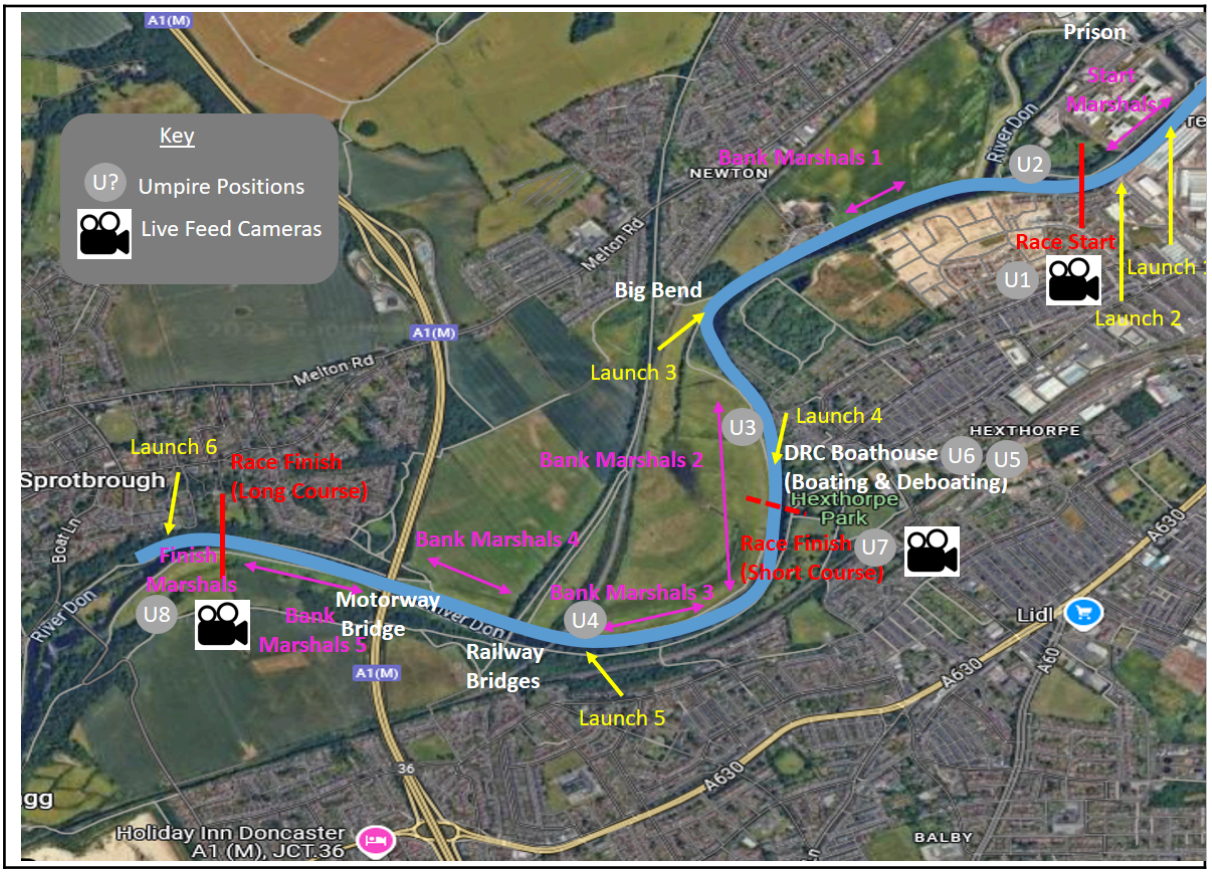
The remaining crews will be invited to rest their boats either i) on trestles (provided by DRC) at the top of the steps, along the side of the boathouse or ii) on the fence by the crane. In each case the blades can be left on the adjacent grassed areas

It is important that these stored boats are arranged such that subsequently, they will boat in reverse race sequence, ie highest race number first.

