



Proposed Rule Changes for the 2025 USRowing Rules of Rowing – Classic Rowing

Ready for Public Comments



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Comment from USRowing

The White House Administration and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) have requested that all National Governing Bodies review and revise their policies to align with Executive Order 14201 - Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports. In light of that request and the timing of this document being distributed, there may be further changes to the 2026 Rules of Rowing.

USRowing will notify members of rule changes accordingly.

4-104.1 (Submitted by Robinson, J.)

Current Text

Current Rule (page 48)

4-104.1

Masters Crews shall be classified by age according to the following categories:

(AA) 21 to 26 years,

(A) 27 to 35 years,

(B) 36 to 42 years,

(C) 43 to 49 years,

(D) 50 to 54 years,

(E) 55 to 59 years,

(F) 60 to 64 years,

(G) 65 to 69 years,

(H) 70 to 74 years,

(I) 75 to 79 years,

(J) 80 to 84 years, and

(K) 85 and over

Proposed Text

A Masters Competitor shall be classified by age according to the following categories:

(AA) 21 to 26 years,

(A) 27 to 35 years,

(B) 36 to 42 years,

(C) 43 to 49 years,

(D) 50 to 54 years,

(E) 55 to 59 years,

*(F) 60 to 64 years,
(G) 65 to 69 years,
(H) 70 to 74 years,
(I) 75 to 79 years,
(J) 80 to 84 years,
(K) 85 to 89 years,
(L) 90 to 94 years,
(M) 95 to 99 years,
(N) 100 and over.*

Reasoning

My reason for submitting this proposal is to align the masters age categories for on-water racing with those currently used for indoor rowing. Currently, the indoor rowing age classifications extend beyond Category K to include Categories L, M, and N. The on-water racing age categories stop at Category K.

Comments

4-105; Coxswains (Submitted by Murray, J.)

Current Text

- (a) A Coxswain is a member of the Crew and subject to all rules governing Competitors unless a specific exception is written.
- (b) A male Coxswain may compete in Events for women, and a female Coxswain may compete in Events for men.
- (c) Rules relating to USRowing National Team Trials Regattas and Regattas governed by World Rowing may vary.
- (d) For Adaptive Rowing or Para Rowing Events, there is no restriction on Coxswains in respect to Adaptive Rowing or Para Rowing eligibility, gender, or age.

Proposed Text

- (a) A Coxswain is a member of the Crew and subject to all rules governing Competitors unless a specific exception is written.
- (b) A male Coxswain may compete in Events for women, and a female Coxswain may compete in Events for men.
- (c) Rules relating to USRowing National Team Trials Regattas and Regattas governed by World Rowing may vary.
- (d) For Adaptive Rowing or Para Rowing Events, there is no restriction on Coxswains in respect to Adaptive Rowing or Para Rowing eligibility, gender, or age.
- (e) When in a boat, the Coxswain must at all times wear, in the manufacturer-prescribed manner, a U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid, which must be in serviceable condition and be rated for the weight of the Coxswain. A Coxswain must be familiar with the proper method of operating said lifejacket or buoyancy aid. Self- (or "automatic-") inflating lifejackets are prohibited. In bow-loader boats, the Coxswain shall wear a manually operated, gas inflation lifejacket.

Reasoning

Rule 1-102, Purposes, is unambiguous: "The purposes of these rules are to: (a) provide for the safety of Competitors [...]".



Just as unambiguous is the life-saving capacity of a lifejacket. The competitive ability of the coxswain is not diminished by the use of a lifejacket.

Many of our international counterparts (e.g., Ireland, Britain, New Zealand) have adopted this common-sense requirement. A single casualty averted by this rule far outweighs any frustration caused by its implementation.

Comments

4-105.1 (f); Coxswains Weight (Submitted by Murray, J.)

Current Text

(f) Excess clothing, Equipment, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

Proposed Text

(f) Excess clothing, **lifejackets or buoyancy aids, Equipment**, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

Reasoning

Rule 4-106(a), Weighing of Competitors, specifies that "[c]ompetitors shall be weighed in racing uniform without shoes or other footgear. The racing uniform shall cover the torso of the competitor."

Rule 4-105.1(f), Coxswain's Weight, exempts certain items from inclusion in the calculation of a coxswain's weight.

In Rule 4-105.1(f), the plain text of the existing language (namely, "other utilitarian devices germane to competition") would appear inclusive of a personal floatation device. Possible conflict arises when one considers this rule in its broader context, though. The phrasing of Rule 1.06, Weighing of Competitors, introduces potential vagueness, inasmuch as "racing uniform" is not specifically defined in the Rules of Racing.

