



## SAFETY ALERT 02/23 – Competency

### **What happened?**

During the Scottish Rowing Spring Regatta (22-23 April 23) a significant number of capsizes occurred with 12 on the Saturday and 2 on the Sunday. The majority of the capsizes involved athletes aged 18 years or under with two aged over 21 years. All were in either singles or doubles.

### **Why did it happen?**

Water conditions on the Saturday were consistent with an Easterly wind crossing the course but wave conditions were not at a level to give undue concern. On the Sunday water conditions were mainly flat. On both days it was evident that all those who capsized were having difficulty coping with the waves.

### **What action was taken?**

Following rescue all the junior athletes required treatment for cold with one showing signs of mild Hypothermia and two suffering minor cuts.

### **What can others learn from this?**

This regatta was the first multi-lane racing event of 2023 with many novice and inexperienced athletes taking part in open water racing for the first time. It is incumbent upon individuals to recognise their own limitations and not to race if they are in any doubt as to their ability to cope with the prevailing water and weather conditions.

In the case of Juniors, coaches have a responsibility and a duty of care to satisfy themselves that an individual has gained sufficient experience and competency to be able to race safely. The priority must always be on safety and, despite the possible protestations of the athlete, coaches should have no hesitation in scratching an entry if they have any doubt.

In preparing for a race on open water such as Strathclyde Park coaches should ensure that their athletes are given the opportunity beforehand to experience unsettled water and cross winds and this experience should also include being taught how to attach to stakeboats. It was very evident that at this regatta there were athletes on the water who were lacking in basic boat handling skills.