After the Division 1 competitors have passed and when instructed by the Chief Boating Marshal, boating can proceed

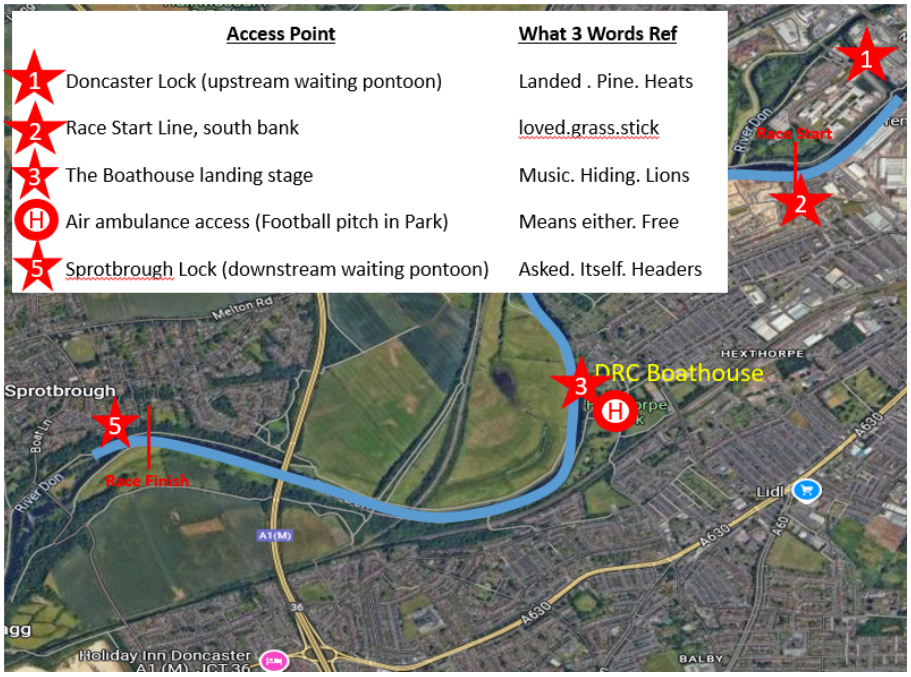
- The boats on the water and landing stages will depart from where they are
- The remaining boats will be boat from the wooden landing stages only and will approach these using the downstream steps