This proposed addition of "lifejackets or buoyancy aids" would ensure clarity on the exemptions from coxswain weight. It would eliminate any possible confusion as to whether such an accoutrement is included in a coxswain's weight.

Rule 1-102, Purposes, establishes that "[t]he purposes of these rules are to: [...]"

(c) promote consistent application of rules in situations where they apply." This proposed addition to Rule 1-405.1(f), Coxswain's Weight, would promote the consistent application of the Rules of Rowing.



Comments

4-105 (d) Weighing of Competitors (Submitted by Murray, J.)

Current Text

(d) The weight of Rowers in lightweight Events as described in Rule 4-104.3 (“Lightweights”) shall be determined once each day during either the Weigh-in Window or the Adjusted Weigh-in Window, but not both, that applies to the first applicable Race of the day. Each Rower shall have only one (1) initial opportunity to weigh in. A Rower within one (1.0) pound or less of the weight standard is allowed one (1) re-weigh within the same window as his or her initial opportunity. A Rower whose initial weight is greater than one (1.0) pound above the weight standard will be ineligible to compete in the Event.

Proposed Text

(d) The weight of Rowers in lightweight Events as described in Rule 4-104.3 (“Lightweights”) shall be determined once each day during either the Weigh-in Window or the Adjusted Weigh-in Window, but not both, that applies to the first applicable Race of the day. Each Rower shall have only one (1) opportunity to weigh in.

Reasoning

Currently, Rule 4-106(d), Weighing of Competitors, permits a lightweight rower one 'freebie' when weighing in. An athlete can weigh in more than the maximum weight, then come back any time within an hour to weigh in again.

Weigh-in scales are calibrated and certified. Allowing for an athlete to weigh in twice is tantamount to complicity in or condoning of an athlete's cutting weight.

Wrestling has an analogous use of weigh-ins for competition. NCAA and high school wrestling rules do not permit any such 'second-chance weigh-in'. There are two simple reasons for that fact: a second chance is both unsafe for the athlete in question and unfair to other competitors.

Safety: A second weigh-in is explicitly allowing an athlete time to cut weight. It is



impossible to safely lose bodyweight in sixty minutes. The only weight to lose is water weight. It is universally accepted that proper hydration is critical for an athlete's safe participation in sport. There is no reason for the rules to build in time for an athlete to engage in unsafe behaviors.

Fairness: A second weigh-in privileges athletes who did not conform to the rules initially. Those athletes who legitimately met the weight requirement are disadvantaged: another athlete who has, on the official scale, been certified to be out of compliance is allowed a 're-do'. Furthermore, that 're-do' can be up to an hour later than the compliant athlete's last allowable time to weigh in!

Comments

4-105.1 (e) Coxswains Weight (Submitted by Murray, J.)

Current Text

(e) At any time, before or immediately after the Race, the Referee, another Race Official, or a member of the Control Commission may require the weight of the deadweight to be checked.

Proposed Text

(e) At any time, **before or after the Race**, the Referee, another Race Official, or a member of the Control Commission may require the weight of the deadweight to be checked.

Reason

Currently, Rule 4-105.1(e) states that the deadweight can only be checked "immediately" after the race.

Rule 2-501(f), Finish of the Race, however, states that "[a]ll results are subject to revision based on the outcome of Equipment and Competitor compliance validations that are completed on land subsequent to a Crew finishing the Race."

A violation of the deadweight requirement is, as far as competitive outcome is concerned, analogous to a violation of the minimum boat weight. Given that the rules do not prohibit the use of loose particulate or liquid as a deadweight, it is possible to jettison partial deadweight while on the water.

This rule change would allow for the Control Commission to verify deadweight compliance upon a crew's return after the race.

Comments

3-108 Footgear Release (Submitted by Fraser, B.)

Current Text

3-108 Footgear Release

(a) In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the Rowers shall be a type which allows the Rowers to rapidly release from the boat. Rapid release refers to a mechanism or system designed to quickly and efficiently disengage a rower's feet or shoes from the foot stretcher.

(b) Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that the heel will not lift more than three inches (7.5 cm) above the foot board to which it is anchored.

Proposed Text

3-108 Footgear Release

(a) In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the Rowers shall be a type which allows the Rowers to rapidly release from the boat. Rapid release refers to a mechanism or system designed to ~~quickly and efficiently~~ disengage a rower's feet or shoes from the foot stretcher **with a single, continuous, one-handed motion.**

(b) Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that the heel will not lift more than three inches (7.5 cm) above the foot board to which it is anchored.

