



Safe Rowing Incident Report

Subject	Turning Upstream of English Bridge
Alert number	1
Date	04 October 2024

Lessons Learned

1. When turning upstream of English Bridge, crews must be aware that while turning a boat, the river stream will tend to sweep the boat downstream closer to English Bridge.
2. All crews must turn promptly after passing downstream under Greyfriars Bridge while in the **green safe turning zone** indicated below. This is explained in '[Safe Rowing Note 8 – Bridges and Weir - Turning and Navigation](#)'.

What Happened

On Saturday 28 Sept 2024, a 8+ boat collided with English Bridge. No rowers were injured, but this resulted in a small amount of damage to the boat. Experienced crew members in the boat then helped to recover the situation.

How it Happened

At the time of the incident, the river level was around 1.71 m, so just into the 'yellow' risk zone. The stream was flowing faster than occurs during lower river levels.

An 8+ boat with a mixed-experienced crew was attempting to turn around when positioned in the 'pool' between English Bridge and Greyfriars Bridge.

A 4+ boat positioned at the far end of the pool near English Bridge had commenced a turn. This meant the 8+ boat while facing downstream decided to wait while the 4+ boat turned. During this time, both boats drifted with the stream closer to English Bridge faster than would be the case in low-stream conditions.

When the 8+ boat started to turn to face upstream it was then too close to English Bridge and was caught in the faster stream close to the Bridge. The 8+ boat was swept through English Bridge while still across the stream. The 8+ boat collided with the Bridge.

Learnings

Since this incident, the Club has updated its safe rowing guidance, posting on the club website [Safe Rowing Note 8 - Bridges and Weir - Turning and Navigation](#). This includes safe rowing rules on turning near and navigating through English Bridge. The revised safe rowing rule requires the following:

Crews must turn promptly after passing under Greyfriars Bridge while in the **green 'safe turning zone'**, indicated below. This is a safe distance away from (upstream of) English Bridge.

The boat should be turned around, so it faces *upstream* in time to ensure the boat does not drift with the stream into the **red 'no turning zone'**, indicated below.

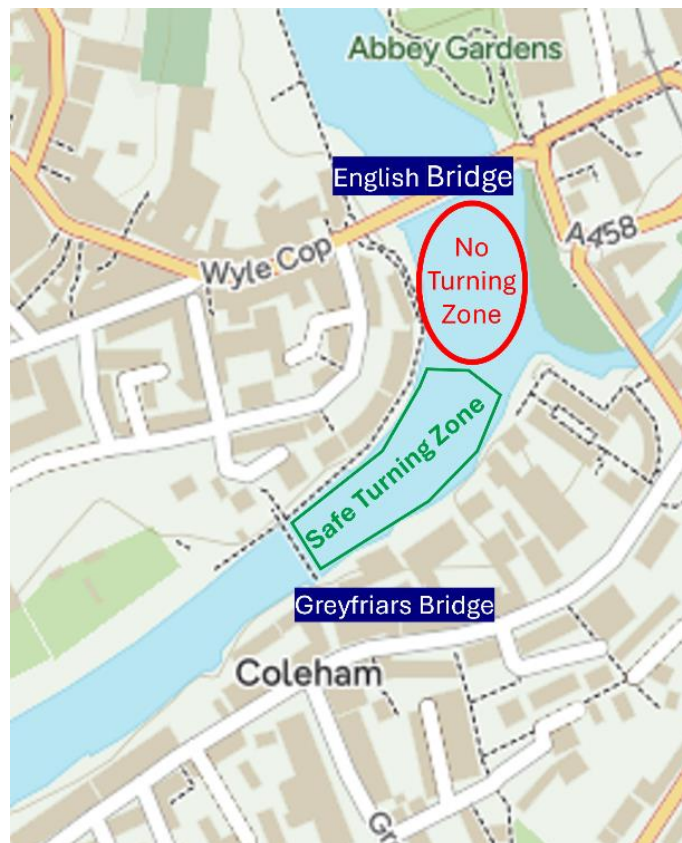


While the boat faces upstream in the green zone, it may be necessary to paddle upstream a short distance to avoid drifting with the stream into the red zone.

Only adjust clothing or rigging, drink water, discuss the outing, or listen to instruction from a coach once the boat is **facing upstream and in the green zone**. Never do this when facing downstream or if in the red zone.

If other crews need to turn at a similar time:

- crews facing upstream should give way to crews coming downstream; and
- crews facing upstream may need to paddle upstream a short distance to enable the other boat(s) to turn safely in the green zone.



Feedback and Suggestion

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to provide suggestions on how to improve the Club's safety guidance. Please talk to the Rowing Safety Adviser, or other club committee member.

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