Referee Committee Meeting Minutes - FINAL
3/27/2024
7:30p E via Zoom

1. **Welcome**
    a. **Call to Order –** *Start Recording 7:32pm*
    b. **Committee –** *Bob Appleyard, Derek Blazo, Jim Dwyer, Bryan Fraser, Terry Friel Portell, Jess McAlear, Mike Murphy, Letcher Ross, Kathleen Crowe*
    c. **Absent –** *Elaine Roden, Kris Thorsness*
    d. **Staff –** *Hugh McAdam, Referee Program Associate*
    e. **Guests –** *Amanda Hoffnung, Lisa Regan-Vienop, & Mariah McAfee*

2. **USRowing updates – Hugh**
    a. **News at USRowing** – *British Rowing put out an article to help a Ukrainian Club build a boathouse. USRowing is also looking to revamp the Regatta Registration process.*
    b. **Regionals & Nationals update**
        i. *Hugh – The Northwest has been struggling with the total number of referees. I know Jim in the Northeast has had trouble recruiting referees.*
        ii. *Bryan – Have we figured out about the referees needing to take the Diversity Training?*
        iii. *Hugh – I know The Launch still has issues. I'll be following up with that.*
        iv. *Terry – How are we distributing that information? Are we sending an email?*
        v. *Hugh – I do need to follow up with the Jury List.*
        vi. *Terry – I think we should set a deadline of 30 days before, people have that information.*
        vii. *Kathleen – I just want to know if we have decided on the language for single scullers yet.*
        viii. *Terry – From our conversation last week, it was Club followed by Last Name.*
    c. **Rule book**
        i. **Posted on USRowing.com; hyperlink due April 1**
        ii. **Mail distribution timing**
            1. *Hugh – They should be in hand by the end of next week, if not sooner.*
            2. *Mike – I might suggest Staples for spiral binding for $7.*
            3. *Terry – I agree it's time for a better format for the Rule Book.*
            4. ***TO DO:*** *Investigate Rule Book Formatting in the Fall Budget Discussion – Specifically Spiraling.*
    d. **Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure** – *There aren't any updates.*
    e. **IOP changes – current version (dated 3/2024) done on USRowing and to be posted in RefCorps.**
        i. **NRR –** *That has not yet been officially taken up by Amanda.*

f. **Regatta Print projects status –**
    i. **New Assistant packages –** *These should be out.*
    ii. **Referee badge –**
    iii. **Pins – Referee and Emeritus** – *Pins should be received this week or next week.*
    iv. **Blade awards – 20 yr. awards – 2023 Awards – notification, physical award, when to give, story on USR website** – *I confirmed with Annette, she has the list. We should be all set. That should be everything with Regatta Print. She didn't give me an ETA yet.*

g. **2024 Data Tracking –**
    i. **# logged in RefCorps as of 3/26 - 255 out of 480**
        1. *Hugh –All the feedback I've gotten is that it's been successful.*
        2. *Terry – I'm concerned that we're so close to the season, and only half the corps has done a clinic. That's a lot of people who haven't gone through the clinic.*
        3. *Mike – Do you know that everyone who did the clinic has logged in?*
        4. *Kathleen – You can look in RefCorps to see who has logged their clinic.*
        5. *Bryan – I know a lot of people who haven't done it in the Southwest.*
        6. *Terry – Bob, has the College decided on an online clinic date?*
        7. *Bob – Up to this point in time, I was waiting for the coordinators to let me know when they need it. I've not set any date yet because I was awaiting input.*
        8. *Terry – Coordinators, should we start scheduling?*
        9. *Bob – What I'd want to make this efficient, is for the coordinators to let me know when you think this needs to be done.*
        10. *Mike – Our region had an online clinic, and our facilitator was Mariah. I think it was like seven people who did it online.*
        11. *Terry – I just need to make sure we're sticking with smaller groups.*
        12. *Bob – The recommendation was five to seven.*
        13. *Terry – I don't know how you do that online with the breakout rooms, but you can figure that out. I'd like to see us at 75% by the end of April.*

h. **Recruiting – do we have a good # of active candidates?**
    i. **239 active candidates in RefCorps - coordinators need to review.**
        1. *Hugh – There is no designation date for Candidates right now. I don't know who's been active for three months or five years. Right now, we have 239.*
        2. *Kathleen – I have that for the Northwest. I just didn't realize you needed that.*
        3. *Hugh – It would be helpful so that we can clean that data up and know the actual number of candidates in the system.*
        4. *Bryan – I know the Southwest has a lot of candidates that need to be purged.*
        5. *Terry – Everyone, let's try to get through that list. We need to know if the Candidates are good or not.*
        6. *Mike – I'm willing to take any suggestions. I've got like 80 people who are listed as candidates since before I took this job about two years ago.*
        7. *Hugh – Mike, for you, just send me a list of the folks. Perfect. I'll get rid of everyone else. If they're still interested, they can rejoin.*
        8. *Terry – Everyone for next week try to get those lists to Hugh.*
        9. *Hugh – I'm going to mark when they've been listed in the system so that we know if a Candidate has been in the system for a year or two years. If someone has been in for two years and needs a follow-up, let them know.*

