

The definitive guide to Shipping your boat to and from the Atlantic Rowing Race 2007/08.

Dear Rowing Team

BACKGROUND

I am writing this guide on behalf of Woodvale Events and the Ocean Rowing Society to help you understand exactly what you need to do to meet all the shipping deadlines for the race but also to share some of my experience having been heavily involved in the development of the PA Freight Shipping package over the last few years.

I was also one of the main people assisting with the organisation of the ORS 2004 Atlantic Rowing Regatta, which is where many of the practical applications of the package we hope you will choose to go with, were conceived, tried and tested.

I made an unsuccessful attempt as a competitor in the Challenge 2001 race giving me a whole lot more experience of boat shipment that I could have done without and successfully rowed the Atlantic solo as part of the 2004 ORS Regatta. I also became a Trustee of the ORS after being invited to take up this role following my return from the Regatta.

I have no commercial interest in PA Freight but enthusiastically endorse the package we are offering through them partly because they did a magnificent job of shipping my boat last year and because I had a significant role in the development of the package having given a considerable amount of time in a voluntary capacity to helping put together what I would consider the best package available to Ocean Rowers at the present time. Why? Because I wanted to make sure my boat got there in one piece and was able to do the job I built it for!

Regarding PA Freight as a company fit for the task, there has been some bad press on the ORS Forum regarding the shipping of boats in the past and the role of PA in this. Suffice to say most of this was due to circumstances outside the control and remit of PA Freight and had more to do with trying to offer as cheap a package as possible by trying to facilitate lower cost options than those a professional shipper could provide. For example in the ORS Regatta, we (that is the ORS) took on the task of transporting the boats from Santa Cruz to La Gomera. For a number of reasons I won't go into here this DIY approach failed in some cases to give the kind of service we would have liked. It saved roughly £1000 on the shipping cost but wasn't worth it in the long run! We have learnt from this, hence the new package. Some of the other comment has resulted from rowers leaving their boats in the PA freight yard for months because of their bad project management in so far as they could not raise the funds to retrieve their boats and expected PA to hold them indefinitely until they got their act together. This is often the side of the story you don't hear.

In **2001** the initial shipment package the Challenge Business offered was for £7500, This was one boat in one 40 foot container on a trailer. It was also only to Tenerife and did not include the final outward leg to La Gomera. (These initial races departed from Tenerife) Rowers were not happy with this price and eventually it was reduced to about £6500. ALL this had to be paid up front for both outward and return legs. The ORS then offered a cheaper package which worked out about £4500 initially but there were additions to this, the 'hidden costs' that inevitably seem to arise with 'cheap' alternatives. I think we probably paid around the £5000+ mark in the end. For last years Regatta the total was £6350, but we did cut corners to achieve this and some damage to boats was sustained as a result. (All of which was repaired in La Gomera before the start by ORS reps)

The reason for the detail on this is I am aware that first time rowers have very little background knowledge to fall back on and I really wanted to put the official package into context to re-assure you that you really are getting good value for money. I would be extremely surprised if you could do all the shipping necessary to get your boat to La Gomera and back from Antigua with ALL the costs taken into consideration for less than £6250.00 for a standard Woodvale Pair class), for the 29` Woodvale fours =£7550.00, the rates include Fully Comprehensive Insurance @£25,000.00 ,there and back.

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ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

If you are offered something for less (and you are entirely free to choose an alternative), then please be aware of two issues:

1. You are very likely to be asked for additional costs, which were not taken into consideration when the offer was put together, generally due to lack of experience in this kind of exercise. (This has applied as much to the ORS as anyone else and this package has taken several years to gain the expertise and refine a lot of which has been by trail and error.)
2. Woodvale Events and the ORS will take absolutely no responsibility for anything that may result from a decision not to use the official shipping package. This is not because we are being bloody minded but simply because of the investment we have made in developing the package and the knowledge that it is in your best interests to use it. If extra costs are incurred or your boat gets stuck in customs and you miss the deadline we will not be able to do anything about it if you are using an alternative arrangement. If such an unlikely occurrence should take place as a result of problems with the official package all hell will break loose and we will fix it as part of the service we are offering!

DETAILS OF THE OFFICIAL PACKAGE

Having put all that into context here is what you need to know regarding the package:

Your boat HAS to be on the hard in La Gomera at least 10 days before the race start (provisional date is the 4th of November)2007. (This is to give sufficient time for all boat inspection and the inevitable things that may to be done before the start of the race)

TO MEET THIS DEADLINE THE LATEST DATE FOR YOUR BOAT TO BE DELIVERED TO THE PA FREIGHT DEPOT IN NEWARK IS TUESDAY 4th OCTOBER 2007. (This allows for a small time contingency in case there are any unforeseen problems like delays due to bad weather in transit etc)

PA Freight MUST be contacted AT LEAST 2 weeks before your boat arrives at NEWARK in order for them to prepare and make available the skids your boat will sit on for both outward and return legs of the journey. (Assuming of course you make it to Antigua) It is probably a good idea to make contact as soon as possible if only to confirm your interest in the official package.