**Course Map With Locations of Bank Marshals, Launches, Umpires and Cameras**



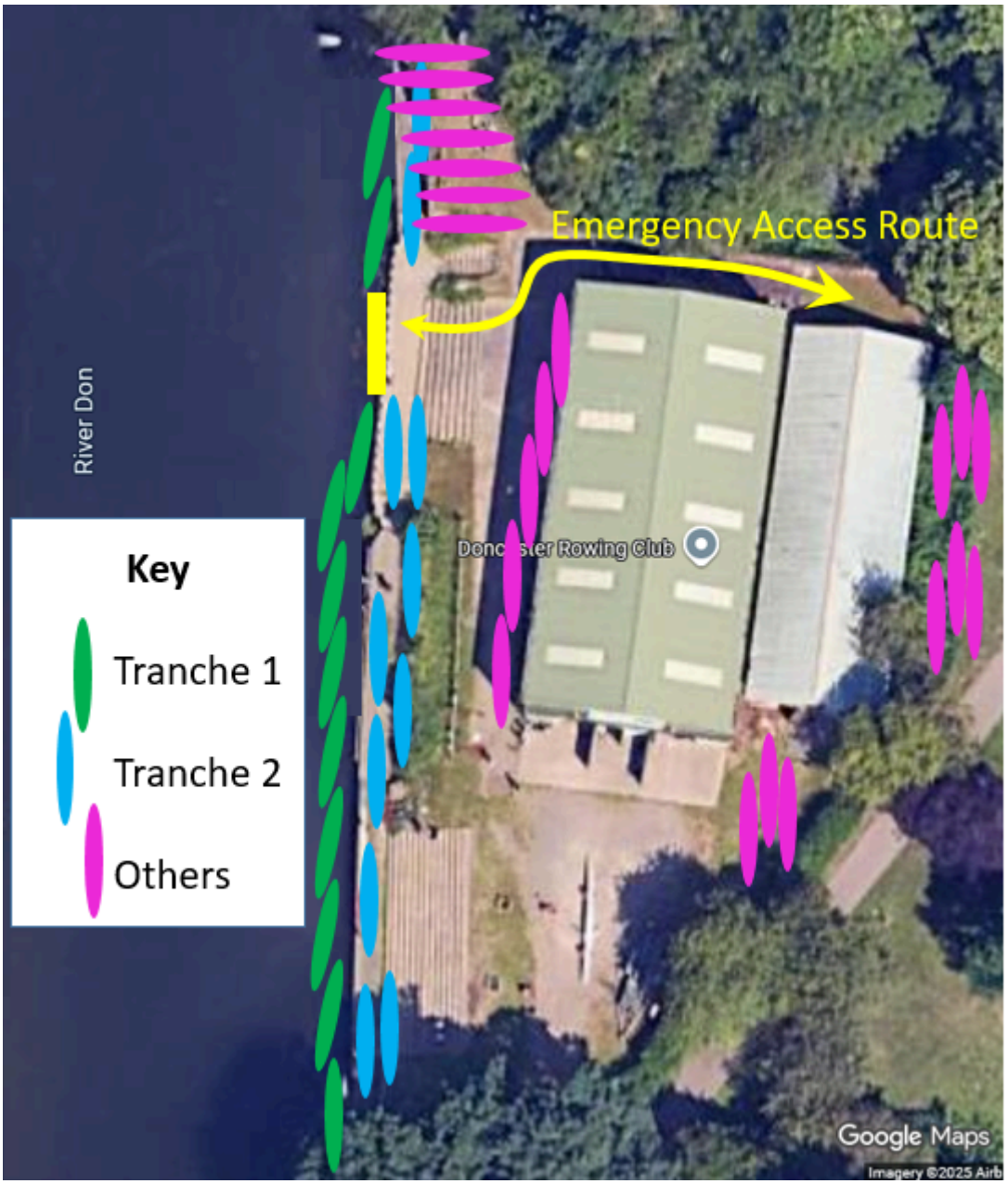
# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

## Course Map With Points For River Emergency Egress & Access



# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

**Holding Positions for Division 2 Boats after Vetting**



# 4. Starting Instructions.

Crews arriving at the start will be intercepted by a Marshall at the Start Line. Crews should not pass this point until authorised to do so by this marshal.

Boats will be marshalled in the following order

- Long Course before Short Course competitors
- Descending number order. That is to say, crews with higher numbers will be marshalled first and furthest from the Race Start.

Accordingly

- Crews racing over the Long Course will marshal first and race first.
- Crews racing over the Short Course will marshal second and race second.

Precise marshalling locations for each crew and division are shown on the attached diagrams and are in accordance with the following.

| Div'n | Prison Bank | | Boathouse Bank | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Station A-B | Station B-D | Station A-B | Station B-D |
| 1&3 | Short Course Competitors<br><br>Odd & even numbers | Long Course Competitors<br><br>Even numbers only | Long Course Competitors<br><br>Both odd & even numbers | Long Course Competitors<br><br>Odd numbers only |
| 2 | Long Course Competitors<br><br>Even numbers only | | Long Course Competitors<br><br>Odd numbers only | |

Crews who arrive late at the start or who disobey marshals' instructions may incur a time penalty.

When instructed to enter the Marshalling Area, crews will proceed to the location of the Chief Start Marshal in Launch 1, who will be adjacent to your waiting position.

Just prior to arrival at their waiting position, crews shall turn in the centre of the river and reverse into their waiting position, tucked against the appropriate bank.

You will be given approximately 2 minutes warning by 3 short blasts on an air horn before you are due to start moving up to the start at which point outer clothes can be removed.

When instructed to, by the Chief Start Marshal, you should slowly, make your way upstream keeping close to the Boathouse bank.

Crews should pass to the left of Launch 2 which will be located in the river at the end of the prison straight.

