



Marlow Rowing Club

Sweep Proficiency Scheme

Version	2026/4
Status	Approved March 2026 This is a club rule under Article 65 of the Articles of Association and binding on members
Documents Replaced: This document replaces the following documents which will cease to have effect from the date of this document:	Previous, unimplemented, coxing & steering proficiency award

Introduction

The Sweep Proficiency Award is a graded award about experience and competence in crew sweep boats. It judges a person's suitability to boat under the River Access & Navigation Safety Policy [Marlow RC - River Access & Navigation Safety Policy](#). There are separate Foot-Steering, Sculling and Coxing qualifications.

Sweep competency is therefore a simpler concept used only for determining whether a boat is likely to be safe in particular river/light conditions. It provides developmental markers for those with no or limited prior experience.

Pre-Conditions

Passing the club Safety Training Modules is a pre-requisite of any award under this scheme and the assessor under this scheme is free to re-test any part of the navigation knowledge and fail candidates under this scheme if they do not know the content.
You must have an up-to-date Swim Test/Capsize Drill.

Assessors

Sweep Assessors will be appointed by the Captain and will usually be coaches. Coaches should not assess their own squads, unless by agreement with the Captain.

Record Keeping

Sweep Assessors will be responsible for informing the designated Safety Records Admin (cc the Safety Officer) when they approve the award.

Appeals and complaints

The Scheme is administered by the Captain, the Safety Officer, and the Committee. Appeals, complaints, and comments should be addressed to the Captain through the squad representative.

Prior Experience

Silver - Recent win in a sweep boat at a BR Junior, Senior or Masters Event (excluding development categories) as evidenced in the British Rowing Almanac. Assessment is by the squad coach following a review with the Captain.

Gold:

- Win in sweep boat at a BR Junior, Senior or Masters Championship Level Event, or
- Qualified or pre-qualified for HWR, HRR or HMR sweep event, or
- GB Talent Pipeline in seep boat - trialist and above

Training and Assessment

Candidates for the award should be referred to the documentation noted in the appendices before presenting for assessment.

Bronze

Complete British Rowing Rower Development Guide Level 1 in:

- Physical literacy
- Knowledge

Complete British Rowing Rower Development Guide Level 2 in:

- Physical literacy
- Knowledge

Candidates must complete the club on-land assessment (Appendix 1) with the Assessor.

Silver

Successful completion of Bronze

Complete British Rowing Rower Development Guide Level 3 in:

- Physical literacy
- Knowledge

Complete British Rowing Rower Development Guide Level 4 in:

- Physical literacy
- Knowledge

Gold (Subject to independent assessment)

Successful completion of Silver.

Over a period of 3 months, the sweeper must complete and log 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 above Marlow lock counts as 3.6km. Kilometres attained in reaching Bronze and Silver levels do not count towards the Gold level award.

Be judged to be capable of racing in 2- at a BR event

Below lock approval

There is no separate below-lock endorsement, but candidates are expected to know the circulation patterns and risks below the lock when questioned. Members should exercise common sense when steering - the river below the lock has different hazards and while the technical skill is the same, you should not steer through or below the lock for the first time without launch cover or assistance from others who know the stretch.

Appendix 1 River Access and Navigation

In particular, the Candidate should show a thorough knowledge of the following:

1. Safety Lights

- a) Know the stream conditions that initiate a safety light change to:
 - i. Amber
 - ii. Red.
- b) Know where you would obtain information on stream conditions.
- c) Know the water temperatures that initiate a safety light change to both amber and red and the consequence on allowable boat size. Know how to determine the water temperature.
- d) Know the fog protocol and what to do if fog descends while boated.
- e) Know the thunder and lightning protocol and what to do if thunder and lightning appear while boated.
- f) Know to make a dynamic risk assessment before boating.

2. Circulation Pattern

- a) Know the circulation pattern and the type of turn that should be executed at each turning point under green conditions.
- b) Know how the circulation pattern changes under amber conditions.
- c) Know where “race pieces” should stop at both the top end and the bottom end of the Marlow stretch.

3. Visibility/ Night/ Early Morning Rowing

- a) Know what boat lights are needed and where they should be placed.
- b) Know that during dusk and dawn conditions Hi Vis– not fluorescent - is required to be worn by at least bow and stroke.
- c) Know to steer a course tighter to the bank when visibility is low.

4. Capsize

Explain the safety procedure of how to try to avoid capsize and what to do in the event of a capsize.

5. Incident Reporting

Know that incidents should be reported as soon as possible on British Rowing website.

Appendix 2 On Land Assessment Sheet

Element	Outcome	Comments
Safety light changes		
1. Flow		

2. Temperature		
Protocols		
3. Fog protocol		
4. Thunder/lightening protocol		
Circulation pattern and changes		
5. Green		
6. Amber		
Rowing in the Dark		
7. Lights		
8. Hi Vis		
9. Steering line		
General		
10. Pontoon hazards		
11. Capsize protocol		
12. Describe a ferry glide		

Appendix 3 Useful links

<https://www.marlowrowingclub.org.uk/members/safety-information/>

<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/the-coaching-stream/rower-development-guide/>

<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/club-support/club-governance/club-safety/incident-reporting/>