You will also need to contact PA Freight to organise paperwork and customs documentation with them and to make final arrangements for delivery of your boat to the depot. I found them extremely helpful insofar as I delivered my boat to the depot in 2004 and then went to collect Henry Dales from the Isle of Ely. I got stuck in traffic and they kept the depot open for a couple of hours after it would normally shut to accommodate this late arrival.

When you arrive your boat will be lifted off your trailer and either directly onto your skid or into a holding position ready for loading at the appropriate time. You will need to take your trailer away with you as there is no arrangement made to store them at PA freight.

On another matter from my experience that may be of interest, when towing a trailer of the size necessary for an ocean rowing boat you must not exceed 60 MPH or use the fast lane on the motorway. One rower last year was prosecuted on his return journey from Newark for doing both! (free advice that may even save you money!!)

PA Freight are happy to have boats delivered from mid September onwards and will try and coordinate arrivals at the depot to enable two boats to be packed at one time as they will be shipped in pairs in 40 foot containers.

PAYMENT:

The rate for a 23 foot standard boat from Newark to the hard in La Gomera , Canary Islands and from English Harbour back to the Newark Depot is £6250.00 GBP.

The rate for the 29 foot standard boat over the same route is £7550.00 GBP.

There is a reserve for fuel fluctuation , as Pa Freight are giving the rates so far in advance ,there should not be any changes but if there is a worldwide fuel crisis, then this may alter .

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

50% on arrival at Newark prior to the outbound leg

50% when the boat is collected from Newark after the event.

All these prices include VAT.

STORAGE:

PA Freight will allow up to one month's storage in Newark free of charge. However due to past experience already mentioned above, once a month has elapsed a charge of £20.00 + VAT will be levied until the boat is collected from the depot. On a personal note as one of those assisting in the organisation of the Regatta last year I see NO reason why PA freight should have to put up with the less than adequate project management of rowers. If you come back from the row and have run out of money that is your problem to resolve and should not become that of any other party. So if you don't have sufficient funds to complete your project before you leave please think about some contingency to cover this cost on your return. Even a loan will get your boat back, it really is your problem to resolve and should not be made that of other parties.

INSURANCE:

PA Freight will insure boats up to £25000 GBP free of charge. If this amount needs to be increased this is entirely the choice of individual teams but will incur an extra cost of £45.00 for every £1000 of extra cover. ROWERS MUST ADVISE PA Freight of any additional cover required BEFORE bringing the boat to the Depot for shipment.

Insurance is for loss and damage to the boat and possessions, not consequential loss (eg payment of team expenses whilst waiting for boat delivery etc)

Other aspects of the process for your information.

When your boat arrives at PA Freight it will be loaded onto a bespoke skid and then put into a 40 foot container with one of your fellow competitors boats. It will be secured for sea and transported to a port of departure for the Canary Islands, probably Felixstowe. The ship will take it to Santa Cruz in Tenerife where it will be discharged and go through customs formalities. It will then be transported, still in it's container to La Gomera. Once there it will be taken from the container and deposited onto the area Woodvale has designated for inspection and storage. At this point the responsibility for shipping ceases for PA Freight and becomes that of the organisers and Teams. The skid your boat came on will be marked for your boat and taken onward to Antigua where it will be used again for the homeward leg provided you get across OK.

In Antigua boats will be taken from the water and PA Freight will once again become responsible for your boat. They will be shipping the boats home in pairs and they expect this may facilitate a delay of up to a week before the boat leaves the Island. They will not wait until all the boats have finished but will ship them in pairs after arrival at English Harbour.

Unsuccessful Teams

In the event that you have any problems with your row eg if you retire at the start etc you will need to make alternative arrangements for recovery of your boat to the UK. If you have opted for the official package we will endeavour to help you as much as possible to get your boat back. You will of course need to make your own arrangements with your chosen shipper if you choose to take advantage of any alternative deals. I end with this as when I had to retire in 2001 the boat was towed back to La Gomera. It was out there for 6 months whilst arrangements were made for its return and cost me a fortune to cover all the costs involved. And that was in 2001!

Summary

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Having said all the above , may I take this opportunity of wishing you well and every success in the enormous challenge you are about to experience. Don't underestimate what you are getting yourselves into but the great thing about a huge challenge is that success is so much sweeter. All the best.

Richard Wood
June 2005