As crews pass Launch 2 they will correct their heading (pull on stroke side) to face the Start Line and through the bend

The Race Starter will start the boats as they pass their position (approx. 20m upstream of Launch 2) by announcing “Crew xx, Go!” loud enough for the crew to hear.

At this point crews shall accelerate to race pace so as to be moving at full speed as they pass the Race Start approx. 80 m upstream of the Race Starter.

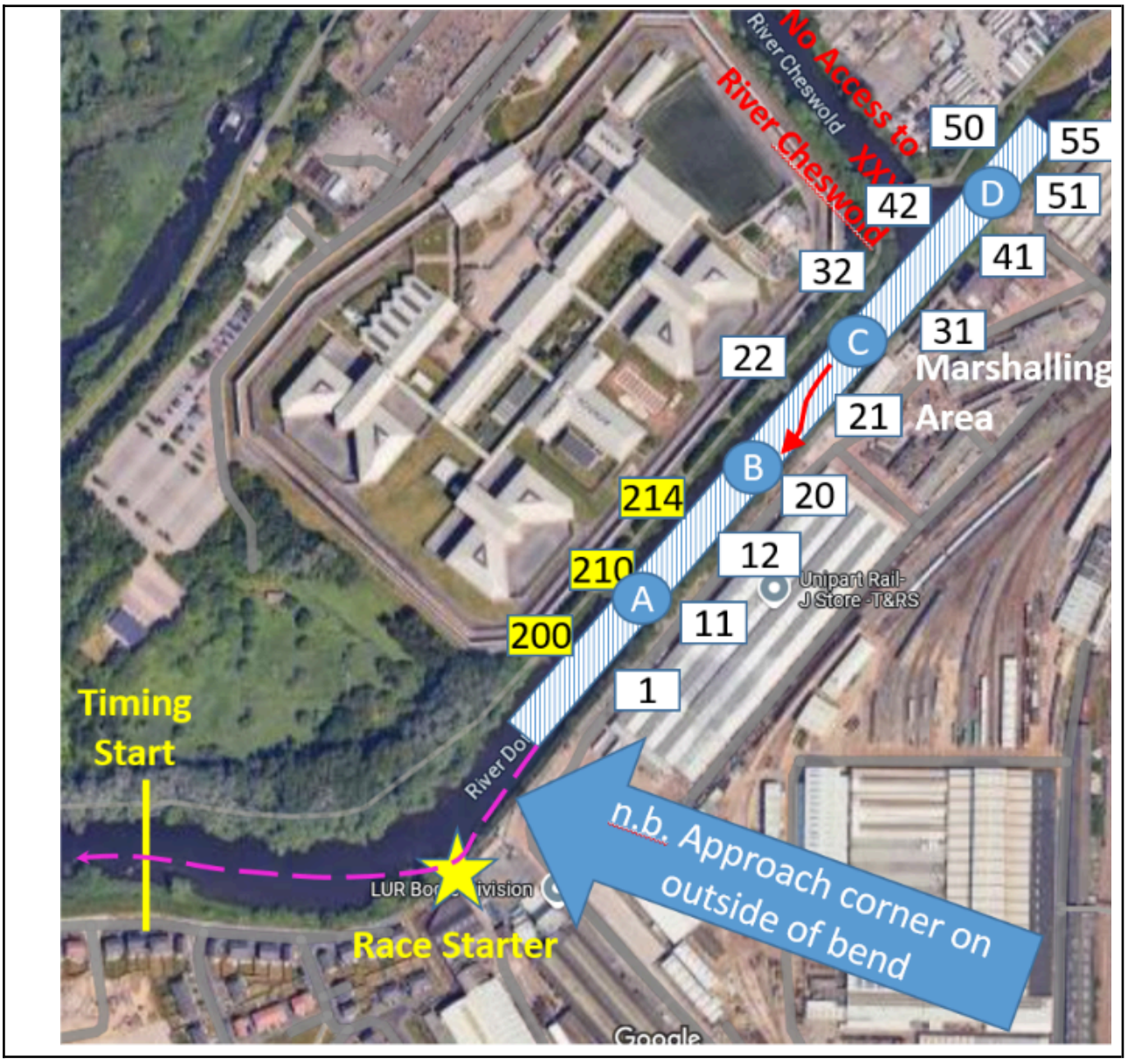
As the crew passes the start line the timing team will sound a horn to indicate that their timer has started

There will be a slight pause between the last crew rowing the Long Course, and the first rowing the Short Course.

