



2025 Secret City Head Race

Version 1.0

Event Dates: October 25-26, 2024

**697 Melton Lake Drive
Oak Ridge, Tennessee**

Oak Ridge Rowing Association is delighted to present the 2025 Secret City Head Race in Oak Ridge, TN. This two-day event includes two different and challenging 5000-meter head racecourses on Melton Lake.

ORRA is delighted to include inclusive events at the Secret City Head Race. We will provide both Inclusive 2x (Saturday: Mixed Masters 2x) and Inclusive 4+ (Sunday: Mixed Masters Inclusive 4+). We are happy to consider other inclusive events. Please contact us with those requests.

Please read this packet completely as it includes information regarding entries, rules, events, eligibility, the venue, and other information about the policies governing this regatta. All crews competing in the Secret City Head Race are responsible for the information contained in this packet.

Best,

Mike Stinson
Regatta Director

Oak Ridge Rowing Association



Overview

The Secret City Head Race features our traditional Clinch River/Melton Lake Reservoir downstream course on Saturday, October 25 and our throwback upstream course on Sunday, October 26. Both courses are 5000-meters and offer beautiful scenery and a challenging steering course that includes sweeping turns and bridges. They overlap only at the Finish, ensuring that you see completely unique head race courses on both days. Course maps are posted below.

Events are offered on both days to allow athletes a wide variety of options for enter multiple events. Saturday offers a very broad event list for everyone including Youth, Collegiate, Novice, Open and Masters. The Saturday Event List is structured to allow up to two races (maximum) per athlete and includes a 3200-meter U15 Event series in 8+ and 4+ for our younger athletes. Sunday is a shorter race day, finishing in the early afternoon. The Sunday event list reflects a structure that provides everyone an opportunity to challenge the upstream course.

The Secret City Head Race is a USRowing-registered event. Per USRowing policy, effective August 18, 2025, all athletes must be listed on your team's roster and a USRowing member number must exist for the individual being added to a lineup when making an entry. Please note, athletes do not need to be compliant when entries are made, only prior to race.

Important Dates and Deadlines

2025 SCHR Registration Dates and Deadlines

Registration for both Saturday and Sunday is available via [Regatta Central](#).

- **EARLY REGISTRATION**
 - Opens July 1, 2025 @ 12:00 AM EDT
 - Closes September 7, 2025 @ 11:59 PM EDT
- **STANDARD REGISTRATION**
 - Opens September 8, 2025 @ 12:00 AM EDT
 - Closes October 12, 2025 @ 11:59 PM EDT
- **LATE REGISTRATION**
 - Opens October 13, 2025 @ 12:00 AM EDT
 - Closes October 19, 2025 @ 11:59 PM EDT
- **LATE-LATE REGISTRATION (NO REGATTA CENTRAL REGISTRATION. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.)**
 - Daily October 20-24, 2025 @ 9:00 AM – 5:00PM EDT
- **SCRATCH WINDOW***
 - Opens July 1, 2025 @ 12:00 AM EDT
 - Closes October 12, 2025 @ 11:59 PM EDT

Quick Links



Join the [2025 Secret City Head Race GroupMe](https://groupme.com/join_group/108973102/eZQz2pi6) (https://groupme.com/join_group/108973102/eZQz2pi6) (Announcements-only). This will be used to communicate information to coaches and other participants throughout the Event. It is a announce-only text message service.

Schedule The initial schedule is posted, with times estimated based on 2024 registration numbers. A revised estimate will be provided via Regatta Central at the conclusion of Standard Registration. The Official Schedule will be available via HereNow on/around October 21, 2025.

Results Official Results will be provided via HereNow.

Course Maps: [Saturday | Downstream](#) • [Sunday | Upstream](#).

VIP Parking: Available via SignUp Genius. See the Overview page on RC for the link. VIP Parking will sell out. Don't delay.

Venue: [Site Map](#)

Equipment: [Boat Rental Request Form \(Google Forms\)](#)

Event List, Saturday-Sunday, October 25-26, 2025

The Event List is published on [Regatta Central](#). The authoritative times of the events will be published on HereNow. Times listed are only notional. Oak Ridge Rowing Association reserves the right to eliminate Events with fewer than 2 entries at the close of Standard registration. Para/Adaptive/Inclusive Events will be run with any number of competitors.

Oak Ridge Rowing Association Venue

Site Map

Oak Ridge Rowing Association is located at 697 Melton Lake Drive, Oak Ridge TN 37830. Download a PDF of the Oak Ridge Rowing / Secret City Head Race [Site Map](#) here.

