



# KINGSTON ROWING CLUB SCULLING COMPETENCY SCHEME

## Abstract

The scheme has been developed to assess and record the competency of adult members over the age of eighteen for sculling alone without the aid of a coach and safety boat. There are three levels of competency progression: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Each level provides approval for a sculler to go out alone in progressively more difficult conditions.

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# KRC Sculling Competency Scheme

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## Version History

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<sup>1</sup> Source information from Mike Landers and Dermod Sweeney

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The scheme is based on The Scottish Amateur Rowing Association's (SARA) Sculling Proficiency Award Scheme that has been rolled out and used successfully within SARA Clubs and BR Clubs such as Marlow. The original SARA scheme was designed to encourage and develop sculling for young people.

The implementation of the scheme at Kingston RC is primarily to ensure local safety rules are understood and observed and that good watermanship skills are practiced.

Previously the club operated under subjective decisions partly based on the ARA status which is no longer used with British Rowing (BR) and which potentially discriminated against scullers who had learnt watermanship skills and gained experience in a sweep boat or had simply not competed and won their novice pot before.

The proficiency scheme described is being introduced to overcome these issues and incorporate experience of running the scheme in other clubs.

The scheme is designed to cover unaccompanied adult scullers and small boat crews. "Unaccompanied" means without a coach in a launch or without a coach on the bank equipped with throwline, radio, and / or mobile phone.

The intention of this scheme is that progressing through the award levels demonstrates increasing competence to enable the sculler or rower to train on the water alone under Green<sup>2</sup> conditions (Bronze), at night (Silver) or under Yellow<sup>3</sup> conditions (Gold).

There are three levels of award. All levels may be carried out in any boat, but a big boat award does not qualify candidates to go out in a smaller boat; e.g. if someone has passed the gold level in a quad, they cannot go out under Yellow conditions in a double or single. The smaller the boat, the higher the assumed skill level.

### 1.1 1.1 Bronze

The Bronze level may be carried out in any boat.

Completion of the Bronze level entitles the sculler to go afloat alone under green conditions and in daylight only.

### 1.2 Silver

The Silver level may be carried out in any boat.

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<sup>2</sup> Green, Yellow and Red generally refer to the EA Board System but might be modified by the Kingston Rowing Club boating safety Plan

<sup>3</sup> A very limited number of Scullers might also be approved for Red Conditions

Completion of the Silver level entitles the sculler to the same privileges as a Bronze level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out at night with appropriate lights and clothing.

### 1.3 Gold

The Gold level may be carried out in any boat.

The Gold award generates experience. It exposes the sculler to longer distance work and due to the mileage (time) required, changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the sculler to the same privileges as a Silver level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out under Yellow conditions.

### 1.4 Crew Sculling Boats

It is not necessary for the entire crew to be qualified to the prevailing conditions. For coxless boats, at least the steersman must be qualified<sup>4</sup> to go afloat in the prevailing conditions. For coxed boats, both one member of the crew and the cox must be qualified to go afloat in the prevailing conditions.

### 1.5 Assessors

The KRC Safety Panel will appoint course Assessors. In general Assessors will be qualified to BR Level 2 (or Instructor's Award) or higher; the Safety Panel may appoint additional competent persons as Assessors with or without a BR coaching qualification where it deems appropriate.

### 1.6 Administration

The awards should be taken in the correct order but there will be some flexibility for very experienced and competent scullers to fast track through the process.

Even though the technical aspects of the Bronze award are very basic, the local safety rules on the river (meaning of warning lights, turning and circulation patterns etc.) can sometimes be misunderstood by club members and a formal test will help to ensure that the club has taken steps to educate and inform.

A swimming test is not a prerequisite for this scheme as this aspect of water safety is handled via the membership application process and is managed differently for adults and juniors.

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<sup>4</sup> The Steersman must also be approved as competent in steering by the relevant Coach, the Safety Panel, and the Captain.

### 1.7 Record Keeping and Publicity

To minimise paperwork and to keep records in one place it is recommended that the membership Secretary and Safety Officer are informed whenever a candidate achieves a new level of competence. This can be added to their membership record. Managing the scheme is easy if every member, no matter how experienced understands the scheme and supports it appropriately.

The award scheme documentation will be published on the club website with accompanying notes. Members are expected to print off their own copy which will contain signature sheets and the Gold level logbook.

### 1.8 Implementation

Squad coaches will be responsible for signing off (or getting signed off where they are not qualified to assess) award levels for their athletes. Members who are not in a designated squad should contact the Captain or Safety Advisor to arrange assessment.

It is recognised that a large number of the club's athletes are competent at all levels of the scheme; it is up to the assessor to judge if the practical aspects of the level in question need be carried out, but in all cases the safety aspects must be reviewed. This can be done at a group session or at a debrief after an outing.

The Executive Committee will need to publicise the scheme and communicate via all means at its disposal to get acceptance from the membership.

### 1.9 Appeals and Complaints

The scheme is administered by the Captain and Safety Panel. Appeals, complaints and comments should be addressed to the Captain or Safety Panel through the athlete's squad representative.

## 2 BRONZE AWARD

Completion of the Bronze level entitles the sculler to go afloat alone under Green conditions and in daylight only.