The parallel sides of the prison straight can give rise to complex interference patterns from the wake of passing boats. This ‘Jailhouse Rock’ phenomena can be an impediment to rowing and if needs be the Chief Start Marshal may elect to pause racing whilst it abates.

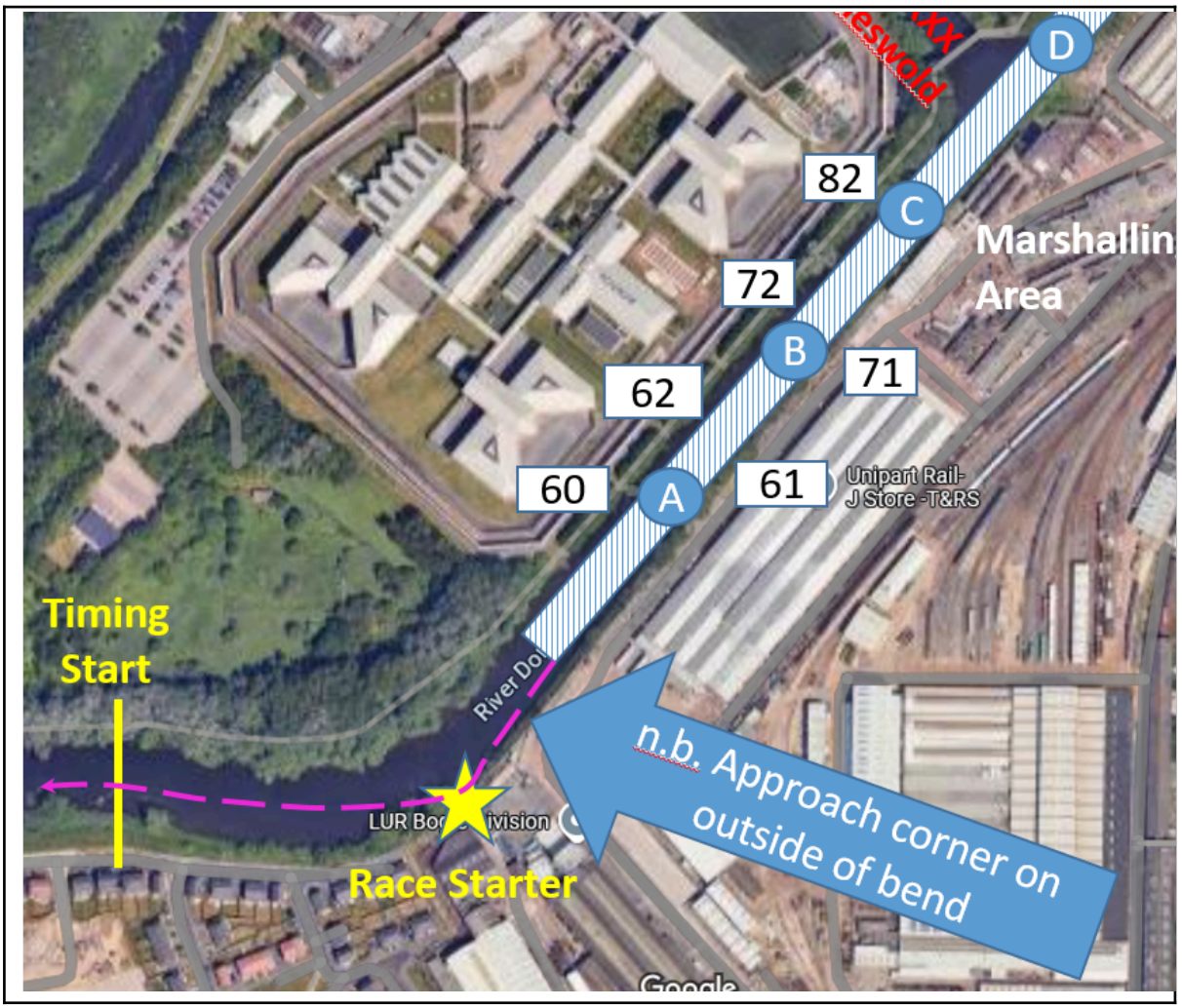
# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

