

The Oxford-Cambridge Cross-Country Varsity Matches: Rules and Regulations

1 Introduction

The following rules and regulations provides the framework hereby agreed by Thames Hare and Hounds (“TH&H”), Oxford University Cross Country Club (“OUCCC”) and Cambridge University Hare and Hounds (“CUH&H”) within which the Varsity Matches or “Races” (both the Blues’ Varsity Matches (“Blues Matches”) and the Seconds’ to Fourths’ Varsity Matches (“II-IVs”)) will operate in the future. All rules will apply equally to the Blues match as to II-IVs, unless explicitly specified otherwise.

Other definitions include:

The “Hosting Club” is the club that organises a set of Races on a certain Match Day.

The “Visiting Club(s)” are the club(s) competing in a set of Races on a certain Match Day.

The “Competing Clubs” are CUH&H and OUCCC.

The “Race Referee” is a supervising official whose selection, roles and responsibilities are outlined, but not limited to, 6.1.1 to 6.3.1f.

2 The Hosting Club

2.1 Selection of the Hosting Club

1. The Hosting Club for the Blues Match will be TH&H every year. OUCCC will host II-IVs in odd numbered years, while CUH&H will host II-IVs in even numbered years.

2.2 Responsibilities of the Hosting Club

1. The Hosting Club has responsibilities to ensure the fair running of any Race on the Match Day. These include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) The Hosting Club must make all reasonable efforts (within the limits of financial allowance, time constraints, and lawful use of Common Land) to demarcate the course as clearly as possible, particularly at points in the course where different loops separate, or where the correct course separates from another footpath that is not part of the course. The use of tape, sticks, flags and flour is to be recommended.
 - (b) The Hosting Club should publicise a full course map to all relevant Clubs no later than 1 week before the Match Day.
 - i. This map should show all Marshal Points.
 - (c) The Hosting Club should ensure that all Marshal Points shown on the map are manned throughout the course of all Races on Match Day.
 - i. The Hosting Club, as well as all appointed Marshals, should be aware that not adhering to these rules risks the disqualification of runners, teams, or the nullification of the Race or Varsity Match, at the discretion of the Race Referee.

2. In the case of II-IVs, the Club Captain of the Hosting Club (or a deputy) will liaise with the Club Captain (or deputy) of the Visiting Club and the Race Referee, in cases including, but not limited to, inspecting the course before the Races.

3 The Visiting Club(s)

3.1 Responsibilities of the Visiting Club(s)

1. The Visiting Club(s) has responsibilities to comply with the Hosting Club and the Race Referee to ensure the fair running of every Race on the Match Day. These include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) The Visiting Club(s) must notify the Hosting Club as soon as possible in the case of late arrival that may require a change in timing of Races.
 - i. Any change in timing of any Race on the Match Day is to be decided by the Race Referee with the consultation of both Club Captains of the Competing Clubs.
 - (b) The Visiting Club(s) will, to the best of their ability (subject to time constraints), inform their Runners of their relevant Race course having been informed by the Hosting Club.
2. In the case of II-IVs, the Club Captain of the Visiting Club (or a deputy) will liaise with the Club Captain (or deputy) of the Hosting Club and the Race Referee, in cases including, but not limited to, inspecting the course before the Races.

4 The Blues Matches

4.1 Scoring

1. The Races shall consist of the Gentlemen's Blues Race, Ladies' Blues Race, and Old Blues' Race.
2. The Races shall be held on the first Saturday after the end of Michaelmas Term.
3. The Gentlemen's Blues Race shall be eight-a-side, six-to-score.
4. The Ladies' Blues Race shall be seven-a-side, five-to-score.
5. The Old Blues' Race Race shall be based on the Mob Match principle with the number of scoring runners determined by the size of the smaller of the two teams. Only alumni of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford shall be eligible to score in the race. Current students and guests are permitted to compete in the race, but they shall be non-scorers and not count towards the Race result.
6. For all Races, in the case of a tie, the team whose last scoring member finishes nearest first place will be declared the winner.
 - (a) Should the final scorers finish in a dead heat as well as a tied score, the Match will be declared a draw.

4.2 Location and Distance

1. The Gentlemen's Blues Race shall be run over a course of 7.5 miles. The Ladies' Blues and Old Blues' Race shall be run over a course of approximately 4 miles. Course lengths may be amended by prior agreement between TH&H, OUCCC, and CU&H, but no later than a month before the Match Day.

2. All Races shall start and finish at TH&H headquarters at The Memorial Playing Fields, Roehampton Vale, London, SW15 3PQ, with the Old Blues' Race at 1pm, the Ladies' Blues Race at 2pm and the Gentlemen's Blues Race at 2:45pm.

