# Referee Committee Minutes - FINAL
# October 26, 2022
# 7:30 PM EST

## AGENDA

1. **Welcome (Lyn)**
    a. **Call to Order** – *7:31pm*
    b. **Roll Call**
        i. Attendees – *Dee McComb, Derek Blazo, Elaine Roden, Eric Weir, Howard Meisner, Jess McAlear, Kris Thorsness Lyn Wylder, Mike Murphy, Terry Friel Portell*
        ii. Absent – *Bob Appleyard*
        iii. Staff – *none*
        iv. Guests – *Barbara Grudt, Cindy Whitehead, Duncan Hudson, Gregg Harris, Hal Johnson, Kristin San Bento, Nikola Vajda, Ruth Macnamara, Scott Woodworth*
        v. *Howard Meisner started the recording of the meeting.*

2. **Discussion on 2022 National Championships w Chiefs and Deputies**

    a. **Youths – Ruth Macnamara and Duncan Hudson –** *Lyn, I hear what you're saying about USRowing and being absent. Speaking for Duncan and myself, we had the opposite experience. We both felt like whichever one of us addressed them, they nipped it in the bud. I will say that the challenges for us at the beginning of last year was that decisions were made fairly late. I think the traffic patterns that we came up with worked fairly well. We did practice starts. Every minute or minute and a half, we did the lights. No one got to back in. It was a drive-by. We think that has worked well. It's not a matter of can they back in. It's a matter of familiarizing themselves with the system. Our referee meeting went well. We hosted it the night before. The volunteers at the start line need to come earlier. We had a weird situation. We had a staff member go to her boss because it was Pride Month and there wasn't much signage. I guess some of our members felt slighted by that because there wasn't much visibility. My only concern was that if someone wanted to leave our regatta, I was ok with that. I just wanted to make sure that wouldn't be held against them, that they wouldn't be penalized for future regattas.*

**b. Summer Nationals w Trials – Nikola Vajda, Barb Grudt and Hal Johnson**

i. *(Nikola) Good evening. I was surprised when I got two assistants for this event, but I'm so happy to have Hal and Barbara. During the first couple of days, I had them switching between Start and Finish, kind of like the FISA system. I tried to set a schedule of meetings to cover anything from timing to all aspects of the regatta. The USRowing staff are spread too thin. We canceled more meetings than we actually had. Also, they scheduled Trials for the same week, so we had two separate juries trying to work together. I still prefer to have an in-person coaches and coxswains meeting.*

ii. *(Barb) It was a pleasure working with Hal and Nikola. For this event, I'll admit to being that third wheel and wondering if I was really needed. It was great to know the venue because I work there. I didn't need to have any influence on Kris because he's great at what he does.*

iii. *(Hal) Thank you very much, it was a great opportunity for me. I'd like to reemphasize what Nikola said about the prep with USRowing. I think Sarah is overwhelmed because she had the Youth Nationals and then us. We were overwhelmed by a lack of time on her part. One of the big things that was in question was volunteers, though they always seemed to come through. It really didn't make a lot of sense to have Trials referees doing their thing, not with us. Having two events simultaneously that are interwoven was difficult in the beginning. The HereNow guys need to show up early.*

**c. Summer Nationals U19 – Scott Woodworth and Cindy Whitehead**

i. *(Cindy) Scott and I worked really well together. Early on we established a division of labor. I interfaced with the referees and he interfaced with USRowing. That's how we handled everything without getting overwhelmed. I'm going to review what didn't go so well. We were supposed to start having meetings with USRowing on March 9th. We didn't have our meeting until June 1st, and our regatta was July. We had no idea what the travel guidelines were. People didn't know when to make travel plans. As far as the venue and the LOC, the LOC is fantastic. I think people know the LOC at Oak Ridge is tops, so accommodating, so nice, share information about the weather conditions and water speed. One day we asked if we could have popsicles, and before the day was over, the referees had popsicles. There were no practice marshals. Referees had to fill in, and they didn't get paid for the additional practice shift. We had no protests. We had no weather delays. We had a lot of debris in the morning that threatened to delay racing, but the referees did a fantastic job clearing the course. What is not so great? Oak Ridge had john boats. Wakes were an issue. We had gotten wind that HereNow might not always get it right, so we were ready, but nothing got screwed up. The vans were good. The reimbursement was bad. Three referees did not get paid until October. I haven't been paid. I submitted all my receipts. I think I am the last one. I did a lot of travel coordination. The travel agent was hard to get ahold of. I ended up doing it myself and coordinated with referees directly to get their travel info for airport pickups. It appeared that our jury was undersubscribed, so we got a lot of Chief Picks. Everyone was so great! We also wish we'd known that Sunday was a half day.*