**HoD - Division 1 – Marshalling Plan 2026**



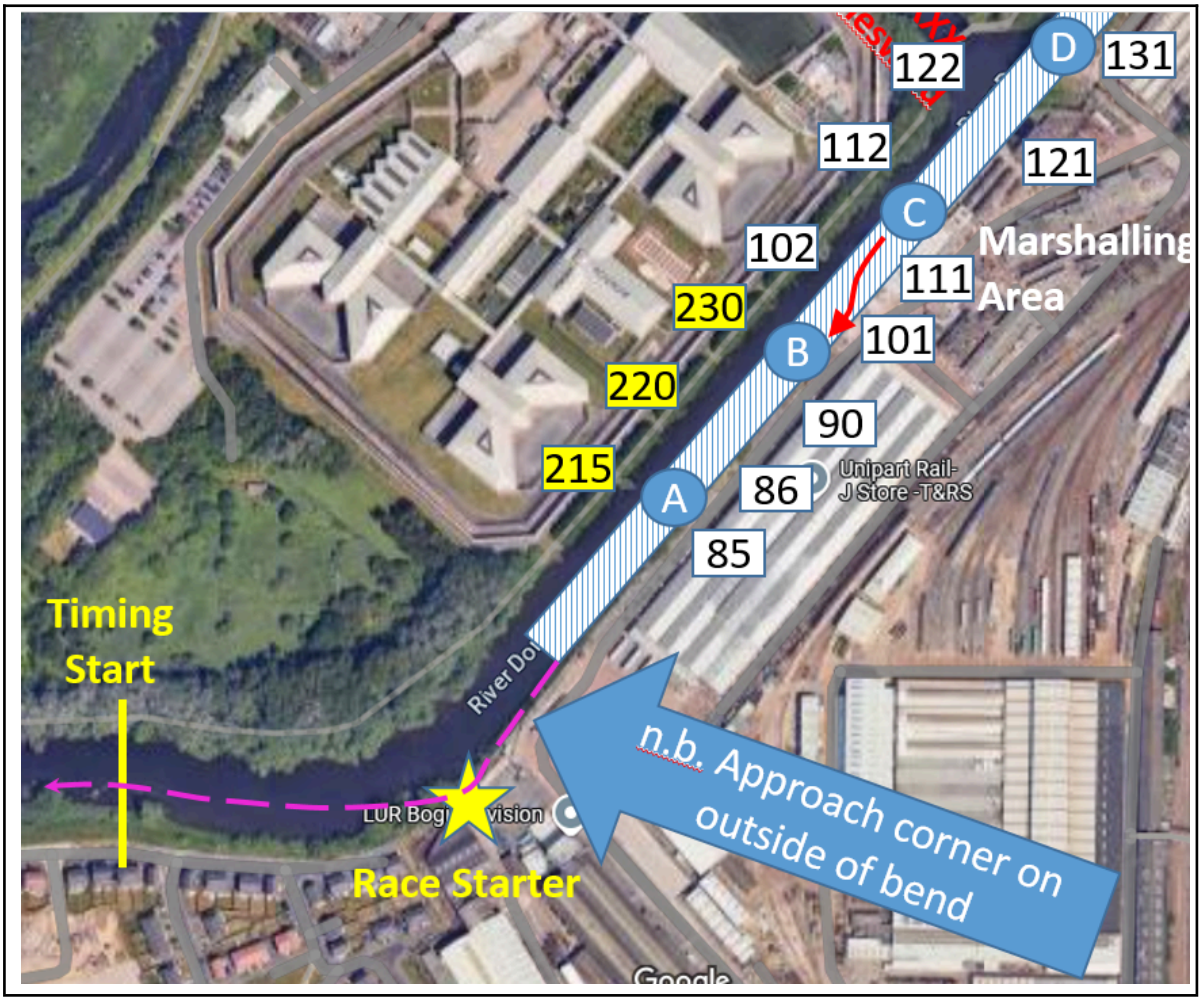
# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

