

INEXPERIENCED SINGLE AND DOUBLE SCULLERS, REQUIRING BANK SUPERVISION.

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1) Faster River Users

River users should be aware to the possibility of substantially faster boats using the water at the same time. This is not an ideal situation as, potentially, if the slower boat is being caught it puts pressure on them to; a) speed up, b) try to move out of the way, c) shouting for the faster boat to slow down. For the faster boat it can mean they: a) try to overtake, which may not be safe, b) have to slow down, which can create frustration. However, in the early stages of getting back on the water following relaxation of the Covid-19 rules, it may be more likely than prior to Covid-19, when different groups, or squads had separate training times.

As a general principle the slower boat should give way to the faster one. This could mean moving over to let the other crew round – but please remember to always look in both directions and check that the river is clear and that it is safe to moving.

2) Turning Points - When And Where To Turn

Scenario where there is a faster crew ahead of you and you decide to turn “early”.

When turning, the crew, and or the bank support, should have sufficient awareness and appreciation of the implications. Turning early, the question to ask yourselves is; the crew that is now behind you, how likely are they to catch you before the end of the length. If the answer is very, or quite likely, it is good practice to allow them to go down before you. This will take pressure off you both and will be the safest option.

It is especially important when turning down near Castle Gardens, see Figure 3, The river near to Castle Gardens moorings, to check if anyone is about to come up stream through West Bridge. When turning here, it can be quite blind, so unless you are very close to the bridge, you only actually see crews coming, when they are actually through the bridge turning onto the straight. Trying to build up a mental picture of whose out, where they are, what speed they are doing, allows you, to a certain extent, to anticipate what’s likely to happen. Remember though that other crews may turn early – so don’t assume – always check.

If you do see someone coming upstream through the bridge, depending on other river traffic, it might be advisable to let the crew go ahead of you, assuming that they are quicker than you. If you are likely to impede them, a loud shout to warn crews coming up through the bridge is required.

3) Stream Conditions

There are clear guidelines around the height of the water – if it's over the "hard", you don't go out, [that rule extends to all levels of competency and all boat types].

The water level may be deemed sufficiently low, i.e. it's below the level of the "hard", however the flow may still be very fast. Excessively fast flow creates problems in normal paddling. Water flows quicker in the middle of the river than near the bank and one blade will always be towards the middle of the river, this can cause instability and steering issues. Also, large amounts of debris can be washed down, which can cause damage to the boats and potentially provide obstructions which can cause the sculler to catch their blade and capsize. Finally, be careful spinning in fast stream conditions, you will be swept downstream faster than normal – particularly when you are broadside on to the stream – getting swept onto – or even near to a bridge buttress is not a good experience for anyone!

4) Wind Conditions

Strong winds can sometimes cause the water to be whipped up, creating “white horses” which may be too rough to row through. These may provide potentially sinking conditions and also increase the possibility for the sculler to catch the water and catch a “crab” and fall in.

Strong crosswinds can also cause considerable disruption at various key points on the river. These can be anywhere – depends on the strength and direction of the wind – but tend to be:

1. See Figure 1, Freemans Lock near LCFC stadium
2. See Figure 2, Section of river above The Newarke (Stone) bridge
3. See Figure 3, The river near to Castle Gardens moorings

The wind tends to push the sculler sideways making steering difficult and creating balance problems. Also, with the wind comes the disruption to the bladework which can also provide balance problems, coupled with the difficulty of handling the blades – there is an increased risk of catching a crab and falling in due to irregular bladework. Sudden gusts of wind, exacerbate the problem, the gusts can hit you at any time during the stroke and be very sudden without warning.

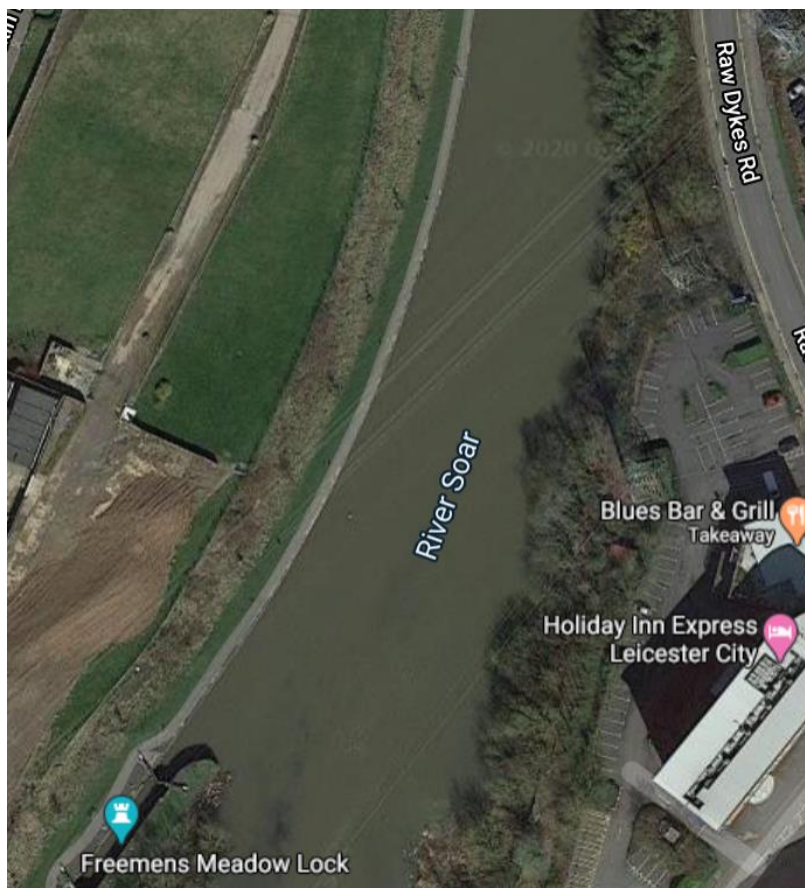


Figure 1, Freemans Lock near LCFC stadium



Figure 2, Section of river above The Newarke (Stone) bridge

Coming out through The Newarke (Stone) Bridge travelling upstream: At this point on the river the wind often rebounds off the buildings on the Soar Points side of the river, causing boats to be pushed towards the towpath. It helps if you can anticipate when this might happen and 'sharpen up' so you have a little more momentum going into it. You may also need to pull a bit harder on your left hand (bow side) blade. You may end up 'crabbing' sideways for a few strokes – but don't worry – try to stay relaxed and keep rowing; if you stop you are much more likely to be blown into the bank.



Figure 3, The river near to Castle Gardens moorings