Reasoning

Due to the rise of quick-change shoe systems, multiple athletes and teams claim that these systems are also quick release systems, even though the manufacture of the quick-change system clearly states on their website that it is not a quick release system. The massaged verbiage is intended to clarify that a rower must be able to disengage either their feet or shoes from the boat with one continuous hand motion, rather than needing both hands to remove the shoes. The proposed verbiage still allows for the Shimano quick release system to not need heel ties, as the Shimano system requires only a one handed operation to release both shoes.

Comments



5-304 (b) Youth National Championships (Submitted by Crowe, K.)

Current Text

USRowing will publish each year policies and procedures governing the Youth National Championships. These shall include eligibility, qualification standards, listing of qualification regattas, order of events, and any other requirements not covered in these rules. These policies and procedures shall be available in the Regatta Packet, available no later than March 1 each year, on the USRowing web site:

Proposed Text

USRowing will publish each year's policies and procedures governing the Youth National Championships. These shall include eligibility, qualification standards, listing of qualification regattas, order of events, and any other requirements not covered in these rules. These policies and procedures shall be available in the Regatta Packet, available no later than March 1 each year, on the USRowing web site:

Reasoning

Membership eligibility criteria are covered in proposed Rule 4-107: Youth Affiliation.

Comments



"Procedure to Propose Changes to the Rules of Rowing" (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Submit your changes to referee.program@usrowing.org. All changes must be submitted no later than August 31 of the current year for consideration of incorporation into the following year's Rules of Rowing. Anything submitted after August 31 will not be considered.

Proposed Text

Submit your changes to referee.programs@usrowing.org. All changes must be submitted no later than August 31 of the current year for consideration of incorporation into the following year's Rules of Rowing. Anything submitted after August 31 will not be considered.

Reasoning

This will correct the email address for rule change proposals.

Comments

“General Language Change” (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Article II

2-201 Suspending Racing 2x

2-202 Regatta Information

2-203.b Alignment

2-306.b Starting Commands with Flags 2x

2-306.1.b Starting Commands with Lights

2-403 Referee’s Position

2-406.c Resolving Interference

2-407.a.1 Referee’s Instructions to Crews

2-410.b Unsportsmanlike Conduct

2-501.c.2 Finish of the Race

2-502.h.1 Placement of Crews; Dead Heats

2-502.h.2 Placement of Crews; Dead Heats

2-603.a Restoring Opportunity of Winning; Altering Results

2-603.b Restoring Opportunity of Winning; Altering Results

2-603.c.1 Restoring Opportunity of Winning; Altering Results

2-603.c.2 Restoring Opportunity of Winning; Altering Results

2-605.b Raising an Objection

2-605.c Raising an Objection 2x

2-606.a Filing the Protest Statement

Article III

3-202 Oars

Article IV

4-101.a.1 Amateur Standing

4-103.b Eligibility to Compete in Events

4-103.g Eligibility to Compete in Events

4-104.1.a Classification by Age

4-104.1.a Classification by Age

4-104.1.b.5 Classification by Age

4-104.1.d Classification by Age

4-104.1.d.4 Classification by Age

4-104.2.a Classification by Skill

4-104.2.e Classification by Skill

4-106.d Weighing of Competitors

4-106.f Weighing of Competitors

Article V

5-205.a False Entries 4x

5-205.b False Entries

Article VIII

8-107.b The Start

Article X

10-204.a Adaptive Rowing Sport Class Statuses

10-501 Starting Commands

10-502 Acknowledgement of Penalties Assessed at the Start 2x

10-503 Finish of the Race

10-504 Lodging and Objection

Article XI

11-402.d Classification by Age 2x

11-402.e Classification by Age

24 times in Procedures Manual

2 times in LOC Guidance Manual

Proposed Text

Replace every instance of “he or she” and “him or her” and “his or her” in the RoR, Procedures Manual, and LOC Guidance Manual to “they” and “them” and “their”

Reasoning

This proposal shortens the rulebook, improves readability, is still grammatically correct, and is more inclusive. The singular “they” is a shorter way of dealing with an indeterminate antecedent e.g., “Somebody left their umbrella in the start tower.” Since we already use the singular “they” in the rulebook (see 1-105, 2-607.f, 3-104.g, 4-104.1.b, 5-203.f, 8-107, 10-504, 11-202), we expect this change will be familiar for anyone reading the rulebook.

Comments



"General Language Change" (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Throughout the rulebook (5x) and procedures manual (18x).

