



TODAY'S WEATHER

Thunderstorms
Sunny intervals
Sudden showers
Cross-tail wind
Lightning
Rain
More thunderstorms
Breezy spells
Acts of gods
Torrential rain

TODAY

Who to watch in the finals

11.55 LM1x Zac Purchase takes on the Greek Pappas and the Spaniard Zunzunegui
12.25 W1x Karsten and Knappkova and Balmory do battle again
12.40 M1x Battle of the Titans — Drysdale, Tuft, Hacker, Synek, Maeyens and Campbell
13.10 M2- Smith and James take on Ginn and Free, Twaddle and Bridgewater, Zhang and Wang
13.25 W2x Vernon and Bebington meet the Evers-Swindells and others
13.40 M2x Spik and Cop and Macquet and Hardy await Wells and Rowbotham
13.55 M4- Williams, Reed, Partridge and Hodge, leaders in the bitch event
14.30 Shaun Sewell in arms-only single sculls rep
14.50 Karen Crombie and James Roberts in the trunk and arms doubles sculls rep

Today's timetable

Finals from 11.10 to 13.55
W4-, M2+, LW1x, LM1x, LM8+, W1x, M1x, W2-, M2-, W2x, M2x, M4-
Final C at 9.30
LM2x
Final Bs from 9.36 to 10.24
LW1x, LM1x, W1x, M1x, W2-, M2-, W2x, M2x, M4-
Adaptive repechages from 14.10 to 15.10.
AW1x, AM1x, TA2x, LTAMX4+

PLUS

19.30 Nations Dinner*
*Blaggers to note — by invitation only

Your TV guide

BBC2 live 12.00-13.00 BST
BBC1 live 13.00-14.15 BST
Eurosport live 12.00-15.00 CET

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Calm down dear, it's only a race!" — Chris Shambrook, GB team psychologist.

How to get to the Mess

E hammer@rowingsservice.com
Text 07710-538114

Dead heat conundrum

Hammer Smith reports from the Windsor Castle, Slough

When considering the brouhaha that is bound to break out in congress now that two crews who dead-heated for a place in the last six were forced to take part in a re-row instead of being allowed into a 7-boat final, perhaps FISA should take a leaf from the adaptive rulebook. Apparently adaptive races have a free start, *i.e.* the boats are not attached to a start pontoon. Such a procedure ignores the awkward fact that boats are aligned by the naked eye on the start but judged at the finish by watches accurate to 100th of a second and cameras accurate to 1000th.

Both managers of the crews in the coxless fours debacle on Thursday, John Howard of NZ and Elpi Pagitsas of the US, were happy that neither the electronic nor the photographic evidence shown by the fairness commission could split them. Both appealed to the FISA executive against the Rule 75 decision that there must be a re-row, requesting a seven-boat final.

When that was rejected, both appealed for a further delay because of the time taken to reach decisions on the matter. And, since you ask, the difference between this incident and that at Athens in 2004 when there was a seven boat final is that in Athens, the umpire allotted a finishing order for places 3 and 4, and Norway in 4th place successfully appealed to be allowed into the final after the photographic evidence was examined.

So, how could this be improved? I admit that several hours spent judging brews in this hostelry in John Betjemen's favourite English town has probably coloured my judgment, but a free start would lead to much more fun. The old professionals used to start races by mutual agreement, which led to all sorts of disputes and arguments, and, nowadays,

would keep all the rowers who are lawyers in business. It would also make dead heats far less likely.

News from the start

The French lightweight men's four were admonished by an umpire because three of them had their long white socks turned down while the fourth didn't. I cannot say whether three rolled them up or one rolled them down, but I hear that, tomorrow, bow side are to wear the stroke sock up and the bow sock down, and the stroke side are to wear the bow sock up and stroke sock down, or perhaps it's the bow side who will wear the bow sock up and stroke sock down and the stroke side who will wear the bow sock down and the stroke sock up. Or stroke and two will wear socks up and bow and three socks down, or perhaps the socks will be spaghetti rigged. Either way, it will test the jobsworths' handbook.

