



6/3/2026

Committee Members Present: Letcher Ross, Eric Chiang, Bruce Doak, Michael Murphy, Elaine Roden, Blake Ebright-Jones, Kathleen Crowe

Committee Members Absent: Jess McAlear, Liz Jenista, Jim Dwyer, Bryan Fraser

Assistant Regional Coordinators Present: Gudi Bigga

Referee College Present: Andy Blackwood

USRowing Present: Sarah McAuliffe

Guests: Chris Kerr, Frank McClintick, June Harper, Lorraine Baltzer, Mike Hildebrandt, Patty Hyatt, Paul Keddy, Sam Chang, Sara Moore, Sheila Tolle

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order & Approval of Previous Minutes

- **Letcher** confirms that a quorum is present and calls the meeting to order.
- **Sarah** raises a housekeeping question about approval of minutes carried over from the last meeting.
- **Letcher** clarifies that **minutes are not formally voted on**; if there are **no objections**, they are updated and considered approved.
- **Outcome:** Outstanding minutes will be **closed out and posted** along with this meeting's minutes.

2. USRowing Staffing and Structural Updates

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe

- **Interim CEO:**
 - **Peter Roby** continues as **Interim CEO**.
 - Originally anticipated to be a **~6-month** appointment, but the timeline is **fluid** and may extend beyond that.



- No additional information is available beyond what is on the **USRowing website**.
- **Domestic Operations & Membership:**
 - **Tom** remains **Chief of Sport** and now oversees **all domestic operations**, including **membership**.
 - **Jenny Trays** has left USRowing for a new role in **field hockey**; Tom assumes responsibility for her former membership portfolio.
- **Sarah's Role:**
 - Now **Chief Program Officer**, overseeing:
 - **Competition**
 - **Camps**
 - **Referees**
 - **Learning & Development (L&D)**
 - Continues to report to **Tom**.
 - For referee operations, **Sarah and Chris** will continue working with the committee in the **same capacity** as before.
- **Competition Management:**
 - **Jake Robinson** has been **promoted** from Competition Associate to **Competition Manager**.
 - He will:
 - Continue to manage **Youth Series** day-to-day operations.
 - Add **Masters Series** and **Row Fest** to his responsibilities.
 - **Sarah** will maintain responsibility for **budgeting and long-term planning**.
- **Board Seats & CEO Search:**
 - **Eric** asks whether the board must fill its empty seats before naming a permanent CEO.
 - **Sarah** notes that **board vacancies will likely be filled “sooner rather than later”**, but does not link them to a specific CEO-hire timeline.

3. LA28 Specialized Volunteers & NTO Interest

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe



- In late April, **Sarah** and **Matt Evans** hosted a **webinar** for the referee corps on **LA28 specialized volunteers / NTO** opportunities; the recording was emailed out afterward.
- The **LA28 interest form** is **not yet available**:
 - When ready, it will be:
 - Posted on the **USRowing website**.
 - Emailed to the **referee corps**.
- **Eric** asks whether there will be **one code or multiple codes** for different groups (USRowing referees, other specialized volunteers, World Rowing umpires from outside the U.S.).
 - **Sarah** states that these details are **not yet known**; definitive information will be included in the email when the form is released.

4. Rules of Rowing – Rule Book Distribution

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe

- Regional Coordinators requested a **reserve stash** of **Rules of Rowing** books.
- **Sarah**:
 - Has already handed books to **Jim** (at Mercer).
 - Plans to bring additional stashes to:
 - **Youth Nationals**
 - **Youth Beach**
 - **U19 Trials** in Sarasota
for any Regional Coordinators present.
 - After June, remaining coordinators who were not seen in person will receive **mailed** copies.
- Individual referees needing books may be sent **directly to Sarah** for fulfillment.

5. Potential In-Person Committee Meeting

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe

- **Sarah** invites the committee to consider an **in-person meeting** this year.



- She requests that members submit **proposals** including:
 - **Suggested timing**
 - **Rationale/objectives** for meeting in person
- USRowing preference:
 - Align meeting with events where **multiple committee members are already on site.**
 - Ensure clear **goals and deliverables** for the in-person session.

6. IRC Jury Update

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe; clarification by Letcher

- **Letcher** notes that the IRC event is **not a national championship.**
- **Sarah** explains:
 - The event is a **developmental regatta** for camps and athletes, designed as a **development opportunity** rather than a championship.
 - Because it is **outside the IOP**, **USRowing** is responsible for **selecting the jury.**
- **Selection Process:**
 - USRowing is working through **planning and operational details.**
 - Timelines have **slipped** compared to original expectations.
 - In the coming weeks, USRowing will:
 - Distribute an **interest form** for **World Rowing referees** who wish to be considered for appointment, including **Chief** roles.
 - USRowing is committed to a **thoughtful, fair selection process.**
- **International Officials / Exchanges:**
 - **Eric** asks whether the jury will be entirely U.S.-based and references prior interest in **exchange opportunities.**
 - **Sarah** notes:
 - Some other countries value the regatta precisely because there are **“zero strings attached”** and they do not want to take on logistical burdens.
 - There may be an opportunity to include **one or two international officials**, but USRowing will first:



- Review the **U.S.-based interest** before making a decision.