Proposed Text

Replace every instance of "Referee or Assistant Referee license" and "Assistant Referees" in the RoR and Procedures Manual to "Referee license" (not delineating between levels)

Reasoning

The referee committee recently passed a change to its internal operating procedures (IOP) that creates a 3-level structure for referees. As such, there are no longer (full) Referees and Assistant Referees, but L1, L2, and L3 referees. The rights and responsibilities are not different between the levels for the purpose of the rulebook, so the terms should be collapsed to just "Referee license" in 2026.

Comments

1-202: Definitions (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(pp) “Unsportsmanlike conduct” shall include, but not be limited to, failure to heed the instructions of Race Officials, use of obscene language or gestures directed at a Crew/Team or other person in attendance at the event, delaying a race without just cause, international or flagrant disregard of principles of safety and fairness, or abusive behavior toward a Race Official, Team member, spectator, or person at the event, as witnessed by a Race Official.

Proposed Text

Revise definition (pp) to read:

(pp) “Unsportsmanlike conduct” shall include, but not be limited to, failure to heed the instructions of Race Officials, use of obscene language or gestures directed at a Crew/Team or other person in attendance at the event, delaying a race without just cause, **intentional** ~~international~~ or flagrant disregard of principles of safety and fairness, or abusive behavior toward a Race Official, Team member, spectator, or person at the event, as witnessed by a Race Official **or based on information deemed reliable by a Race Official.**

Reasoning

This proposal puts the definition in line with the 2025 rule change to 2-410 and fixes a typo (international).

Comments

1-202 Definitions (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(rr) "Weigh-in Window" shall mean the period of time that is no less than one (1) hour and not more than two (2) hours before the Scheduled Time of the first Race in which the weight is relevant.

(ss) "Adjusted Weigh-in Window." Should the LOC or Race Officials adjust or alter the racing schedule for compelling reasons, changing the amount of time between the Weighin Window and the newly Scheduled Time of the Race, an Adjusted Weigh-in Window shall be created. The Adjusted Weigh-in Window shall be no less than one (1) hour and not more than two (2) hours before the newly Scheduled Time of the Race.

Proposed Text

Strike (rr) and (ss), or revise to read:

(rr) "Weigh-in Window" shall mean the period of time that ~~is no less than one (1) hour and not more than two (2) hours before the Scheduled Time of~~ **the LOC has published as the time that Lightweight Rowers and/or Coxswains must weigh in before** the first Race in which the weight is relevant.

(ss) "Adjusted Weigh-in Window." Should the LOC or Race Officials adjust or alter the racing schedule ~~for compelling reasons, changing the amount of time between the Weighin Window and the newly Scheduled Time of the Race,~~ **and the LOC or Race Officials deem it necessary to adjust the originally published time for the Weigh-in Window,** an "Adjusted Weigh-in Window" ~~shall be~~ **is** created. ~~The Adjusted Weigh-in Window shall be no less than one (1) hour and not more than two (2) hours before the newly Scheduled Time of the Race.~~

Reasoning

I'd rather get rid of these definitions altogether, but I've given the ref committee a rewording in case that's what we prefer. The rewording gets rid of the 2-1 rule, which is only stipulated in the definition of the term weigh-in window (probably why so many people miss it). change is just grammar.) Does any LOC use this definition of a weigh-in window anymore? Not even the NGB uses this definition. I would argue that having this here just confuses everyone. Surprisingly, this will not affect any other part of the rulebook (everywhere else we just use the term weigh-in window and make no mention of when exactly it is, another reason everyone misses their window). This change will only affect 3.a.5 in the procedures manual.

Comments



2-102 Appointment of the Chief Referee (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

- (a) Before the Regatta, a Chief Referee shall be appointed.
- (b) All persons acting as Chief Referee at a Registered Regatta shall hold a Referee license.

Proposed Text

Revise (a) and (b), and add (c) and (d) to read:

(a) Before the Regatta, a Chief Referee shall be appointed **by the LOC or, for a USRowing owned event, USRowing.**

(b) All persons acting as Chief Referee at a Registered Regatta shall hold a **Referee** license **and a Chief endorsement.**

(c) Before the Regatta, a Deputy Chief Referee may be appointed.

(d) All persons acting as Deputy Chief Referee at a Registered Regatta shall hold a Referee license. A Deputy Chief Referee holding a Referee license but not a Chief endorsement cannot serve as the Chief Referee for a Regatta in the event that the originally appointed Chief cannot serve.