i. **2024 Planning subcommittee meeting at RowFest – focus on Recruiting, Development (incl Evaluating), Retention**
    i. **what are the pain points?**
        1. *Hugh – It's going to be the night of the 14th and the night of the 19th and the night of the 20th I believe. I'll confirm that with Sara.*
        2. *Jim – What am I going to do in Oklahoma for five days?*
        3. *Hugh – I'll confirm that. Five is a lot.*
        4. *Terry – Hugh, I think you and I need to have a conversation about this.*
        5. *Hugh – We can talk about this, and I can get the confirmations on my side.*
        6. *Terry – Ideally there'd be someone from the College there. Ideally there'd be someone who knows a lot about RefCorps.*
    ii. **what do need to do to grow the corps?**
j. **Clarification of Inclusion training – Terry –** *I'm going to send a note to Jenny and Tom, and copy Hugh about the wording. Hopefully we'll get something back to you guys.*
k. **Separating out Chief status for 2025**
    i. *Hugh – If the committee decided to go that way, it would be a way of recognizing a referee who has put in the time and effort to be there. It's not exclusionary.*
    ii. *Terry – I think it should be heavily education based.*
    iii. *Derek – That could include that you need to be a Deputy x-number of times.*
    iv. *Bob – Up through about 2016, and ten years prior to that, we developed a separate in-person college for the Chief Referee. That is a starting point.*
    v. *Kathleen – How do we handle the cold start problem? None of us are certified as chiefs. What is the timeline to getting us certified as chiefs and not running out of chiefs?*
    vi. *Terry – In the Ranks Subcommittee, we discussed grandfathering everyone who is currently a chief. They can confirm if they want to be considered a Chief.*
    vii. *Hugh – The idea behind the exam is to ensure they can be a chief, theoretically. So, we should be able to grandfather in the fully licensed referees.*
    viii. *Bryan – It would be nice to have this, because I have several referees in my region who don't want to become a full referee because they don't want to be a Chief.*
    ix. *Derek – When we tried to go through the rank structure recommendation, the Chief designation was the only one that had a super majority support.*
    x. *Letcher – I think we're missing an opportunity here to make some impactful changes. I do agree that not everyone is ready or willing to be Chief.*
    xi. *Hugh – The consensus seems that we should have a Chief Referee Rank.*
    xii. *Kathleen – We call it an endorsement. Yes.*
    xiii. *Bob – Words are important. It's an endorsement. It's making sure everyone who is a Chief is up to speed with what USRowing expects for a Chief Referee for their events.*
    xiv. *Jim – The first step is to make the Chief Endorsement. Then we can step back and ask how we go from a two-tiered to three-tiered system.*
    xv. *Bryan – If we're planning a get-together at Row Fest, is this better discussed there?*
    xvi. *Terry – Part of why I'm trying to bring this up now is so that we have time to make it happen for 2025 and the College needs time to develop the training. We can do more with it and around it at the summer discussion.*
    xvii. *Jim – When we're at RowFest, we can look at the other parts of the rank.*
    xviii. *Terry – Is there agreement that we want the College to develop training for a Chief Referee for 2025? [All agreed]. I'd like a committee member to support Bob with this.*

xix. *Jim – I'll do it.*

l. Evaluating referees in '24 – use old clinician system?

i. *Terry – We've had issues with not giving evaluations. Who has been using the full evaluation form with their assistants? Not many.*
ii. *Derek – It would be great if it were online.*
iii. *Terry – I just did one electronically. I don't know where it goes.*
iv. *Hugh – They can be done electronically on RefCorps. Once you fill it out for a specific referee, they get to see your feedback, if that referee has entered that regatta.*
v. *Derek – The whole idea was to get real time feedback. We want it to be saved long term.*
vi. *Terry – I did two this weekend, and the note box cut me off in the middle of the third line. I don't know if it's 250 characters, but I had a lot more to say.*
vii. *Jim – It's a very good system.*
viii. *Mike – According to the IOP, there is a system in place that probably needs tweaking and updating.*
ix. *Terry – We stopped because of Covid.*
x. *Mike – I was told that someone got their feelings hurt or something. Whatever it was, that's history.*
xi. *Terry – In the past, the evaluations only went to the Regional Coordinators. Now, the evaluations are going to the individuals. Is there a report that goes to Coordinators?*
xii. *Kathleen – Not that I've seen.*
xiii. *Derek – It should be part of the Referee Resume.*
xiv. *Terry – Having done a few, I don't see how it would be useful for the Regional Coordinator. I don't know if this is the system that we should be going 100% in on.*
xv. *Jim – Following up on Terry's comment, it's the only one we have right now. If we start implementing it more, we'll see clearer where it fails. This is our best avenue to use.*
xvi. *Terry – Some referees might not be open to feedback, and we'll just get a bunch of disgruntled referees. Whereas the assistants and candidates, they're open to feedback.*
xvii. *Mike – With the evaluations, tell me what we're talking about.*
xviii. *Terry – You got scored one to five, and you got an average at the end, and you got ranked. Each region had a 1 to 100 ranking of the best referees in their region.*
xix. *Bob – The ranking in that survey was in reference to a national jury. That was different.*
xx. *Terry – That was used to choose referees for Nationals.*
xxi. *Bob – We need to provide Clinicians some sort of support and training if they're going to be evaluators. It never gained traction. Maybe the world is different now.*
xxii. *Mike – We have this in our IOP. When you go away to a National, that should be part of the deal, that everyone gets evaluated.*
xxiii. *Bob – Tell your clinicians that the evaluation closes the loop on training. You provided training. Now you're working with individuals. Give them feedback. This is formative.*
xxiv. *Jim – If I click on me in RefCorps, and click the Related Tab, I can scroll down and see evaluations I've done.*
xxv. *Derek – I'm going to recommend that Clinicians do as many evaluations as possible.*
xxvi. *Jim – If we don't tell them, and they don't do it, they won't improve.*
xxvii. *Terry – The comment box needs to be bigger. Your choices are "Not Observed," "Needs Work," or "Meets Standard." That's something else we can discuss this summer.*