Not to be outdone, the Greek women's double were wearing identical white hats, except that one had a little black Nike tick(TM) on it. This is apparently a serious breach of etiquette. It's all right for one to wear a hat and the other not, but if they both wear hats, the hats must be the same in every particular. Then again, was this perhaps because the tick is illegal advertising? I hope we shall never know. "With adaptives", said some wag, "I expect they turn a blind eye."

The Canadian women's eight, I am told, also fell foul on the start of wearing shirts under their all-in-ones with visible but redundant BearingPoint logos on them. The crew readily agreed to take them off, only to reveal that they were not wearing sports bras, or indeed, bras of any kind. All the paparazzi were sadly looking the other way or refuse to admit to having snapped them.

Hammer Smith

Never underestimate the power of the press

FROM THE MESS CRIME DESK

"Jimmy" Haggerty writes:

Just one day after we exclusively revealed its theft, we're delighted to report the return of GB coach Jurgen Grobler's bike, complete with the lock it had when it disappeared. The crime desk is, of course, taking all the credit for this success as we've clearly induced a bout of remorse somewhere.

However, by contrast, we must now report the loss (theft?) of one of those smart golf buggies being used at the venue. It was the one with the

furry dice, so any sightings should be reported to the constabulary. It just makes you wonder what'll be next...one of the FISA Treasurer's Bentleys perhaps? Surely not.

The police have announced a clamp-down on speeding in the Dorney vicinity, with new speed traps to be installed on the M2000. Drivers of camera trucks, commentary wagons and fairness commissioners' cars have been seen frequently travelling at speeds in excess of 150mph to keep up with the races.



Caption competition: get your thinking caps on. Email hammer@rowingservice.com by 6pm

Missile barrage on tribune

You know things are bad when the respectable members of BARJ start a paper-ball fight up in the media grandstand. However, there's a handicap system. The venerable Mr Times has cannily installed himself further from the finish line than Mr Independent and Ms Telegraph, thus taking advantage of Friday's roaring tailwind to aid his pelting. The Telegraph nevertheless managed to beat the wind and bounce one off the head of the Herald and is now feeling rather smug.

Yesterday's monstrous efforts (see right):

"Psst, Ma'am. Have you heard the one about Siemens?" (Michael J)

"Can I interest you in my range of reasonably priced quality outdoorswear your Royal Highness?"

"Just between you and me, is that a wig?" (both Michael Cannon)

As Sir Steve droned on about how it was in his day, Princess Anne's hair prepared to leap to freedom. (both Ben Taylor)

"Cor blimey, Ma'am. Don't look now but on your right is the biggest Nikon you'll ever see"

"Don't look now ma'am but that media hack over there is either concealing Leander's missing beer-barrel or is very pleased to see you. Or me."

"Excuse me ma'am but I think the Media want an excuse for a caption competition" (all Michael J, aka new kid on the block)



POSTBAG

Dear Hammer,

It will be remembered that the last time England hosted the world champs, officials and volunteers were identified by their distinctive ties.

Just 20 years later, the formality has gone as ties have been supplanted by polo shirts and baseball caps.

Does this mean that the Wednesday of Henley Royal will now see a multitude of red polo shirts, and if so, must they be below the knee?

Ted Hynton-Locke
Duke's Head Subscription Rooms

FROM THE ENVIRONMENT DESK

Dateline: Finish Tower Island.

There have been consistent breaches of the "no cycling" rule which applies to the pathway along the return lane and passes behind the luxurious pavilion where FISA's blazerati hang out through the strenuous hours of the regatta. The desire to pass this area as quickly as possible is probably because the site's main sewer meets its cesspit right under the pavilion.

Commentaryballs

"And the Turkey is crossing the line"

HOW THE EXPERTS DO IT

"Keep your strategy simple – to go faster than the other crews." Colin Smith on constantly being asked what his strategy is.

Tessa und blitzen

We hear that Protocol have discovered a new way to amuse themselves. Apparently all you have to do to wind up Tideway coach Tessa Millar is to move her Post-It notes, and donner and blitzen ensue.