Reasoning

(a) The LOC Guidance Manual says the LOC may appoint the Chief Referee. We need to change the rules to be in line with the guidance manual and common practice. (b) We are soon going to change the Referee license part to just Chief endorsement, but they should still be a licensed referee. (c) We should add deputies to legitimize their existence. Right



now, they are only mentioned in the rulebook once and not defined. (d) We need to clarify that anyone can be a deputy (especially considering there is no other way to train them) but they aren't automatically allowed to chief; just because they are deputy does not make them heir apparent to be chief. They need to have the Chief endorsement to chief, even if the originally appointed Chief becomes unable to serve.

Comments

2-104 Officials (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(1) Referee: The Referee shall have general supervision of the Race and shall follow the progress of the Race from start to finish. All other Race Officials for a particular Race shall be subject to the control of the Referee except where duties are specifically delegated to them under these rules.

...

(b) All persons acting as a Referee, Starter, Judge at Start, or Chief Judge at any Registered Regatta shall have a valid Referee or Assistant Referee license.

Proposed Text

Revise (1) and (b) to read:

(1) ~~Umpire-Referee~~: The ~~Umpire-Referee~~ shall have general supervision of the Race and shall follow the progress of the Race from start to finish. All other Race Officials for a particular Race shall be subject to the control of the ~~Umpire-Referee~~ except where duties are specifically delegated to them under these rules.

...

(b) All persons acting as an ~~Umpire-Referee~~, Starter, Judge at Start, or Chief Judge at any Registered Regatta shall have a valid Referee or Assistant Referee license.

... and so on

Reasoning

Calling the following referee “Umpire” puts us in line with WR nomenclature and makes it clear when the rulebook and procedures manual is referring to someone with a referee license (who may be serving in the role of Starter, Chief Judge, etc.) and when the rulebook is specifically referring to someone serving in the role that used to be called following referee. For example, even in 2-104.b we use the term Referee in two different ways in the same sentence.



Comments

3-102 Bow Numbers (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Each boat shall be capable of having mounted on its bow an identifying card of sufficient size and contrast such that a Race Official can easily identify the Crew. Recommended standards for the card include:

Proposed Text

Revise paragraph to read:

Each boat shall be capable of having mounted on its bow an identifying card of sufficient size and contrast such that a Race Official can easily identify the Crew. ~~Recommended~~ **Required minimum** standards for the card include:

(a) A square or rectangular shape.

(b) Waterproof and opaque.

(c) A minimum height of 5 inches for any numbers and letters.

(d) A white background with black numbers and letters or a black background with white numbers and letters.

Reasoning

Triangles are too hard to reliably see for race officials. Black on pink is too hard to see for race officials. These need to be requirements not recommendations to be in line with the rule as currently written anyway: “such that a Race Official can easily identify the Crew.” Race Officials are making split second judgments thousands of times a day about which crew is which. Unclear bow markers make it that much harder to do their job and do it quickly and well for an extended period of time.

Comments

3-108 Footgear Release (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(a) In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the Rowers shall be a type which allows the Rowers to rapidly release from the boat. Rapid release refers to a mechanism or system designed to quickly and efficiently disengage a rower's feet or shoes from the foot stretcher.

Proposed Text

(a) In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the Rowers shall be a type which allows the Rowers to rapidly release from the boat. ***Where laces, Velcro or similar materials must be opened before the rower can remove their feet from the shoes or other device, all such materials must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.*** Rapid release refers to a mechanism or system designed to quickly and efficiently disengage a rower's feet or shoes from the foot stretcher. ***Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower either without using their hands or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device.***

Reasoning

We are borrowing from the WR rulebook to further clarify the full definition of what referees should consider "safe." This change will help reduce confusion about what equipment would meet control commission safety checks.

Comments

3-108 Footgear Release (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(b) Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that the heel will not lift more than three inches (7.5 cm) above the foot board to which it is anchored.

Proposed Text

(b) Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that the heel will not lift more than three inches (7.65 cm) above the foot board to which it is anchored.

Reasoning

3 inches is 7.6 cm, not 7.5 cm.

Comments

Article III – Equipment, Part A Construction and Design (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

N/A (No current language)

Proposed Text

Add 11th rule to read:

3-111 Safety Requirements for Boats

A boat equipped with portholes that provide a service entrance to the inside of the canvas area (bowdeck/sterndeck) shall have those portholes plugged in a watertight manner to preserve the status of the shell as a flotation device. Portholes between the shoulders are exempt from this requirement.