7. 2026 USRowing Indoor National Championship

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe; discussion with Letcher and Eric

- **Event timing & format:**
 - Scheduled for **February 6, 2026**.
 - USRowing will:
 - **Partner** with local hosts instead of owning the venues.
 - Use a **digital leaderboard** to unify results across hosts.
- **After-Action Report:**
 - **Sarah** has attached **Mariah's** after-action report from the last event for committee review.
- **Chief Referee Selection Timeline:**
 - **Eric** asks when the **Chief Referee** selection process will happen.
 - **Sarah** indicates USRowing's **ideal**:
 - **Chief in place by late October / early November**, to:
 - Review the **entry packet** and related materials, which go **live November 1**.
 - **Latest acceptable**: by **end of year**, but earlier is better.
 - **Letcher** agrees to add this to an upcoming agenda so the committee can **set a timeline**.
- **Chief Job Descriptions:**
 - **Eric** notes that draft job descriptions for chief positions (including Indoor) were sent earlier and he provided feedback.
 - **Sarah**:
 - Acknowledges that **few comments** were received.
 - Will **resurface and forward** those drafts again so the committee can:
 - Review.
 - Provide feedback.
 - Finalize **position descriptions** for use when soliciting candidates.



8. Feedback from May Youth Series – Referee Performance

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe; major input from Kathleen and others

- **Sarah reports:**
 - Extensive feedback from **competition staff, coaches**, and internal observations regarding referees at the **May Youth Series**.
 - Feedback includes:
 - **Very positive** comments (e.g., **Susan Schmidt** at Northeast “knocked it out of the park”).
 - **Constructive** comments questioning processes (e.g., “I’ve never seen it done this way before”), which may indicate **training or consistency issues** rather than individual failings.
- **Goal of Reviewing Feedback:**
 - As Sarah explains:
 - Highlight **exemplary performance**.
 - Use constructive comments to:
 - Identify **training gaps** (e.g., start procedures).
 - Direct **future educational efforts**.
 - Ensure feedback from coaches does not disappear into a “**black hole**”; it should reach:
 - **Regional Coordinators**.
 - Chiefs/deputies.
 - Appropriate committees.
- **Committee Questions and Suggestions:**
 - Question asked about the **objective** of reviewing comments, to help determine the best format for sharing them.
 - **Sarah** reiterates the dual focus: celebrating strengths and targeting training improvements.
 - **Kathleen** proposes:
 - At minimum, the **six Regional Coordinators** should receive **all feedback**.
 - Coordinators should:



- Provide **context** (e.g., weather: “20 gusting to 40 with lightning”).
- Work together to identify **themes and patterns** across regions.
 - This would support:
 - Regional **follow-up** where needed.
 - A shared **national picture** of strengths and issues.
- **Letcher** agrees the whole committee should see the information, but supports having **Regional Coordinators take the lead** in triaging and synthesizing.
- **Eric** asks that feedback relevant to a specific regatta also be shared with the **chief and deputy**, as it may influence **future jury selection**.
- **Sarah** agrees and suggests:
 - Continuing to require **after-action reports from chiefs and deputies** (as for national championships).
 - Having the **competition team** generate a **parallel report**, so the committee receives a **rounded view**.
- **Letcher** endorses the idea of “**each side**” (chiefs/deputies and competition staff) preparing after-action documentation, and **implementing this going forward**.

9. Positive Coaching Alliance / Referee Training Subcommittee

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe

Status:

- USRowing has **approved funding** for the project.
- Work with the Positive Coaching Alliance is currently **paused** until after the **Youth Series**, given limited bandwidth during the season.
- Once the Youth Series is complete:
 - The subcommittee will re-engage to:
 - Develop and refine **scenarios**.
 - Coordinate with PCA on **content and delivery**.



10. Referee Training Document – Release for Corps Feedback

Lead: Blake; coordination with Sarah and Letcher

- **Blake** reports that the relevant subcommittee completed its work.
- **Elaine** confirms she has **no further questions** on that work.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Originally, the subcommittee planned a **short email vote** to confirm the document was ready for USRowing staff formatting and broader feedback.
 - Given the tight timing before **Youth Nationals**, **Letcher** suggests:
 - Proceeding **without a formal vote**, assuming no objections.
 - Sending the draft **directly to Sarah's staff** for formatting and preparation for release.
 - **Blake** and the committee agree.
- **Timing & Marketing & Communications (MarComs):**
 - **Sarah:**
 - Notes that any broad release should **not** occur during **Youth Nationals**, to ensure staff capacity to manage emails and feedback.
 - Will coordinate with **MarComs** on:
 - The **go-live date** for posting the draft for comment.
 - A **comment window** (roughly **two weeks**, or whatever fits marketing norms).
 - Will inform the subcommittee of:
 - The **opening and closing dates** for feedback.
 - When compiled feedback will be available so they can:
 - Schedule a **subcommittee meeting**.
 - Decide whether to present a near-final version for a **full committee vote** at a future meeting.

