

And the lesson is – Why is Traffic Flow Important

As Boat Race Officials we are often asked to give safety briefings to rowers and coxswains. Safety and fairness are the two most important reasons Boat Race Officials are on the water.

One of the main topics is the traffic flow at that particular regatta and we try to emphasise that it is very important that crews are aware of what it is and stick to the rules. Yet not a regatta goes by without a crew being pulled up for going against the traffic flow. Many times when this happens the Boat Race Official receives an argument as to why the crew was not obeying the rules. (Be aware that the traffic flow can be different on the same course from one regatta to another.)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words – the photos below are taken from an incident that occurred on the back lake at SIRC at the 2016 Sydney International Rowing Regatta.

Have a look and see if you can determine just how this happened – the oar is from a Quad:



The sculler was incredibly lucky – the oar pierced the hull on stroke side and fortunately just missed her ankle. She was not hurt, went back to the rowing sheds on the rescue jet ski, grabbed her double partner's scull and came 3rd in her race – her expected result.

The accident was caused by a men's coxless quad travelling at speed on the wrong side of the buoy line **i.e. against the traffic flow**. Although no one witnessed the actual event it appears that they hit the sculler at an angle to the quad as they were returning to the catch with Bow's bow-side oar piercing the scull.

In case you are curious – the traffic flow at SIRC is on maps all over the venue including near most pontoons – so the information is readily available.

So – please – rowers and coxswains, be aware of the traffic flow when training and at any regatta you attend and obey it for your safety.

Stay safe and good rowing,

Queensland BROs