Reasoning

This is a basic safety feature of the rowing shells that gives safety personnel extra time to respond in the event of an emergency (see WR Guideline: “A boat when full of water with a crew of average weight equal to the design weight stated on the boat’s production plaque, seated in the rowing position should float such that the top of the seat is a maximum of 5 cm below the static waterline” – that won’t happen with open portholes). This requirement codifies enforcement already common at higher-level regattas, where some crews may be unfamiliar with the practice. Ideally, this change also spurs community members to think about rowing with a properly watertight shell at practice, too.

Comments

3-202 Oars (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Oars, whether Sweep or Scull, must be uniform throughout the Crew, except that each Rower in a composite Crew may use the colors of his or her own Club. Only the national or Club colors may appear on oar blades. Unpainted oars also are permitted for all boats, whether composite or otherwise, if all Rowers use such oars. Use of National Team colors, without the express approval of USRowing, is specifically prohibited.

Proposed Text

Oars, whether Sweep or Scull, must be uniform throughout the Crew, except that each Rower in a composite Crew may use the colors of his or her own Club. Only the national or Club colors may appear on oar blades. Unpainted oars also are permitted for all boats, whether composite or otherwise, if all Rowers use such oars. Use of the National Team **blade design**-colors, without the express approval of USRowing, is specifically prohibited.

Reasoning

The national team colors are not prohibited in common practice (e.g., blades for RowAmerica, St. Louis, etc.). It is common practice to prohibit the full National Team blade design, rather than the colors alone.

Comments

2-605 Raising an Objection (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(c) The Referee shall make his or her decision and inform the objecting Crew, as well as any other affected Crews, of his or her decision and then display a white or red flag as described in Rule 2-501 (“Finish of the Race”).

Proposed Text

(c) The Referee shall make his or her decision and inform the objecting Crew, as well as any other affected Crews, of his or her decision and then display a white or red flag as described in Rule 2-501 (“Finish of the Race”). ***If a crew agrees to the decision on the water and the race is declared official with a white flag, the crew waives its right to protest that decision on land.***

Reasoning

Why would referees hear a protest after the crews all agree to the decision the referee came to? We should make it clear that this shouldn't happen. There are often 4-hour protest hearings after long workdays for referees, all for cut and dry decisions that result in quick, unanimous votes once referees get through hours of written and verbal testimony. In many of these cases, the jury even mentions wondering why we are hearing a protest if the crew agreed to the decision on the water. This change will prevent unnecessary protests after the crews have agreed to the result, which would be unfair to the other crews affected by a decision that was already agreed to by everyone affected.

Comments

2-606 Filing the Protest Statement (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Once an objection is lodged, a Crew wishing to be heard before the Jury shall submit a concise written statement, describing the facts that underlie the objection and the relief that the Crew seeks, to the Chief Judge, or another Race Official designated by the Chief Referee whose identity is conspicuously posted, within one hour after it reaches land. The written statement shall comprise the protest statement. The statement shall be accompanied by cash or a check payable to the LOC in the amount of \$50. An objection in which such a protest statement is not filed shall not be heard.

Proposed Text

Once After an objection is lodged **on the water**, a Crew wishing to be heard before the Jury shall submit a concise written statement, describing the facts that underlie the objection and the relief that the Crew seeks, to the Chief Judge, or another Race Official designated by the Chief Referee whose identity is conspicuously posted, within one hour **after the conclusion of the race** it reaches land. The written statement shall comprise the protest statement. The statement shall be accompanied by cash or a check payable to the LOC in the amount of **\$5100**. An objection in which such a protest statement is not filed shall not be heard.

A protest may only be made by: a) a crew whose objection has been rejected by the referee; b) a crew whose placement in a race has been affected by the referee's acceptance of an objection; c) a crew ruled DNS (did not start) or DNF (did not finish); d) a crew that has been excluded or disqualified; and e) a crew that disputes the published results.



Reasoning

Going with the conclusion of the race speeds up the timeline of the jury hearing. This also puts the US RoR in line with the WR rules to make the transition easier for our national team athletes and WR umpires. \$100 is in line with WR's 100 EUR deposit and it has been \$50 domestically for a while. Lastly, the added paragraph helps potential protestors quickly reference when they are eligible to submit a protest, saving the chief time and putting us in line with WR rules.

Comments

2-607 Protest Hearing (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(h) After the Jury has deliberated, it shall render its decision. The Chief Referee will announce the Jury's decision to all parties to the objection.

Proposed Text

(h) After the Jury has deliberated, it shall render its decision **before the next round of races in the event concerned and, in any case, no later than two hours after the last race of the day**. The Chief Referee will announce the Jury's decision to all parties to the objection.