11. IOP (Internal Operating Procedures) – World Rowing Changes & Scheduling

Presenter: Letcher; question from Kathleen

- **Letcher** states:



- A **scheduling questionnaire** is being completed and will go out **this evening**.
 - Goal: find dates for a **World Rowing IOP** group meeting.
- **Kathleen** asks how many potential dates were available after considering everyone's availability.
- **Letcher**:
 - Has not counted them precisely but confirms there were **enough dates** across the window to allow a **well-represented** meeting (even if one member is missing).

12. L1/L2 Subcommittee & Chief Endorsements

- **L1/L2 Subcommittee**:
 - Chair **Liz** is not present; no update is provided.
- **Chief Endorsements / Publishing Approved Chiefs List**:
 - **Eric** asks if the list of **approved Chiefs** has been published to the referee corps, as previously discussed.
 - **Sarah** believes she has **not yet received** the updated list.
 - **Letcher**:
 - Will locate the **prior list**.
 - Update it with **new approvals** made since then.
 - Commit to doing this by the **end of the week**.
 - Once updated, the list will be:
 - Sent to **Regional Coordinators** for review (to catch any omissions or errors).
 - Then **formally published** (e.g., in Ref Corps or other official documentation).

13. Listening Tour / Survey Feedback

Presenter: Sarah McAuliffe; question attributed to Blake



- **Blake** had previously requested the **results** of the listening tour and referee feedback (fall work, SurveyMonkey, etc.).
- **Sarah** explains:
 - The **SurveyMonkey email** was sent, but it came from **SurveyMonkey**, not from “**Sarah McAuliffe**”, so it may have been overlooked.
 - She will **resend** that information to the committee.

14. World Rowing Liaison & IOP Interpretation

Presenters: Eric, Kathleen, Letcher

- **Eric** raises:
 - The upcoming **end of Tiffany’s term** as **World Rowing Liaison** (around July/August).
 - The need to:
 - Clarify whether **Tiffany** wishes to continue.
 - Follow correct procedure for **soliciting interest** and selecting the liaison.
 - He also notes the expectation of an **annual report** from the liaison.
- **Kathleen** clarifies her understanding:
 - The position should be filled via an **open call to World Rowing umpires**, not just at the discretion of the chair.
- **Letcher** responds:
 - The **current IOP (M2)** states that the **chair is the chooser**, though this may differ from past practice.
 - Recognizes that this discrepancy may need to be **addressed in the IOP updates**.
 - Commits to:
 - Following up on Tiffany’s term and report.
 - Emailing the committee with a **recommended approach** that respects both the current IOP and the committee’s expectations.



15. Ref Corps Email Address Issues

Presenters: Blake, Sarah

- **Blake** reports noticing **incorrect email addresses** for referees in Ref Corps, likely due to:
 - A **mis-merge** with other databases (e.g., donor lists).
- Another member notes having had a similar issue, which **Mariah** resolved previously.
- **Letcher** requests:
 - Future issues be sent to **Chris**, so:
 - Mariah is not overburdened.
 - The committee can track issues and **improve processes** to prevent recurrence.
- **Sarah** asks **Blake** to email specifics to **Chris**.
- **Action:**
 - Blake will send the latest example to **Chris**.
 - USRowing staff will investigate and **correct** the underlying records.

16. College Referee Clinics & 2027 Topics

Presenters: Eric, Andy Blackwood, Letcher

- **Eric** asks **Andy** when the committee should provide **clinic topic ideas** for **2027**.
- **Andy:**
 - States that feedback is welcome **anytime**.
 - Notes that the college committee meets **tomorrow evening**, when they will start outlining a **fall work calendar**.
- **Letcher:**
 - Suggests using the **Youth Series** experience as a key input to shape clinic topics.
 - Will verify the best **timeline** for topic submissions and get back to Andy.



17. Rules Change Process & Safety Committee Items

Presenters: Eric, Sarah, Letcher

- **Rules Deadlines:**
 - **Eric** reminds the group that **proposed rules changes** are due by **August 31**.
 - **Sarah** confirms:
 - The email addresses and process for receiving proposals are **set** for this year.
- **Previously Referred Safety-Related Items:**
 - **Eric** recalls:
 - Several items (particularly around **heel ties**) were referred back to USRowing and the **Safety Committee** last cycle.
 - The committee had suggested that the **single-hand/single-motion** requirement be examined by the Safety Committee as well.
 - **Sarah:**
 - Confirms that materials were **sent** to the Safety Committee.
 - States that the feedback received was **not a clear decision**, but rather more considerations.
 - Commits to **pushing** the Safety Committee for a **more definitive, usable response**.
 - **Letcher** adds that he will **research** the current status of the **single-hand/single-motion** question and report back.

18. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Presenter: Eric

- Confirmed upcoming meeting dates:
 - **June 24**
 - **July 8**
 - **July 22** (clarified that an entry in Ref Corps listing **July 20** is a **typo**; the correct meeting is **Wednesday, July 22**).



19. Other Business & Adjournment

- With no additional business:
 - **Motion to adjourn** is made and seconded (seconds from Eric and another committee member).
 - **All in favor; none opposed.**
- **Meeting adjourned.**