

BGCC TRIATHLON ASSISTANCE **PADDLER GUIDE**

Our main task is to put boats around the swimming course to provide prompt assistance (or rescue) to swimmers in difficulty, without unnecessarily impeding other competitors. In addition, a boat might have to lead each wave of swimmers around the course, or we may be asked to position a boat at turning marks to prevent swimmers cutting corners.

PREPARATION

- * If you have a choice of boat, choose the most stable (a K1 is not suitable).
- * PFDs are mandatory as an aid both to visibility and your safety. You should also carry a whistle.
- * As you might be on the water for some time, consider carrying a drink bottle, hat, sun screen etc.
- * Arrive at the launching place at least 30 minutes before race start.
- * LISTEN to the BGCC leader's pre-race briefing.

YOUR SAFETY

Weather conditions may not always be ideal. If you consider conditions unsafe or beyond your capabilities, advise the BGCC leader and leave the water.

If the BGCC leader considers conditions generally unsafe, he/she will notify the Race Director and direct all boats to leave the water.

GIVING ASSISTANCE

Swimmers will usually call for assistance by raising their hand, but if you need to get the attention of a swimmer who is going the wrong way, tap the side of your boat as they are unlikely to hear your voice with their head under water.

- * If a swimmer is going **WELL OFF COURSE**, you may give directions. But remember that navigation is actually part of the event; if a swimmer is slightly off the shortest course, that's their problem.

Approach the swimmer from behind or the side if possible. Do not place your boat in a position where the swimmer might collide with it.

- * If a swimmer needs a **REST** because of fatigue, mild cramp etc, they are allowed to hold on to your boat provided it is basically stationary. If you tow them any distance along the course, they will be disqualified. You may tow them back away from the course if they are likely to get in the way of other swimmers.

Encourage swimmers to hold on to the bow or stern of your boat (not the side) for the obvious stability reason. Use your voice to calm and encourage them, and make sure you listen to what they tell you; it's their race.

* Be aware of what other boats around you are doing in case another paddler needs assistance.

RESCUE

* If a swimmer chooses to withdraw from the race, or is clearly unable to continue, your key concern is the preservation of life and getting the swimmer to shore.

- Do NOT attempt to pull the swimmer into your boat.
- If possible, advise someone on the bank to be ready to assist (the organisers should have first aid services in attendance).
- Tow the swimmer to the nearest land. They should hold the back of your boat (clear of the rudder) and kick if possible. Be prepared for this to be hard work.
- Remind the swimmer to report their withdrawal to a Race Official (and try to remember their race number or cap colour in case they don't).

* In extreme cases, where life may be at risk, the swimmer will need to be removed from the water by the organiser's power boat or Water Police.

- Call another boat to assist you, by raising your hand.
- Support the swimmer as best you can.
- Call for power boat assistance by raising your paddle (and keeping it raised). Black paddles may be hard to see, so use your whistle if you don't get an immediate response.

REMEMBER

* As well as providing a formal assistance service, we can help fellow athletes enjoy their sport by providing understanding and encouragement. However, you are not a Race Official, so be careful not to give information regarding race rules, cut-off times etc.