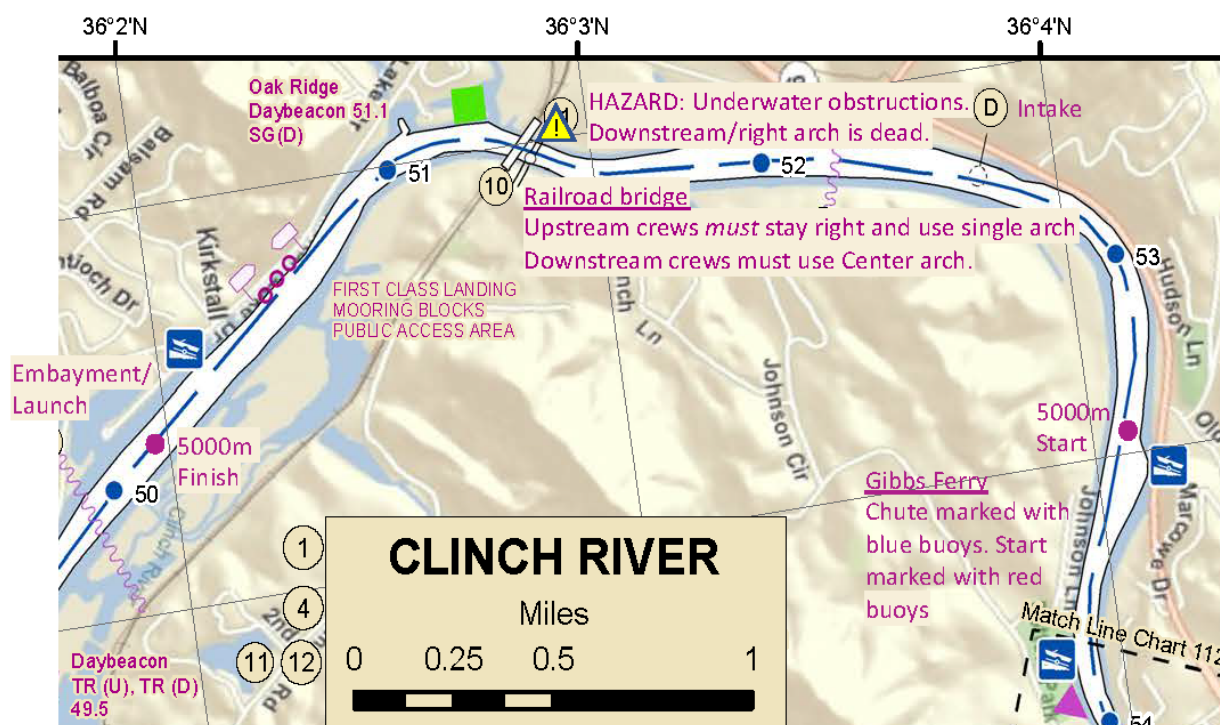


Race-Courses

The ORRA Secret City Head Race consists of two separate 5000-meter races, with a downstream version on Saturday, October 25, 2025, and an upstream version on Sunday, October 26, 2025.

Reference the Saturday/downstream course in Figure 1, and available for download here - [SCHR Race Course Maps- Downstream.pdf](#)

ORRA Secret City Head Race - Downstream 5k Course



Reference the Sunday/upstream course in Figure 2, and available for download here - [SCHR Race Course Maps - Upstream.pdf](#)

ORRA Secret City Head Race - Upstream 5k Course



Volunteers



Oak Ridge Rowing Association depends on the generosity of our volunteers to ensure the delivery of a successful event.

Interested in how the regatta is delivered? Curious about on-water execution by the USRowing referees? Interested in helping with control commission, starts, or the finish line? Want to see how the course is installed? Feel free to grab a volunteer shift and help. We'll provide a volunteer shirt, food and drinks, and appropriate instruction on your role. ORRA uses Sign Up Genius to describe volunteer opportunities and manage sign-ups. **Volunteer via Sign Up Genius, with that link found on the Overview page on Regatta Central.**

Rules and Eligibility

All USRowing rules found in the [Rules of Rowing](#) apply unless otherwise noted below.

Eligibility

The Secret City Head Race follows the Rules of Rowing, Article IV- COMPETITORS, with minor exceptions for Sunday races.

A **Youth** is a competitor who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 19, or who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 20 *and* has been continuously enrolled in secondary school as a full-time student seeking a diploma. Youth entries on Regatta Central apply the U19 definition and allow this single exception.