**d. Masters National – Gregg Harris and Kristin San Bento**

**i.** *(Gregg) Planning meetings were canceled with little to no notice. There were times that we had to call and remind the host that we had a meeting scheduled. This was a common occurrence. We didn't know if we'd be in Oakland CA. We didn't find out until March 30th that we'd be in Sarasota FL. We set a planning meeting schedule. At Youths, we were supposed to have a planning meeting in the finish tower to talk about Masters, but Sarah never showed up. The 21st of June was the first meeting we had with both USRowing and the LOC. It got to the point where I had to call Sarah after a meeting and tell her that I was upset. This is not how you run a national regatta. We didn't know what hotel we'd be at initially. It was fortunate that I was able to observe previous chiefs and use what worked for them. We never saw the contract. USRowing hadn't fulfilled their obligations. The LOC hadn't fulfilled their obligations. So basically the contract was null and void. USRowing was very good at promising a lot of things, and delivering very little. We had issues with weigh-ins, getting the info from HereNow. Unfortunately, when we had our referee meeting on Wednesday at 7pm, we were watching them set-up the course. When we arrived on Thursday, our Starter informed us that there was no Start Tower. The larger boats, when locked onto their stake boats, their oars were across the buoy line. The course was not set up like a national course should be. Not until the last day was the course set up the way it should be. I'm a little bit frustrated on how things played out. I was made to feel less than welcome by Amanda at our own national regatta. On the fifth floor, she came into the room, and she never acknowledged me. That really hurt me. I felt like what am I doing here? USRowing is doing a lot of DEI. There were two other African Americans that were Chiefs picks. I heard that they were only there because of the color of their skin. They were there because they were qualified. There are some things I could have done better. The deputy chief and I did not see eye to eye on a number of things. When we had phone calls scheduled, and the way that USRowing canceled meetings, I had to make a decision. The mission is greater. I had an opportunity to work under strong chief referees, and I learned from them. I did what was necessary. Maybe I should have included my deputy a bit more. At a certain time, I'm not going to play catch-up. To me, it was more important to take care of the mission, rather than get into a debate about who's doing what. I believe the athletes had a positive experience.*

**ii.** *(Kristin) It wasn't the smoothest relationship. I'll agree on that, it's alright. Like he said, it's about the mission. I was there to do a job, so I stayed to do the job. It was frustrating to have Sarah cancel meetings on us. Talking to the LOC, my understanding is that the USRowing contract only involves six Stillwater boats. We needed 14. I think Ruth brought up the same thing, that the volunteer times need to match the referee shifts. That seems to be a theme. I thought Tom Rook was very good at doing the weather. The interns were great. Hody from HereNow was helpful. I think that the division of labor between Sarah Kupiec and Sarah McAuliffe needs to be clearer. It was often faster to go straight to the LOC than USRowing.*

**e. General Discussion**

i. *(Derek) Are there any Chiefs aware of missing reimbursements?*
ii. *(Elaine) Whatever happens after you turn in your paperwork it takes a long time to get paid.*
iii. *(Nikola) They try to channel everything through Sarah or Jules. Part of the problem is that just going to the two individuals, things can get messed up.*
iv. *(Ruth) The day after a National Championship ends, I have a spreadsheet with every referee with how much they worked, with a total at the end.*
v. *(Dee) For the Chiefs and Deputies, did you feel you had the control that you wanted in terms of being in charge? Or would you suggest that there be a more specific delineation? Or would you rather have it be less of a delineation so that you have more ability to make a decision?*
vi. *(Ruth) It was one of the best experiences I had. I wouldn't want someone to dictate how to do our job.*
vii. *(Cindy) Scott and I were on the phone together as soon as we found out we were assigned to the event.*
viii. *(Gregg) I would do it again if asked. It was an honor.*
ix. *(Lyn) There is some discussion that job descriptions might better ease the relationship of what is the LOC supposed to do, what is USRowing supposed to do, what is the Chief Referee supposed to do, what is Safety to do?*
x. *(Ruth) I think we all need to make an effort to recognize what Safety brings to the table, what USRowing brings to the table, what the LOC brings to the table.*
xi. *(Derek) I think that it's great that everyone thinks collaboratively, but there are times where I've seen that someone didn't know who had the last say in something, whether that's a weather thing.*
xii. *(Ruth) We had weather quite a few times, and Tom said I need to know what your comfort level is. It was talking back and forth.*
xiii. *(Derek) There might be more people at the table now.*
xiv. *(Ruth) As the Chief Referee, I always felt that I had the last say.*
xv. *(Duncan) Ultimately it was my call at Mid-Atlantics, and Ruth's at Youths.*
xvi. *(Kristin) Dee, to answer your question, I do this because I love it. I can say that I would probably do it again, but I do think that there has to be, they don't have to be hard and set guidelines, but kind of like a job description, so that someone who hasn't been a deputy before, they know what they should be looking at or doing perhaps. Otherwise it falls on the Chief to remember the whole list of things. As a deputy, you may not know that you were supposed to do X, Y, and Z.*
xvii. *(Dee) We're all Type A's, so what are we going to do? I agree, that if you have somebody who's going to be a deputy, that they're going to need to get oriented and trained.*
xviii. *(Nikola) Every course and every event is a little different. Maybe the referee committee could take on the task to develop a Chief / Deputy template. I don't think it should be something that the Chief has to use, but it could be helpful, and allow the Chief and Deputy to modify, as sort of a checklist.*

3. **Discussion on 2023 National Championships**

4. **Next Meetings**
    a. **November 9 – Regular Meeting - Must Include Discussion on Proposed Rule Changes and Discussion on Awards**
    b. **December 14 – Regular Meeting – Must Include Review of Clinicians, New Emeritus Referees, Retirements, Regattas, etc.**

5. **Adjourn** – ***MOTION*** *to Adjourn by Kris; seconded by Elaine. All in favor. 9:22pm.*