**HoD - Division 2 – Marshalling Plan 2026**



# Head of The Don 2026 – 1st November 2026

**HoD - Division 3 – Marshalling Plan 2026**



# 5. During The Race

Faster crews have right of way, so crews which are being overtaken must move out of their way.

Please report all incidents (including potential and actual injury or damage to individual or equipment), in the first instance, to a member of the Organising Committee or a Race Marshal.

In the event of any objections the decision of the Race Committee will be final

**PLEASE REMEMBER - IF ASKED TO STOP BY A RACE OFFICIAL YOU MUST STOP – SOMEONE'S LIFE MAY BE AT RISK.**

# 6. Finishing Instructions

After passing the finish line, crews should continue paddling upstream until instructed to pull into a bank by a marshal. **DO NOT TURN**.

Crews who disobey marshals' instructions may incur a **time penalty**.

This applies to competitors racing both the Short and Long Courses, however, Long Course competitors can use both sides of the river. Short Course competitors should use Meadow bank only.

**No crews will be allowed back towards the landing stages until all crews in have finished racing.**

As soon as you have stopped rowing, put on warm clothing while you wait. As there is some current it will be necessary to paddle occasionally to stop your boat drifting downstream and to maintain its position.

**When instructed by a marshal, turn and proceed back downstream.**

**Do not overtake any other crews unless instructed to do so by a marshal.**

Slow down on approaching the boathouse.

# 7. De-boating Instructions

Whilst it is usual to (turn if necessary and) de-boat upstream, in the instance of this Head race, it is deemed less dangerous to adopt de-boating downstream in most instances. This gives rise to the following procedure.

1) Approach the Boathouse slowly and queue on the boathouse side of the river.
2) A marshal, in a launch, will make contact with each crew as it approaches Point A (see Diagram)
3) If any member of the crew is in an emergency or urgent predicament e.g. dangerously cold, they should advise the marshal.
4) The marshal shall advise each crew whether to de-boat facing upstream or downstream i.e whether to use Route 1 or Route 2 (see diagram).
5) Those following Route 1 should remain in the queue on the boathouse side of the river and drift downstream. Please ensure that you do not overrun the landing stages or move to the centre of the river as it inhibits de-boating.
    i) When you are close to the landing stages, you will be contacted by a marshal with a loud hailer at Point B (see diagram).
    ii) The marshal will advise you of a colour (green, pink etc), this corresponds to the colour bibs worn by groups of marshals located at points on the landing stages. De-boat adjacent to those marshals in the relevant colour.
    iii) Coxes are encouraged to make use of the marshals to ‘catch blades’ and walk the boat up or downstream as necessary to expedite the whole de-boating exercise and minimise the time other competitors have to wait on the water.
6) Those following Route 2 should proceed downstream, past the boathouse and when indicated to do so by Launch 2 or 4, should turn. Typically, fours and smaller can turn 50m d/s of Boathouse and before the submerged tree. Eights should proceed to the ‘Big Bend’ to turn.
7) They should then make their way upstream and queue on the Boathouse side of the river, facing upstream.
    i) Quads and fours and smaller will de-boat on the downstream landing stage.
    ii) Eights will not fit on the downstream landing stage and they should proceed to the upstream landing stages and boat in the location advised by **Landing Stage Bank Marshall**

A Landing Stage marshal shall recover the ‘Empacher number’ of the returning boat as they reach the Landing Stage.

Our intention is to move people off the water as rapidly and as safely as possible, so please de-boat quickly.