Reasoning

This rule change puts us in line with WR rules and helps speed up jury hearings to give interested parties their answers sooner and to get referees off the venue quicker after a long workday

Comments

2-607 Protest Hearing (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(c.1) The hearing shall not commence until after each Crew named or involved in the action leading to the filing of the protest statement has had a reasonable opportunity to inspect the written protest statement and gather evidence in its favor.

Proposed Text

(c.1) The hearing shall not commence until after each Crew named or involved in the action leading to the filing of the protest statement has had a reasonable opportunity—**at least 15 but not more than 30 minutes**—to inspect the written protest statement and gather evidence in its favor.

Reasoning

Reasonable opportunity is unspecific and therefore not standard between different Presidents of the Jury. The ref committee can pick different numbers if necessary, but there should be a minimum and maximum time.

Comments

2-608 Appeal from the Jury (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)



Current Text

(a) Any Crew aggrieved by the decision of the Jury may appeal from that decision to USRowing.

(b) The grounds for an appeal shall be limited to actions that affected the outcome of the Race and shall further be limited to:

(1) actions that are at variance with the USRowing Rules of Racing or custom or precedent established thereunder;

(2) actions in areas committed to the discretion of Race Officials that are demonstrably arbitrary or capricious, or where the exercise of discretion is without substantial foundation under the circumstances.

(c) Actions that are not appealable under subsection (b) above, but are nevertheless relevant in assessing the professional conduct of Race Officials, may be reported to USRowing.

(d) An appeal under this Rule shall be filed by placing in the United States mail, or equivalent method of delivery, an appeal statement to USRowing within five working days of receiving the Jury's decision.

(e) Any appeal submitted in accordance with subsection (d) above will be investigated and a written decision will be rendered.

Proposed Text

(a) Any Crew aggrieved by the decision of the Jury may appeal **a coach** -USRowing.

...

(d) An appeal under this Rule shall be filed by placing in the United States mail, or equivalent method of delivery, an appeal statement to USRowing within five working days of receiving the Jury's decision.

(1) At a USRowing-owned National Championship, the appeal is due to USRowing staff on site within one hour of the original decision of the Jury or before the next round

of racing in the affected event, whichever is first. USRowing staff will determine whether there are grounds for appeal.

Reasoning

(The first change is just grammar.) There was a jury at Youth Nationals in which the **a coach** heard about a jury decision that affected one of her crews and protested the jury decision. The jury used 2-608 to defend our decision to not hear the protest and not give a yes or no decision (to avoid setting precedent). It was unclear whether we, a group of referees on the jury, should be hearing a protest to a jury decision. I don't think we as referees should have been given the power to decide whether the original referee's decision was arbitrary or capricious. Complicating things, this was Nationals, so there wasn't time to wait five+ working days. Since (I think) appeals like this come to the ref committee anyway (do they?), it might be fine to continue having the second half of the process handled by a new jury, once USR staff decides there are grounds for an appeal (or should USR try to convene the ref committee?). These additions clarify what happens to an appealed jury decision at USRowing-owned nationals where "USRowing" is right there.

Comments

5-303 Masters National Championships (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Change name of the rule, strike 5-301, and revise 5-303.b to read

Proposed Text

Rule 5-303: **RowFest-Masters** National Championships **(Masters Portion)**

Reasoning

This changes the name of the rule to reflect the new name of the regatta. Presumably 5-301 now covers just the youth/u23 half of rowfest and any beach events USR hosts since there are special carve-outs for Masters and Youth Nats.

Comments

6-104 Order of Racing (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(a) The start of each racing session shall be separated by at least six hours.

Proposed Text

(a) The start of each racing session shall be separated by at least six hours **from the conclusion of the previous racing session.**

Reasoning

This is a grammar/clarity change. Right now, it reads as if the start of Session 1 and start of Session 2 need to be 6 hours apart. In fact, the start of Session 2 needs to be 6 hours apart from the end of Session 1 – we don't care about the start of Session 1 as a reference for anything.

Comments

6-105 Penalties for Interference in Trials Races AND 10-308 Eyewear for Visually Impaired Rowers (Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

N/A

Proposed Text

Actually delete it

Reasoning

These two rules were deleted from the rulebook more than a year ago, so we can remove them from the book. If you look at the 2007 rulebook, there are 6 rules that were recently deleted, none of which are still in the 2025 rulebook: 4-103 USR Membership, 5-311 Manufacturer and Sponsor Adverts, 5-312 Scope of Rules on Advert Exceptions, 6-105 Standards Coordinator, 6-107 Heat and Lane Assignments, 6-202 Time Standard. I understand that it is necessary for rules that were deleted the prior year to stay temporarily, but the two rules that are still marked as deleted were marked as deleted back in the 2023 rulebook as well. This change will shorten the rulebook.