U19: A Competitor may compete in the U19 category until December 31 of the year of their 18th birthday.

U17: A Competitor may compete in the U17 category until December 31 of the year of their 16th birthday.

U16: A Competitor may compete in the U17 category until December 31 of the year of their 15th birthday.

U15: A Competitor may compete in the U15 category until December 31 of the year of their 14th birthday.

For Sunday races, Youth events are marked only as Jr. and Jr. Novice. This provides teams with additional flexibility for creating lineups across age categories. Please note- All Sunday races are 5000-meters in length. There is no shorter/U15 course on Sunday.

Open events are restricted to individuals aged 19 as of December of the same year as the event and older. No Youth crews are allowed in this category.

Novice events are restricted to individuals who have less than 12 months rowing experience in any form, from the date of their first organized practice. NOT one year from their first regatta.

Masters events are an age-restricted category that receives handicaps based on age as of December 31 of the current year. Masters Age Handicaps will be based on the 1000-meter age handicaps x5 found in the USRowing Rules of Rowing.

Women's Division: Female rowers and scullers only.

Men's Division: No less than 75% male rowers, i.e. a single female rower may participate in a 4x

or 4+ and either one or two female rowers may participate in an 8+.

Mixed crews must be at least 50% women.

Coxswains may be of either sex for any event. Coxswains may be at any experience level. No weight restrictions apply. Coxswains are not required to weigh-in. Youth coxswains cannot jeopardize their college eligibility.

Para/Adaptive Rowing Events

All Rowers racing in Para/Adaptive Rowing Events shall be classified before competition by self-classification. There is no mechanism to classify athletes on-site.

Inclusive: A crew entered in the “Inclusive” event must be composed of a mixture of Classified Rowers and Non-Classified Rowers. The crew must contain an equal number of Classified and Non-Classified Rowers. The Inclusive events are open to athletes that have been classified in the PR-3, PR-2, or PR-1 sport classes included in the Rules of Rowing.

Affiliation

A competitor shall represent only one organization at a regatta.

Composite Crews

Crews made up of representatives from different clubs must be entered as composite crews. The affiliation of each member of the crew must be submitted when the crew is registered.

Competitors are allowed to represent one organization at this regatta. Composite crews are not required to wear matching uniforms nor have matching oar blade designs.

Rules

Oversight

It is expected that competitors can row the full race course. If officials see unsafe or dangerous boat handling, they will instruct the crew to return to the docks ASAP. U15 and the Parent/Child will race 3200-meters on Saturday afternoon. Every other event, both Saturday and Sunday, is 5000-meters.

Waiver Requirements

Every competitor shall complete an online USRowing Regatta Liability Waiver. Competitors under the age of 18 must sign and have a parent or legal guardian sign an individual minor's waiver. No Paper waivers will be accepted.

Registration

Entries shall be made on the [Regatta Central](#) web site.

Check-in- 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Friday or 6:30 AM - 8:00 AM Saturday for Saturday Events.
Additional Check-In time 6:30 AM - 8:00 AM on Sunday for Sunday Events. All Check-in is in the ORRA Boathouse.

Crews are required to check in before anyone from that team is allowed to race.

Crews must have all USRowing waivers completed, and all entries paid for prior to racing. This will be verified at check in.

Lineup Changes

Line-up changes must be completed at the Registration Desk *no less than* 90-minutes before the event.

Coaches and Coxswains Meeting – Online on Wednesday. Link to be published on Regatta Central on the Overview Page. There is no on-site C&C.

At least one representative from each crew must attend. All crews will be responsible for the information delivered at the meeting, regardless of attendance.

Weigh Ins

No Weigh Ins (rowers or coxswains). Shells are expected to meet the requirements of Article III, Part A of the [Rules of Rowing](#).

Refunds

The Chief Referee, in consultation with the Regatta Director, is ultimately responsible for any decision that affects the cancellation of events. Fees for events cancelled due to acts of God are not refundable.

Scratches

Oak Ridge Rowing Association allows scratches without penalty through the Standard Registration period of October 12, 2025. Coaches and athletes should make those scratches directly in Regatta Central.

Beginning with the Late Registration Period on October 13, 2025, scratches require notification via email from the coach/athlete to the Regatta Director at regattadirector@orra.org. An administrative fee of \$5.00 will be assessed, with the remainder of the Event Fee refunded.

Beginning October 20, 2025, 12:00 a.m. no refunds will be given. There is no administrative fee for this situation.