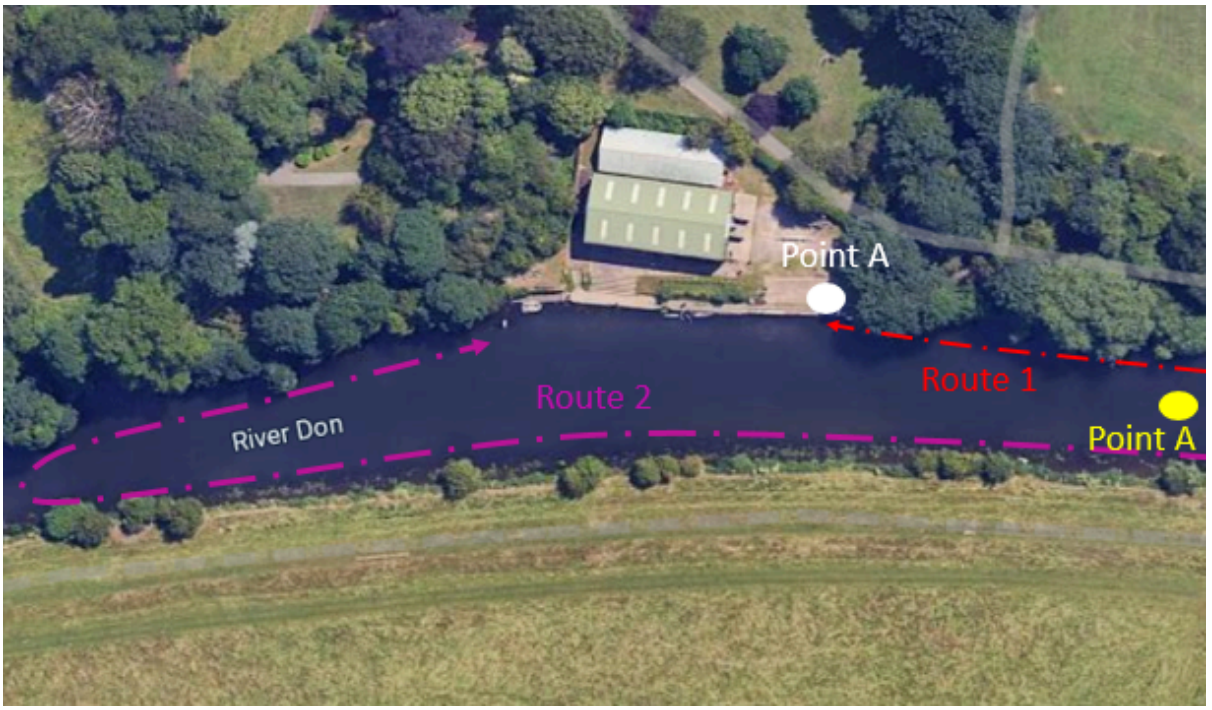
After putting your blades against the bank so they are not a trip hazard,
lift your boat out of the water and take it to the car park before immediately collecting your blades and kit.

There are two exit gates to the boathouse compound. Marshals will tell you which gate to use when carrying your boat back to the park though, typically, crews arriving

on downstream stages use downstream steps and downstream gate and those on upstream stages use upstream steps and gate.

Please return to fetch your blades quickly so as to avoid a dangerous build-up of equipment on the Landing Stages

**Map of De-boating Procedure**



# 8. Results and Departure

RowTime results will be shown on the screen at the boathouse after racing

Prize giving ceremony will take place in the compound, in front of new Boathouse as soon as all results are compiled

When departing, all vehicles shall do so at less than 5mph and have their flashing hazard warning lights illuminated.

**TRAILERS CANNOT TURN RIGHT OUT OF THE PARK GATES. DOING SO WILL RESULT IN EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO BOATS AND TRAILERS.** They should go around the block in the reverse of when arriving ie straight on Urban Road, left on Shady Side, left on Old Hexthorpe Road past gates and down Greenfield Lane.