Comments

Referee Procedures Manual II. 4. c 4. Procedure for Starter(Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

(4) Procedure

- Invite the Crews for the next Race into the Starting area.
 - o Event number/Name (e.g. “Race 27, Women’s Varsity 8+ Heat 2”)
 - o Crew names/Lane number (e.g. “Eastern College, Lane 1; Western University, Lane 2; Northern University, Lane 3”)
 - o Invite Crews into the Starting area (e.g. “Enter the Course and proceed to your lane.”)

- o Relevant number of minutes to start (e.g. “Ten minutes”).

Proposed Text

Switch 2nd and 3rd bullet:

(4) Procedure

- Invite the Crews for the next Race into the Starting area.
 - o Event number/Name (e.g., “Race 27, Women’s Varsity 8+ Heat 2”)
 - o **Invite Crews into the Starting area (e.g., “Enter the Course and proceed to your lane.”)**
 - o Crew names/Lane number (e.g., “Eastern College, Lane 1; Western University, Lane 2; Northern University, Lane 3”)
 - o ~~Invite Crews into the Starting area (e.g. “Enter the Course and proceed to your lane.”)~~
 - o Relevant number of minutes to start (e.g., “Ten minutes”)

Reasoning

If referees are going to give crews a warning for coming onto the course without being invited, we might as well invite crews on as soon as possible instead of waiting for the referee to list off 8 crew names and 8 lane assignments. This is the practical way referees must do the invitation at many courses/regattas anyway because of tight centers or other difficulties with the marshaling area or start tower. This will just codify common practices. The commas after the instances of e.g. are just a grammar correction.

Comments

2-503 Timing Technology, Precision, and Resolution (Submitted by Engel, G.)

Current Text

Keep Text; addition to Rule

Proposed Text

(a) Resolution tiers

(1) 0.10 seconds — required when any of the following are true:

- Start or finish structures are floating and may drift outside alignment tolerance.
- The alignment check can only be certified as “best effort.”
- Human response time is involved.
- The timing measurement precision is more than 0.01s

(2) 0.01 seconds — allowed when any of the following are true and are supported by the chosen timing technology:

- The race has multiple lanes and the start and finish lines are surveyed to be collinear sufficient to achieve 0.01s accuracy across lanes
- The race is a head race or time-trial with fixed position timing
- The start and finish lines are the same fixed position

(b) Timing Technology

(1) A timing system must provide times that are at least as precise as the chosen resolution tier.

a.

If national or world records are established the accuracy must also meet the chosen resolution tier.

- b. Any technology that meets the required precision and accuracy requirements can be used.

(2) Raw data from the timing system shall be archived for at least 30 days after the regatta to allow for later review.

(c) Tie-breaking

If the measured time gap is less than the publication precision in 2-503-a, a tie shall be declared between the crews involved and each receive the same placing and official time.

(d) Manual timing

Manual hand timing may be used for results only when using the 0.10s resolution tier. If the finish order is not obvious to the naked eye it must be confirmed with suitable technology or declaration of a tie.

Reasoning

1. Use of 0.001 resolution is eliminated entirely
2. A photo finish requirement is explicitly left out to allow for a variety of technology solution
3. Even the 0.1 resolution tier is tighter than the actual precision when human response time is involved but it is the usual resolution chosen for most athletic events using hand timing solutions. A perhaps more suitable number would be 0.2 second but at least at 0.1 we'll be much closer to reality than the usual 0.001 popularly used today. 0.1 also allows use of moderately priced technology solutions compared to what is needed for 0.01.
4. Alignment of floating structures is not really achievable at the needed accuracy unless cabled tightly to land and a properly aligned mechanical boot system for start. Most regattas using a floating start whether stake boats or a dock system would likely need to fall back to 0.1s resolution. Should a 0.05s resolution tier be provided?
5. At 0.1s resolution there will be more ties at regattas but it accurately conveys our ability to determine placement.

Comments

4-105.1 (g)(Submitted by Ebright-Jones, B.)

Current Text

Excess clothing, Equipment, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be 53 included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

**Proposed Text**

Excess clothing, Equipment, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be **53** included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

Reasoning

There is an old page number in the middle of the rule.

Comments