For scratches beginning October 20, 2025, please notify regattadirector@orra.org so that we can update the Heat Sheets in HereNow.

Practice

The boathouse and launch docks are available on Friday for practice. The downstream course will be fully installed. The Sunday/upstream course will only be partially marked on Friday. The upstream course is completed Saturday night, at the conclusion of Day 1 racing, so is only loosely defined. Refer to the race course map for the course framework. Teams may practice anywhere they prefer, acknowledging that they do so at their own risk. Teams that row below the embayment on the portion of the lake that is used on Sunday are strongly cautioned to follow the traditional boating traffic pattern established by the green and orange navigation aids (US Coast Guard installed buoys and poles) and aided by the initial course framework (each 1000-meters marked). The Secret City Head Race Regatta committee may have an on-water presence anywhere across the two courses but does not schedule nor supervise practices.

Daylight is approximately 7:30 a.m. No crews may leave the dock before 8:00 a.m. If early morning fog is present such that the far shore is obscured, the Chief Referee and LOC regatta director will restrict launching until such time as conditions allow. Sunset is approximately 7:00 p.m. All crews must be off the water, with no exceptions, by 7:00 p.m.

There is no practice after racing on Saturday afternoon/evening.

Weather

Weather in late October can vary considerably. Typical weather conditions include early morning temperatures around 50 degrees and highs around 70 degrees. Athletes are reminded to be mindful of the weather conditions and dress appropriately.

Dock Master

The Dock Master, a USRowing Referee/Official, has absolute authority over the dock area. Each competitor is required to report in before boarding launching dock. Outgoing boats will have priority over incoming boats. The Dock Master will expedite and prioritize launching. All competitors must return to the recovery docks after their race.

Launching

Crews will launch from the labelled launch docks in the marina harbor (embayment). There will be no time allowed for equipment adjustment on the docks. Crews should plan to adjust foot stretchers and tie shoelaces after launching. Crews are responsible for getting their boat to the

start on time. ***ORRA strongly recommends that crews allow 50 minutes*** to move from the embayment to the marshaling area above the start.

Safety Equipment

Every competing boat must be properly equipped with a bow ball. Every competing boat shall also be equipped with quick-release shoes. Control commission will check before boarding launching docks (per rule 3-109).

Boat Numbers / Bibs

Assigned numbers and bibs for all crews will be distributed when each crew picks up a competitor's' packet at the registration table for each event. Attachment of your boat number on the coxswain is critical for your time to be recorded correctly. Boat numbers will also be placed on the bow of each boat entered. ***Crews will be charged a replacement fee of \$25 for not returning the Boat Number at the conclusion of their race.***

Hot Seating

Coaches must notify the dock master of their intention to hot seat. Events will not be held up to accommodate hot seating crews. The Chief Referee and Dock Master have the final say regarding a crew that wishes to hot seat.

Rowing to the Starting Line on Saturday

Immediately after launching, rowers will hold to the starboard side (coxswain's right) of the harbor entrance to cross to the opposite (eastern) side of the river - there is a blue buoy marking the point to pass and the turn to proceed to the start. After crossing the river, the crew will proceed upstream, staying at least 15 meters away from the bank as a precaution and keeping the large yellow buoys on the port side (coxswain's left). Crews must pass under the right arch of the railroad bridge. PLEASE USE CAUTION! Traffic maps for both races are posted at the Coaches and Coxswains Meeting and at the Control Commission tent. When boats reach the starting line at Gibbs Ferry Park, they must check-in with the start Marshall.

Allow 50-minutes to launch and move upstream to the Gibbs Ferry marshaling area.

Rowing to the Starting Line on Sunday

Immediately exiting the embayment, all crews will turn to your starboard and follow the shoreline to your port (right hand rule). Follow the shore through the right-hand arch of the bridge (~3200-meters) and continue past the downstream start past TVA's Bull Run facility.

A green navigation channel marker is stationed 300-meters below the Sunday Start Line. Crews should use this as a reference marker for turning and moving toward the marshal.

Allow 50-minutes to launch and move downstream to the Bull Run marshaling area.

Warm up

Crews have 5000-meters to warm up to the start. Please complete your warm-up by the time you reach the 5K start. On Saturday, the red buoy ~300m above the start is the turn-around point for staging. Warm-ups should be complete by then. There is additional room upstream but there will be no marshal to collect you if you are out of ear shot. On Sunday, the green navigation channel marker below the course (about 300-meters below the Start Line) is the turn-around point for staging. There is additional room downstream but there will be no marshal to collect you if you are out of ear shot. Crews should be conscious of the fact that other boat traffic on the river will not be suspended during the head race. While ORRA and the USRowing Referee crew will make every effort to enforce a No-Wake rule for this boat traffic, some traffic may be encountered.