### 2.1 Required Elements

The Bronze level may be carried out in any boat. The tasks can be done in any order but should be done in one session

1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the circulation pattern on the Kingston Reach between the Molesey and Teddington Weirs/Locks specifically; a) where to turn and return to the club by Stevens Eyot, b) direction of turning and shape of turning pattern, c) course to be taken paddling upstream and downstream, d) knowledge of training sections where crews and scullers are likely to be doing pieces.
- 2, Demonstrate knowledge of the commercial vessels sounds signals - <https://www.thamesvisitormoorings.co.uk/information/boating/sound-signals/>
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the safety features of the boat, including buoyancy compartments (and importance of keeping closed with intact seal), heel restraints and bow-ball.
4. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the principal parts of the boat and sculls, e.g. riggers, gates, stretchers, shoes, front stops, back stops, slides, runners, seats, wheels, button, sleeve.
5. Without the aid of an assistant, be able to take the sculling boat from the boat rack in the correct manner and place safely in the water. At the end of the session, clean the boat and return it safely to the rack<sup>5</sup>.
6. Without the aid of an assistant, be able to embark and disembark safely.
7. Explain the procedures to avoid capsizing, and what to do in the event of a capsize.
8. Be able to scull a total distance of over 4000m, e.g. one full loop from the club to Ravens Ait and back observing the circulation pattern in full.
9. Turn the sculling boat 180° in its own length.
10. Reverse paddle for 10 strokes (backing down).

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<sup>5</sup> This can be relaxed during normal club opening times to include the aid of an assistant for scullers with boats on racks that are difficult to reach and/or scullers who have a condition that makes it unsafe to try to take the boat off and return to the rack without help. Whilst in the Phase 1 stage of returning from COVID Restrictions though the sculler must be capable of doing it all unaided.

11. Execute an emergency stop on a shout from the examiner (whilst paddling light).
12. "Safe position" (legs flat, hands away, handles together).

## 2.2 Assessors Checklist - Bronze

#	Element	Outcome	Comments
1.	Circulation Pattern and Turning		
2.	Commercial Vessels Sound Signals		
2.	Boat Safety		
3.	Boat Equipment		
4.	Racking and Boat Handling		
5.	Embark and Disembark		
6.	Capsizing		
7.	4000m Paddling		
8.	180-degree Turn		
9.	Backing Down		
10.	Emergency Stop		
11.	"Safe Position"		

Name of Candidate

Signature

Name of Assessor

Signature

Date

### 3 SILVER AWARD

The Silver level entitles the sculler to the same privileges as a Bronze level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out at night with appropriate lights and clothing.

#### 3.1 Required Elements

The Silver level may be carried out in any boat.

1. Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the safety requirements for sculling at night, i.e. white lights on bow and stern, position of lights for best visibility, use of high-visibility clothing on uppermost layer.
2. Understand the need for “conservative” circulation pattern at night, e.g. stay well over to the Middlesex bank going up and away from the middle and towards Surrey bank on the way down stream but giving enough space to avoid collision with moored boats etc.
3. Embark, adjust correctly, and pull away from the landing stage unaided.
4. Scull 10 consecutive strokes without the sculls touching the water during the recovery (note if the boat is balanced and the blades skim the water once or twice this is acceptable; the test shows that the sculler balances the boat correctly rather than leaning on the water).
5. Spin the boat clockwise through 180° paddling and backing alternatively, taking roughly 5 strokes with each hand, repeat anti clockwise.
6. Take 5 consecutive strokes square blade paddling (similar comments apply as 4. above).
7. After 3 hard strokes, sit in the “strike” (hands away) position for 10 seconds without touching the water with sculls (similar comments apply as 4. above).
8. Spin the boat 180° anticlockwise, taking roughly 5 strokes with each hand.
9. Back the boat down in a straight line and then stop the boat.
10. Paddle firm and execute an emergency stop on a shout from the Assessor.
11. Execute an emergency stop with turn to bow side.
12. Execute an emergency stop with turn to stroke side.
13. Come into landing and disembark unaided.

## 3.2 Assessors Checklist - Silver

#	Element	Outcome	Comments
1.	Night Sculling Safety		
2.	Circulation Pattern		
3.	Embark		
4.	10 strokes clear of water		
5.	180 degree turn		
6.	Square blade paddling		
7.	Strike position		
8.	180-degree Turn		
9.	Backing Down and Stopping		
10.	Emergency Stop (straight)		
11.	Emergency Stop (bow side)		
12.	Emergency Stop (stroke side)		
13	Disembark		

Name of Candidate

Signature

Name of Assessor

Signature

Date

## 4 GOLD AWARD

The Gold award generates experience. It exposes the sculler to longer distance work and due to the mileage (time) required the changeable river conditions. Completion of the Gold level entitles the sculler to the same privileges as a Silver level holder, but in addition he or she may also go out under Yellow conditions<sup>6</sup>.

### 4.1 Required Elements

The Gold level may be carried out in any boat.

1. Over a period of 3 months, candidates must scull a total distance of 150km in a safe and competent manner, observing all the safety and technical skills learnt in the previous two levels. One loop to Hampton Court Bridge and back counts as 11km. One loop from club to "Yellow Board" before the Railway Bridge then back down to the Lensbury sign and back to the club counts as 4Km.
2. Be conversant with the club risk-assessments for river conditions.
3. Understand and be able to demonstrate the "Ferry Glide" technique. This allows the sculler to cross the river in fast stream conditions whilst maintaining position in the stream relative to a fixed point on the bank.

Scullers should present a mileage log to their appointed Assessor.

### 4.2 Scullers Distance Log - Gold

Date	KM Today	Total	Witness or other evidence such as Strava

<sup>6</sup> As stated previously a few very competent scullers might be allowed out on Red at their own risk.

## 4.3 Assessors Checklist - Gold

#	Element	Outcome	Comments
1.	150km Experience		
2.	Risk Assessment Demonstration		
3.	Ferry Glide Demonstration		

Name of Candidate

Signature

Name of Assessor

Signature

Date