5 II-IVs Matches

5.1 Scoring

1. The Races shall consist of the following: Men's Seconds; Men's Thirds; Women's Seconds; Men's and Women's Mob Matches.
2. II-IVs shall be held on the Saturday of the eighth week of Michaelmas Term.
3. The Men's Seconds and Men's Thirds shall be eight-a-side, six-to-score.
4. The Women's Seconds shall be seven-a-side, five-to-score.
5. The Men's and Women's Mob Matches shall be based on the Mob Match principle with the number of scoring runners determined by the size of the smaller of the two teams, where the numbers of participants are unlimited.
 - (a) In the Mob Match, the scores of the first eight in the Men's Mob Matches and the scores of the first seven in the Women's Mob Matches are to be doubled.
6. For all Races, in the case of a tie, the team whose last scoring member finishes nearest first place will be declared the winner.
 - (a) Should the final scorers finish in a dead heat as well as a tied score, the Match will be declared a draw.

5.2 Location and Distance

1. The courses for the Men's Races shall be no shorter than 5 miles in length and the Women's Races shall be no shorter than 3 miles in length.
2. The Race starting times and locations shall be agreed between the Club Captains of OUCCC and CUH&H, having consulted their respective committees, but not later than a month before the Match Day.

6 The Race Referee

6.1 Selection of the Race Referee

1. The Hosting Club will propose a Race Referee in writing to the Club Captain(s) of the Visiting Club(s) no later than 2 weeks in advance of the particular Varsity Match that the Hosting Club is responsible for.
2. The Race Referee chosen by the Hosting Club will normally be the Club President.
 - (a) In the case where the Club President is unable to fulfil the role of the Race Referee, the Hosting Club may propose an alternative.
 - (b) Alternatives may be, but are not limited to, Senior Members, the Senior Treasurer, or a Vice President.
 - (c) In the case of II-IVs, a member of TH&H may be proposed as an alternative.

- (d) Unsuitable alternatives include current students of the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge and in particular members of the OUCCC and CUH&H Junior Committees.
3. The Visiting Club(s) may veto a Race Referee, if unsuitable, no later than one week in advance of the Match day.
 - (a) Any Club Captain who wishes to veto a Race Referee must notify the Club Captain of the Hosting Club and, in the case of the Blues Match, the other Visiting Club.
 - (b) In the case of a veto, the Hosting and Visiting Clubs must come to a unanimous agreement not later than four days from the Match Day.
 - (c) If no such unanimous agreement is made by this time, then TH&H may unilaterally appoint a Race Referee who is suitable, as defined by 6.1.2b.

6.2 Responsibilities of the Race Referee

1. The Race Referee has a role and responsibility to ensure the fair running of any race on the Match Day. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Ensuring the Course is laid out and marshalled satisfactorily before races before races begin. This is to be done in consultation with the Club Captains (or deputies) of the Hosting Club and Visiting Club(s).
 - (b) Placing the Runners under Starter's Orders.
 - (c) Declaring the result of the Races and winners of team and individual awards, having consulted with the relevant Captains of both Competing Clubs that there are no outstanding issues.
 - (d) Refereeing the event and settling any points of dispute submitted to them.
2. Their powers include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Disqualification of any Runner who gains an unfair advantage during the Race by their own fault, such as by losing the Course by their own fault or by disobeying the reasonable instruction of the Race Referee or Marshals.
 - (b) Calling to witness any relevant person or party to a specific event, in the interests of making an informed and fair decision.

6.3 Disputation

1. Any petition, complaint or other issue that a Runner, Spectator, or other wishes to raise, must be in the first instance directed to the Men's or Women's Captain of that person's Club. The informed Captain may take the issue to the Race Referee.
 - (a) Any issue must be taken up with the Race Referee as soon as possible, and ideally in the immediate aftermath of the Race.
 - (b) The issue must be taken to the Race Referee in the presence of the informed Captain's relevant counterpart in the Competing Club.
 - (c) Only the informed Captain may take the issue to the Race Referee, unless the Race Referee specifically suggests otherwise.
 - i. It is the informed Captain's responsibility, and not that of the Race Referee, to ensure that 6.3.1c is not violated.
 - (d) The Race Referee should consult with the Senior Members and Club Captains of all Clubs before announcing their decision.

- (e) The decision made by the Race Referee should, unless in the case of extraordinary circumstances, be made as soon as possible, and should be made, at the latest, before an hour has past after the last Race of the Match Day.
- (f) Any decision made by the Race Referee is final and unquestionable.

7 Eligibility

7.1 Eligibility Requirements for Competing Runners

1. All Runners must be eligible to compete per the Regulations of the Joint Blues Committee of Oxford and Cambridge Universities (JBCOCU)¹
 - (a) The main body of the document addresses Blues Match eligibility.
 - (b) Endnote 1 addresses II-IVs eligibility.

8 Amendments to the Rules and Regulations

8.1 Procedure for Amendments

1. Any amendment of the above Rules and Regulations must be agreed to by OUCCC, CUH&H, and TH&H unanimously at least a month before the relevant Match Day that the amendment affects.

¹This can be found at <http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/student-sport/varsity/criteria/>