Staging

Approximately 10 minutes before the scheduled start of their event, boats should proceed to the staging area at the red buoy above the blue starting chute buoys (300m above the start). Line up in numerical sequence of boat numbers. USRowing officials will assist in the staging area. The start chute will consist of the shore on the starboard side and a row of buoys on the port side.

Late Boats

Late-arriving boats should not cross the line of buoys to jump into the Starting Sequence but must await instructions from the Marshals or Starter. Any boat that starts out of sequence against orders of the Starter will be disqualified.

Equipment Failure Prior to Start

If a competitor loses his/her bow marker or experiences equipment breakage prior to Start, he/she should notify course Marshals as soon as possible. Marshals are distributed throughout the race-course, with radio communication to the Chief Referee and LOC.

The Start

All boats must pass through the starting chute to begin the head race. Events will be appropriately separated. The spacing between each boat in the same event will be about 15-20 seconds (or 3-4 boat lengths). The starting marshal will direct each boat to begin rowing in the chute. The start official may direct a crew to stop rowing in the chute if the spacing is too tight. There is no passing in the chute.

The Race

During the race, boats shall always keep the large course buoys on their port side (coxswain's left). Hazards areas on the starboard shore will be marked with orange buoys. Passing a course buoy with the buoy on the starboard side will result in a 30 second time penalty for each buoy violation. The only exception will be at the finish line, where large buoys mark the finish line gate. USRowing officials will be stationed along the course to monitor this as well as for safety.

Passing and Being Passed

Slower boats must give way to overtaking crews, allowing the overtaking crew the shortest course. Failure to give way may result in a time penalty of 15 seconds or disqualification. If you are being overtaken on a turn, move to the outside unless the overtaking crew specifically chooses the outside route.

The Finish

The finish line is marked by a large white tent approximately 300-meters downstream of the blue pavilion. Two large red triangular buoys mark the finish line. Keep rowing after you cross the finish line. Do not stop on or near the finish line. Boats should move toward the Oak Ridge (City) bank and proceed in toward the harbor entering on the right side of the mouth of the harbor.

Protests

Intent to file protest must be indicated to an official (referee / regatta director) immediately and within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the race. The regatta will consider a protest from a coach or coaching representative (only one coach/coaching representative per protest is allowed) per USRowing rules at a fee of \$50.00. The protest must be filed with the Regatta Director and the fee paid within 60-minutes from the start of the race in question. The Regatta Jury will consider appeals from crews who have been assessed a penalty.

Awards/ Medals

The top three places are awarded medals provided at least three boats rowed in their event. Medals will be awarded once results are official. Winners not claiming their medals/trophies by the end of the race day forfeit their award.

Weather

If inclement weather, including high wind or thunderstorms, affects the safety of crews, volunteers, and referees, the Regatta Director and Chief Referee will notify all participating crews of adjustments to the schedule via the announce-only GroupMe service.

Compliance

The Secret City Head Race is a USRowing-registered event. All athletes are required to have a

current waiver.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to, failure to heed the instructions of race officials, use of obscene language or gestures, delaying a race without just cause, intentional or flagrant disregard of principles of safety and fairness, or abusive behavior toward any official, team member, or spectator.

A crew that engages in unsportsmanlike conduct, on land or water, may be assessed a penalty by a race official.

Any team member, including a competitor, who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct at any time during the regatta may have his or her further participation at the regatta curtailed or prohibited by a race official.

Directions and Parking

Oak Ridge Rowing Association is located at

697 Melton Lake Drive
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

VIP Parking

VIP Parking is available at the boathouse, with guaranteed in/out privileges for the entire weekend. Purchase your VIP parking pass using the SignUp Genius link found on the Regatta Central overview page. Pre-purchased passes will be available at the Boathouse Office on Friday afternoon, and at the parking lot entrance beginning at 6am on Saturday, October 12. Pick up your VIP pass early (please!) to ease congestion early on Saturday morning. Note, per City of Oak Ridge ordinance, there is no overnight parking at Melton Lake Park. VIP passes are non-transferable.