m. Other

i. *Rowing News article. Is there a desire / wish to respond to the Rowing News article?*

3. **Compliance update – each coordinator**
    a. **Notification emails to people in advance of expiration**
    b. **How are we communicating to chiefs to check their refs in RefCorps?**
    c. **Is Jules' program catching rules changes and chiefs so he can remind them too?**

4. **Ref College Update – Bob**
    a. **Working with Learning Director on access in The Launch** - *licensed officials would use The Launch in 2025*
    b. **Clinic topic for 2025 – having it by June is helpful for the College.**

5. **RefCorps updates - Kathleen**
    a. **Prioritization list**

6. **New business –**

7. **To do –**
    a. **Communication from Ref desk - Newsletter/Email**
    b. **Committee homework – goals, review of responsibilities in IOP**
    c. **Beach Sprint**
        i. **Rules Review**
        ii. **Beach Sprint Referee Certification**
    d. **Recertification – what does this look like, and what is needed for Referees that are maintaining license.**
    e. **Committee documents revision status (Non-disclosure & Confidentiality)**

8. **Old Business**
    a. **Licensing Foreign Refs as US Referees**
        i. **Kathleen, Letcher, Eric workgroup**
    b. **Other paddle sports' referees**
    c. **Governance Sub-committee and rank structure workgroup**
    d. **Definition of a regatta day**

9. **Next Meetings –** *April 10 7:30p E; (& 24th); May 8; (& 22nd); June 12; (& 26th); July 10 (& 24th); August 14*

10. **Adjourn** *– MOTION to Adjourn by Kathleen; seconded by Jess. All in favor. 9:33pm.*

Projects moving forward:

- 2024 Photo Library
- Tracking candidates through Assistant exam
- Onboarding info/docs for new Committee members.

IOP Deadlines

- Rule Changes, open Comments 10/1 - 10/21
- Referees for Consideration for National events: 1/15 - may need a be adjusted for 2024.
- Committee Recommendations for rule change to the Board: 11/15
- Nominations for At-large Committee members: 11/15
- Regional Coordinator nomination: No later than 11/30
- RefCorps Data Call: 12/31

Summary of To-Do Items:

- TO DO: Committee to review process for rules changes. In past years, submissions have been made that if someone had worked with the subcommittee, they would have been clearer and avoided concerns and had a better chance of being accepted.
- TO DO: Review Confidentiality / Non-Disclosure Agreement revisions for Referee Committee
- TO DO: Insurance Broker discussion update regarding our best status with the organization – i.e., volunteer, employee, contractor, etc.
- TO DO: Draft flow chart of actions for candidates.
- TO DO: Hugh to investigate a new survey platform or another solution so that referees could complete the survey multiple times if they worked multiple events.
- TO DO: Referee Committee to review IOP Sections F (Mission & Purpose of the Referee Committee), G (Responsibilities of Members of the Committee), H (Structure of the Referee Committee), and I (Referee Committee – Conduct of Business).
- TO DO: Investigate Rule Book Formatting in the Fall Budget Discussion – Specifically Spiraling

3/12/2024 MOTION regarding instructions to referees regarding addressing individuals.

In its current training on diversity, equity, and inclusiveness for administrators, leaders, and officials at USRowing owned events in 2024, USRowing has inserted a directive to always use inclusive language. This directive states:

- Use rowers' names, first initial/last name, club names, bow numbers, or known pronouns. For example, do not say "Ms. Smith" to get a rower to approach the starting line.
- Use gender-neutral language in cases when you do not know someone's pronouns.

MOTION: To comply with this directive, we will update our guidance to officials who must address single scull competitors and individual rowers while on the water, as well as on shore in our capacity as control commission officials on the launch/recovery docks and at athlete weigh-in:

- Race officials are to address all crews by club/school as noted on the heat sheet or other registration-provided documentation.
- When it becomes necessary to identify a particular individual from a club or school, then include only the rower’s surname after the club or school name.
- Use of a gender-based salutation such as “Mr.” or “Ms.” is no longer to be practiced. Effective immediately, use of gender-neutral language is to be sought when addressing participants and attendees at any USRowing event.