Additional Parking

The City of Oak Ridge allows privately owned vehicles to park on the shoulder of Melton Lake Drive, on both sides, subject to public safety items such as fire hydrants, intersections, and cross walks. Signage that indicates/restricts these areas is posted *and strongly enforced* by the City of Oak Ridge. No parking is allowed in the adjacent neighborhoods.

2-Minute Drop-Off / Load / Unload Zone

Dropping off athletes, food/beverages? ORRA has a 2-minute drop-off zone directly on the Melton Lake Drive shoulder, just past the parking lot entrance. This area is specifically marked. Parking is not allowed in this zone (and enforced).

Handicapped Parking

Handicap parking, including access aisles, for those persons with a valid handicap tag or placard is available at the boathouse venue, but the number of spaces is quite limited, managed and enforced by the City of Oak Ridge. These spaces are located immediately in front of the ORRA boathouse. VIP Parking affords persons with limited/restricted mobility the ability to park in any available space, including locations that are immediately adjacent (and more convenient) to team areas.

Special Consideration for Buses

For teams that are using commercial vans/buses, ORRA will permit athlete drop-off and pick-up in the ORRA Boathouse parking lot. Special parking spaces are designated for this activity. Buses may not idle and may not stay. Maximum turn-around time is ten-minutes and is enforced. Offsite parking for buses is available at many nearby locations include Roane State Community College (Briarcliff Avenue) and a large surface lot at the corner of Emory Valley Road and Briarcliff Avenue.

Shell Trailer Parking

The venue will be open for shell trailer parking starting at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday. Arrival before this time requires coordination with the LOC. Please contact regattadirector@orra.org with your Team Name, Arrival Time/Date, and contact information for the trailer driver. If arriving on Thursday, please make every effort to arrive before 7:00 pm. General availability of the trailer parking area continues Friday at 8:00 a.m. No pre-coordination is needed beginning Friday. Trailers arriving outside normal/coordinated hours will be required to find an alternate parking area in the area other than the venue. In accordance with City ordinance, trailers parked illegally may be towed. Prior to parking and unloading trailers, crews are required to check-in with a Venue Coordinator.

Trailer locations are not random. Trailers must be parked in order of arrival.

Please watch the weather. If there has been considerable rainfall, please plan to bring plywood sheets to distribute trailer weight and to avoid damage to the venue. ORRA will distribute straw in the athlete areas as need be.

1x and 2x shell drop-offs are available immediately adjacent to the boathouse, directly across from the large mural that faces Melton Lake Drive.

Note: To protect the safety of athletes, teams may *not* remove their trailer from the venue until racing has concluded for that day and all crews have returned their shells to their respective areas. Drivers should expect the greenway to be closed to vehicle traffic until the Chief Referee and LOC reopen the north and south entrances to the laydown area.

Overnight Parking

Melton Lake Park is a City of Oak Ridge facility. Per City regulations, the venue grounds are closed from dusk until dawn. No overnight parking is allowed. ORRA will provide on-site security for the venue, peninsula, and trailer areas and coordinate any necessary early arrivals and late departures with our on-site security personnel.

Miscellaneous

Team Tents

Reference the Site Map. Tents are allowed anywhere along the peninsula, on the river (race-course) side, except for the area that defines the Finish Line for both courses. A Team Tent may occupy up to 20 linear feet along the surface parking area (two regularly sized and marked spaces). This is intended to provide teams with a level surface for athlete care/feeding. The area defined by the team tent, on the surface parking lot, is also extended from those outer boundaries to the riverbank. There is NO PARKING in the surface lot on the *river* side, but the embayment side is available for vehicles with a VIP parking pass. This is intended to provide teams with an easy mechanism for parking their support vehicle very close to their Team Tent.

All tents must be appropriately weighted (reference the occasional loss of an unrestrained tent into Melton Lake /reddit /r/VanderbiltRowing ☺). There is no staking of tents on the venue due to the presence of buried utilities.

ORRA will enforce the 20-linear feet (two parking spaces) rule. ORRA will enforce the NO PARKING rule on the *river* side of the peninsula. The embayment side is open both Saturday and Sunday to VIP Parking.

For 2024, there is no opportunity to rent a tent nor reserve a spot. Each Team is responsible for their own tent(s) on a first-come/first-serve basis.

Alcohol Use

Melton Lake Park is a City of Oak Ridge facility. Per City regulations, no alcohol consumption will be permitted or tolerated at the regatta or on the venue grounds. This will be clearly stated in the registration material to competitors as well as being announced at the coaches meeting prior to the regatta.

Contact Information

Oak Ridge Rowing Association
Mike Stinson
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